

THE CHRISTMAS CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

By Alden Truesdell

Throughout all ages the candle has been a universal symbol of spiritual enlightenment. Thus the promise is given, "I will light a candle of understanding in thine heart, which shall not be put out." And the Psalmist sang to God, "Thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness."

Just as Jesus Christ came as "a light into the world," so He has promised that everyone who follows Him will in turn be a light to those who are still in darkness.

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

This Light of the Spirit, which reveals the Truth of God, also exposes all that is opposed to Truth. In speaking to Zephaniah, God said, "I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees," which means those who, for the sake of security, have compromised with corrupt practice. These are they of whom Jesus said, "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."

Some, who have once known the Light of Spirit, become so righteous in their own eyes that their light goes out. They are like Job who bemoaned the loss of God's 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."

As we cast back in memory to childhood, it seems that we were enlightened then at many points which seem complicated in our adulthood. "Become as little children," said the Master. "Their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." God is real to the innocent and the pure of heart, who see Him plainly by His own Light, which is reflected in them. These are they who remain humble before God no matter how great their achievements may seem to be in the eyes of men. They are truly "the light of the world."

As a person grows in spiritual understanding, he is progressively enlightened. His light "shineth more and more unto the perfect day." He receives the fulfillment of the promise: "when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light. . . . If thy whole body (i.e., consciousness) therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole (Life's experience) shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light."

The spiritual illumination that anyone has is his most precious possession. If he cherishes it above all else and presses on toward God, he

will be lifted out of the darkness of human misunderstanding into that consciousness of God where all is bright and clear. "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light."

The Disciple John, who had a clear understanding of the Light of God, wrote the message that is for all of us today:

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. . . . This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declared unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. . . .

"And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life."

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SPIRITICITY December 1953

WATCH

By Robert Applegate

Why do we want to look to God? We have heard the instruction to do so many times; and we know that, when we do look to God, we are comforted and helped. We know that we are prospered, healed, and protected when we look up, and therefore we do look up when we are desperate for healing, prospering, or protecting. But why should we look to God - not sporadically, not just when we need help - but continuously? Why did Jesus Christ tell us to "watch, and pray always"?

What do you want? This is a question that everyone has to answer for himself. Unless he does answer it, unless he does determine what he wants in life, he will never attain anything. He will just drift.

There are two things that everyone wants, either consciously or unconsciously. One is to know, and the other is to do something worthwhile. Everyone wants to know. He wants to know what life is, what the world is, what he is, and where he is going. Unless he has some definite answers to these questions, his life is aimless. He does not know what to do or which way to turn. All that he can do is to satisfy the impulse of the moment, or conform to the pattern of those around him.

How does anyone know anything? This is the question of authority and we have to have some answer to it. What can we know? What can we believe?

We cannot believe what some person or some institution tells us, because every person and every institution have been proved fallible. This solution of the problem of authority has already been tried. For over a thousand years the Catholic Church told men what to believe, and men accepted the teaching of the Church without too much question. We can see this acceptance of authority in the confession that Galileo was forced to make by the Inquisition: "I, . . . give assurance that I believe, and always will believe, what the Church recognizes and teaches as true."

Galileo made this confession because he was forced to do so; yet he was instrumental in proving that many of the tenets of the Church are false. Others followed him, and they discovered, too, that many of the doctrines of the Church

could be shown to be wrong. Thus the Church was discredited as the final authority in questions of belief and Reason was set up in her place.

The three hundred years from 1600 to 1900 have been called the "Age of Rationalism." During these years science was born and grew to maturity. It remade the face of the world and changed the way of life of everyone in the world. Men, by the use of their reason, discovered the laws of nature, and they were able to use this knowledge to subdue nature and make her serve their ends. They accordingly drew the conclusion that human reason is the highest authority possible, that men can understand everything by the use of their reason. Even religion, for the majority of men, became a "religion within the limits of reason."

If a person is lost in the woods and has no fixed point to guide him, he will walk in a circle and eventually return to his starting point. The same thing happens if you try to reason your way out of any problem at all. You will go in a circle and end where you started. And the same thing happened to mankind as a whole in the three hundred years that ended in 1900.

By the beginning of this century it was beginning to become apparent that men could not reason their way to the answers to the fundamental questions of life. Science has now come down off its pedestal, and Reason has been dethroned as the final arbiter of the destinies of man. But men have to have some answers to the basic questions of life. They have to believe something, and this need for some authority is the cause of the restlessness and soul-searching that are so apparent in the world today.

