

THE LIGHT OF CHRISTMAS

By Alden Truesdell

JESUS SAID of John the Baptist, "He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light."

There had been many men of light preceding John the Baptist and Jesus the Nazarene. But even the greatest among them, Isaiah, who foretold almost exactly the Advent of the Light of the World - even this great one was not so great as John the Baptist, who came not prophesying the future, but declaring the Advent already at hand. The burning and shining of John was like that of a lamp that had been far off, but had been brought near to throw light into the room being occupied.

John's light was a combination of the brilliant light of the Old Dispensation and the seemingly more subdued light of the New, which is the same light, but now shaded by a beautiful filtering. There is a good glow and a good feel about the light of Christ Truth.

Two teachers on the West Coast were somewhat jealous of each other, because each one saw a different color light when in meditation. One saw a white light and the other, a sort of golden glow. Eventually they solicited the aid of a visiting teacher, who told them that both lights are good.

Some work in a white light; some in the softer golden radiation; some, at different stages, in both. But in general we see the white light as coming from the mental operations, which are good when properly done; and the gold light coming from the inner affections. Eventually all the computations and revelations of the mentals will drop into the inner nature, which is closer to the heart; and here they become part of a man's being. "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he."

Again, this golden light seems to be closely identified with the light known as grace; and we may remember, then, that "the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The white light illumines teachings; while the golden light of grace has an anointing influence. The white light reflects with brilliance in the intellect; while the golden light is discovered by an inner audition and comprehension. There is excitement in the revelations of the white light; there is a sense of comfort and gratification in the gold. We could almost say we see the white light and hear the gold.

We believe the Christmas season, the time of the Christ-birth in consciousness, is very much in the realm of the gold light. The spirit of Christmas (as we know it) gives such a sense of "peace on earth, good will to men" that even the Christmas lights take on a subdued, satiny luster.

Every light in the Christmas decorations is symbolic of the Grace and Truth brought into the world by Jesus Christ.

SPIRITICITY, December 1959

THE TEACHING OF JESUS

Paraphrased by Nell Truesdell

JOHN, Chapter 18

(AFTER JESUS' last supper with His disciples, and after His prayer for them {and for us}, He led them across the Kedron Brook, up the slope on the far side to the Garden of Gethsemane. Judas knew the place, for he and the other disciples had often spent the night there with their Master.)

(Meanwhile, at the palace, the chief priests and Pharisees had assigned a number of officers to Judas and told him to find Jesus. All carried torches and weapons and, followed by a group of curious citizens, they ascended the slope to the Garden. Jesus saw them coming and, knowing what would happen, went to meet them. He asked:)

---- Whom do you seek? ----

(They replied, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered:)

---- I AM. ---

(Bewildered by the direct admission, they stepped back and fell to the ground. Again Jesus asked:)

----Whom do you seek?----

(Again they replied, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered:)

---- I have told you I AM. If you are looking for me, let my men go their way. --

(Jesus said this, so that the prediction that He had made might be fulfilled: Of the men You have assigned to me, I have lost none.)

(By this time Simon Peter's temper flared. He drew his sword and cut off the right ear of the high priest's servant, whose name was Malchus. Calmly, Jesus reprimanded Peter:)

---- Sheath your sword. Would you have me refuse to drink the cup which the Supreme One has given to me? ----

(The captain, with the officers of the Jews and the band of citizens, seized and bound Jesus and led Him away, first to Annas, the father-in-law of the high priest Caiaphas. It was Caiaphas who had counseled the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.)

(Simon Peter followed Jesus. So did John, who was known to the high priest and therefore allowed to go into the palace with Jesus. But Peter remained outside the courtyard door. John came out and asked the maid that guarded the door to let Peter come in. As she did, she asked Peter, Are you not one of this man's disciples? Defensively, Peter declared, I am not! Since the night was cold, the servants and officers stood around a fire of coals to warm themselves. Peter stood with them and warmed himself.)

(Meanwhile the high priest questioned Jesus about His teaching and about His disciples. Jesus answered:)

---I spoke openly to everybody as I taught in the assembly and in the temple where the Jews always gather. I have never said anything in secret. Why ask me? Why not ask those who heard me? They know what I said. ----

(Angered by Jesus' reply, one of the officers slapped Him, saying, How dare you answer the high priest that way? Jesus said to him:)

---- If I have lied, bear witness to the lie; but if the truth, why do you hit me? ----

(Not getting anywhere, Annas sent Jesus bound to Caiaphas, the high priest. All this time Peter stood and warmed himself. The men who stood with him asked, Are you not also His disciple? But Peter denied, saying, I am not! Then one of the servants of the high priest {and related to Malchus, whose ear Peter had recently cut off} asked, Weren't you in the Garden with Him? But Peter said, I was not! And immediately the cock crowed.)

(It was now early morning. His persecutors led Jesus from Caiaphas to the hall of judgment. But they themselves did not go into the hall, because they would then be "defiled" and could not eat the passover. Pilate, who had to go out to them, asked, What accusation do you bring against this man? They hedged with: If He were not a malefactor, we would not have brought Him before you. Pilate said, You take and judge Him according to your law. The Jews answered: It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.)

(Pilate went back into the praetorium, called Jesus, and asked, Are you the King of the Jews? Jesus answered:)

---- Do you say this on your own, or did somebody tell you I said it? ----

(Pilate scoffed, Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priest have delivered you to me. Just what have you done? Jesus said:)

---- My realm is not of this world; if my realm were of this world, my servants would fight to keep me from being delivered to the Jews. As it is, my realm is not of this world. ----

(Pilate asked, Are you a king then? Jesus answered:)

---- You say that I am a king. I for this purpose was born and I for this purpose came into the world: that I should testify of the Truth. Everyone that is of the Truth comprehends whatever I say. ----

(Pilate asked, What is truth? And when he had asked, he walked out again to the Jews and said to them: I find no fault in Him. But You have a custom that I should release a prisoner for you at the Passover. Will you let me release the King of the Jews?)

(They yelled: Not this man! Release Barabbas!)

(Now Barabbas was a robber.)

000

SPIRITICITY, December 1959

SOME WORDS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

By Robert Applegate

(Continued from last month)

"BLESSED ARE THEY which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

As I said last month, the Greek word that is translated "blessed" means happy, fortunate, lucky.

There is no English word that means exactly the same as the Greek word dikaiousune (translated "righteousness"). For the word "righteousness" has come to have a rather sanctimonious connotation. It suggests a sort of religious

goody-goodness, which is exactly the opposite of what the New Testament writers meant by the word dikaiosune.

It is easy to say what the term dikaiosune meant for the writers of the New Testament. It meant (applied to man) being in right relation with God. And it didn't mean anything else; for that, to them, was the only thing that mattered. How the word came to have this meaning is a bit harder to explain.

When the word dikaiosune occurs in the classical writers, it is usually translated "justice"; but all translators know that this is an inadequate rendering. For the Greeks, dikaiosune was the sum of all virtue; it included the four cardinal virtues: wisdom, courage, justice, and self-control. (The word "virtue," from the root *vir* meaning man, originally meant "Manliness"; and in the Greek and New Testament writings it never entirely loses that meaning.) So for the Greeks dikaiosune was the sum of all virtue, or manliness, and was therefore desirable.

But the writers of the New Testament, while they wrote in Greek were Jews. They used this word dikaiosune, because it was the best word available; but they gave it a little different meaning. The Hebrew words with which they were familiar and which they would have used if they had been writing in Hebrew are tsedheg and ts'dhaga. These words meant not primarily a state, but an activity. The "righteousness" of God was His activity in delivering an individual from injustice or in delivering His people from their enemies. Similarly a "righteous" judge was not one who upheld an abstract standard of justice, but one who delivered the innocent from unjust persecution.

Professor C. H. Dodd, in his commentary to Paul's Letter to the Romans, says:

"Always 'righteousness' is not primarily an attribute of God or of His people, but an activity whereby the right is asserted in the deliverance of man from the power of evil. . . . In all probability the familiar beatitude, 'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness,' contains the same meaning. For an English reader, as for a Greek reader, of the Gospels, that suggests 'those who ardently desire to be good'; but, in accordance with Old Testament usage, the original Aramaic beatitude would naturally mean, 'Blessed are they who ardently desire the vindication of right, the triumph of the good cause' - the same people, in fact, who are referred to in Luke 18:7: 'Will not God see justice done to His elect who cry to Him by day and night?'"

For Jews of the first century the triumph of the good cause could only mean their deliverance from Roman domination (as in Hungary today it would mean deliverance from Russian domination). But they realized that only God could do this delivering. They believed that, if they kept the religious requirements of the Mosaic Law, then God would deliver them - would reveal His righteousness. In fact, they believed that, if the whole people kept the Law for just one day, then the Messiah (the Deliverer) would come. Thus "righteousness" came to mean keeping the Law; and thus it approximated to the religious "goodness" that we associate with the word "righteousness" today.

But Jesus Christ declared that this idea was inadequate: "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom." So for Him and His followers "righteousness" had a different meaning from that of keeping the Law.