Many seemingly intelligent persons have turned to communism and others have turned back to Catholicism, because both communism and Catholicism offer definite answers to the fundamental questions. Others have turned to fundamentalist religions for the same reason. But the method of turning to some institution for the answers to life has already been tried and found wanting. Further it should be obvious that if man's reason cannot be trusted then the institutions made by man cannot be trusted either.

What, then, can we believe? If we cannot trust any institution or any person, if we cannot trust our own reason or our senses, is there anything else left? Is there anything that has not been found deficient? Yes. The teaching of Jesus Christ. In two thousand years this has never been found wrong, nor has anyone been led astray by following it.

We read the words of Jesus Christ and we receive comfort and inspiration from them; but do we realize that, as far as external authority is concerned, they contain all that we know or can know? Others have said things that are true, of course, but they have also said things that are untrue. We can separate the true from the false only by comparing what is said with what Jesus taught. We know that everything He said is true, because He was so at-one with God that God spoke through Him. "The words that I speak unto you," He said, "I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." In two thousand years no one has disproved this claim. We know, therefore, that the Kingdom of God is at hand, that it is within us. We know that God is in Jesus and Jesus Christ is in us. We know that the Holy Spirit will teach us all things, when we are ready to receive this teaching.

If we read the words of Jesus Christ, we find that He said little about what the world is, or what man is. He said little even about God, except that "God is Spirit," that God is "Our Father," and that God knows what we need before we ask. Mostly, however, He told us what to do. And this brings us to the second point. Everyone wants to do something, which he believes is worthwhile. This is another reason why so many have turned to communism, for communism offers a definite program. It gives its adherents something to do which they believe will bring about better times in the future.

But what is worth doing? What can any person do that will prevent another war or keep our civilization from disintegrating, as have other civilizations

before us? And, if our civilization does collapse, what human achievement will have been of any avail? What can any person do that will make any difference a thousand years from now, or even a hundred years from now? How, in fact, can anyone tell whether what he is doing is worthwhile? We have already seen that no institution is a competent guide, and even our own reason is not reliable; and therefore we are left, again, with nothing to follow but the teaching of Jesus Christ.

This teaching does not appeal to most men, because it does not seem to be active enough. To be told, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." does not satisfy the urge to do. But everything else has been tried; it is time to try the teaching of Jesus Christ.

Science made progress when it stopped reasoning about the physical world and started making experiments. So will we make progress when we stop reasoning about the teaching of Jesus and start following it. It is our own lives that we have to experiment with, but we have everything to gain and nothing to lose.

We want to look up then, because Jesus Christ told us to do so, and He is the only guide that we can trust. We want to look up, because we want to know, and Jesus Christ is the only one who can teach us. He has promised, "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things." We want to look to God, because we want to do something worthwhile; and the only thing worth doing is to look to God and to know God. If Truth is the "pearl of great price," it follows of necessity that the greatest thing you can do for anyone is to tell him about Truth. But you cannot argue anyone into accepting the Truth; you cannot force it on anyone. You can only become such an example of it that others will see what you have and want it. But you do not have to try to be an example. If you have the Truth, it will be obvious. "A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." Your only responsibility is to look to God; it is His responsibility to do the rest.

"At that day," Jesus promised, "Ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." "That day" is the time when Truth suddenly becomes real to you, when you know that the Truth is true, when you know that God is All. This knowing is what we are seeking. This knowing is the only activity that is actually worthwhile, because it is only God that changes things, and He becomes manifest in the world by our knowing of Him.

This knowing, or this realization comes, as Jesus said, "as a thief in the night." It comes when it is least expected, but only to him who is prepared. It is to be prepared for it, to be ready to receive it when it comes that we want to watch and pray always. It is this necessity for readiness that Jesus emphasized when He told us to watch.

"Watch and pray, for ye know neither the hour nor the day, wherein the son of man cometh."

"Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, that when he returneth from the wedding and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching."

SPIRITICITY December 1953

DO WE WANT TO TURN TO GOD?

By Nell Truesdell

The more years a person lives on earth, the longer he wants to live. Man's search for a magic fountain of youth has continued age after age everywhere in the world, and doubtless will go on as long as human beings exist. In the face of failure, man still looks into the world for some guarantee for a prolonged life. Even his search in the realm of intellectual studies has borne no fruit: mathematics will not save a dying man; art or music will not add the wanted years; the study of physiology or of any branch of science will not reveal the secret of continuous conscious existence. However, something in the make-up of man urges him to yearn for eternal life, and one of the marvels of human life is that man has never been discouraged by his failure to make this demonstration.

We observe people in the religious field growing weary of trying to reconcile themselves to the promise that they will experience eternal life after death. As a whole, churchgoers are openly questioning the tenets of their various denominations in regard to this subject. They are searching the teachings of Jesus Christ and are becoming aware of the fact that nowhere in His doctrine is there a basis for the dogma that it is necessary for a man to die before he can have life everlasting. They are finding that the Master did not describe a vague hereafter, where the saved will enjoy the freedom of a heavenly abode while the damned will suffer eternal torment in hell. The Apostle John recorded Jesus Christ's secret of eternal life in His prayer to God soon after His last supper with His men. His words are meant, for all mankind throughout all ages:

"Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

It is reasonable for us to believe that, since man is created by God in His image and likeness, he must eventually come into full consciousness of this fact. How? Through awareness of his inseparableness from God; for man is at one with, and like unto, That which created him, not that which begat him through processes of generation in the flesh. This was plainly revealed by Jesus when He declared, "Call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father which is in heaven."

Man's undeniable bondage on all planes in the world results from his persistent attention to the realms of form, whether mental, religious, physical, or material. His primary task, if he wants to be free, consists of one simple act - that of being willing to shift his attention from outer interests to the inner Spirit and to keep it there steadfastly. "The Kingdom of God is within you," said the Master. This shift takes place in man's consciousness right where he happens to be located on earth. The need to make this elementary turn puzzles man, for he cannot understand how an act so simple can serve as the door that opens into a transcendent realm, where God's treasures, including eternal life, are his rightful heritage.

When we consider the vast numbers of people on the earth, we are shocked that so few man have attempted to turn from the world to "the within"; and we see that the reason the practice has not become universally attractive is that it has not been sufficiently popularized. But the man of God usually walks alone, and the fact remains that each individual must for himself choose whether or not he will give his attention to God or continue to accept the limited existence that is his lot in the world. Unless a man turns Godward, he will never know the meaning of eternal life, nor will he achieve it.

When anyone chooses God as his objective, he discovers the part Jesus Christ plays in unifying him with his Father: "no man," He said, "cometh unto the Father but by me." Since Jesus Christ is the Way, and, since He has already blazed the path, man is foolish not to follow Him. But many excuse themselves by saying, "Jesus Christ is not a man in the world anymore; how can I follow someone who does not exist?" This is the point of departure for many would-be earnest souls who are reluctant to let go their intellectual conclusions so that they may grasp an idea which, to them, is unintelligible. "Ye must be born anew," the Master said to the intellectual Nicodemus, who never caught the point. To others He said, "Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein." Again He emphasized that men must watch, look up, seek first the Kingdom of God.

A change of viewpoint is mandatory. No person, regardless of his apparent superiority of birth, inheritance, or abilities, can escape the simple turn - transfer of attention - from what already appears to be true, and is not, to what actually is true, but is not seen. For what appears is unable to impart the Divine spark that transforms a man from the limited mortal to the free immortal being. However, each for himself must decide whether or not he wants to be the proving ground for the fact of eternal life.

To be reborn so as to partake of everlasting life is not a matter of physical rebirth (reincarnation); it is a matter of being willing to drop all that conceals the image and likeness of God in man so that man may show forth his Sonship.

Because Jesus Christ proved that man is immortal by experiencing death and not relinquishing his consciousness of God, man need not repeat the demonstration. He need only choose to turn, and follow Him who will lead him into full consciousness of God, here and now. For to know God is life eternal.

Alphabet Of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day Of The Month

DECEMBER 1953

1. (Be)ALIVE unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.
2. BE ready to every good work.
3. CALL on the Lord out of a pure heart.
4. Thou knowest not what a DAY may bring forth.
5. Faith is . . . the EVIDENCE of things not seen.

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7. FOLLOW righteousness.
8. Praise the Lord for His GOODNESS.
9. Peace be to thine HOUSE.
10. Delight in the Law of God after the INWARD man.
11. I JUDGE not mine own self.
12. My KINGDOM is not of this world.

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14. LET thine heart keep My Commandments.
15. With God is terrible MAJESTY.
16. Maintain good works for NECESSARY uses.
17. Thou OPENEST Thine hand, they are filled with good.
18. The words of the Lord are PURE words.
19. Thou shalt QUICKEN me again.

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21. I will give you REST.
22. SEEK ye the Lord all ye meek of the earth.
23. God doth TALK with man.
24. Peace be UNTO all that thou hast.
25. Add to your faith VIRTUE.
26. Peace be WITHIN thy WALLS.

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28. YIELD YOURSELVES unto the Lord.
29. They are all ZEALOUS for the Law.
30. Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.
31. As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.

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