The purpose of the Law was to bring man into right relation with God; and so we may say that for the Jews of the first century (including Jesus and the writers of the New Testament) "righteousness" was that activity of man that brought him into right relation with God. This is the only definition of the word that will satisfy all instances of its use in the New Testament.

What is this activity? Jesus, Paul, and all the New Testament writers insist over and over that it is the activity of faith; it does not consist in religious observations or in acts of charity (which are secondary). It is "the righteousness which is of faith."

(To be continued)

SPIRITICITY, December 1959

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Anonymous (Continued from last month)

"THOU SHALT also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee: and the light shall shine upon thy ways."

By his repeated word, formulated in the sacred utterance we call the Lord's Prayer, man clears his environment, untangles himself from the web of earthly attachments, and walks freely in the Truth.

All the way out from the Father's house and all the way back to it man should remember: "I Am the Lord thy God. . . . Thou shalt have no other gods before Me" - "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

The duality of this earth plane, where things appear to be what they are not, makes it the plane of illusion - or the unreal. Man is confused by the pairs of opposites that here hold sway: light and darkness, heat and cold, good and evil, joy and sorrow, health and disease, beauty and ugliness. Working under conditions and laws that he has little understood, man has become an unbalanced creature, a victim of his own selfish appetites and mistakes.

His thoughts and words failing him, it is man's privilege, at any time he chooses, to use the key, the formulated Prayer he was told to use:

Our Father
which art in Heaven,
Hallowed be Thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come.
Thy Will be done in earth,
as it is in Heaven.

There is no use building up a civilization until man learns to build after the pattern of the Heavenly Mansions. No civilization yet has ever endured - and why? Because man has followed his own egotistical, selfish ends. He has endeavored to build form, to magnify and glorify the world of exteriors, forgetting that the outward shell is indeed fragile unless made sound and secure by inner support. The pressure from within must be equal to the pressure from without.

"Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul." The idea soul growth is clearly set before us as we move silently forward on the wings of prayer. The Kingdom can come only as it comes individually to the soul. As the soul journeys earthward it is destined to carry to earth the blessedness of Heaven's eternal Joy. So it is done in earth as it is in Heaven.

"What is man . . .? Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels. . . Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands."

Wonderful indeed will be God's ways in all the earth, when man awakens fully to his purpose and willingly fulfills the Will of God. With patience and perseverance must man "go into all the world" - the world of his own making, the world of his own thoughts - and preach the Gospel (the good spell) to the whole creation. On this revival tour of his own nature man discovers that a subtle conceit interferes with the yielding of his will to the Will of a Superior. Where conceit exists, congesting the mind, it is impossible for that mind to conceive of a greater Mind having dominion. That mind retains such a false confidence in its own ability that it will never acknowledge a higher opinion, lest it mean giving way to that opinion. Often stubbornness and selfishness are involved as well as conceit.

When we meditate on the words "Thy Will be done," we perceive that they were intended to penetrate deep into the nature, to uncover those deep-seated grubs that have embedded themselves in the garden of the mind. Each time we voice this Prayer, accepting it in its true meaning, it acts like a charge of dynamite exploding in our interior; and we feel the rocks of stubborn ignorance breaking up. So ignorance gives itself up piece by piece - to be cleared away, so that it may be replaced by the Original Mind Substance that was in the beginning.

When man arrives at the place where he acknowledges to himself his colossal conceit, and admits to himself that he is nothing, then he is ready to know what is the true and perfect Will of God.

Daily lip-service is meaningless and rewardless, until this breaking down of the inflated self-opinion has taken place. This, however, does not mean that all man's personal attainments and ideas have to be discarded. Not at all! But, so far as they feed his personal pride, they must be rendered powerless; for selfishness deadens and solidifies our interior state of being.

If man would pedestal himself as a light, a radiant tower of inspiration to others, he must be willing to empty himself of all conceit and false pride in his own accomplishments; and, bowing lowly, offer himself to be transformed by the Will of Him who ultimately must be obeyed.

Man has wrongly associated the term the "Will of God" with the outer man and his outer world. When all physical efforts have failed he has accepted conditions as the "Will of God." When problems have appeared stubborn and have refused to change, then man, aghast and bewildered, has retreated, given up, resigned himself to what he termed the "Will of God." There is always a note of defeat when this attitude is accepted. Man has blindly bowed down under the crucifying burdens of his own making and told himself, in his blindness, that God would reward him copiously for his suffering.

Man has become almost sentimental in his belief that agony and suffering are bestowed upon him as something to be borne in sanctity as the "Will of God." This belief has removed from the sufferer's nature all rebellion, all resentment, all bitterness toward life. These have given way to a resolve to wear the disfiguring cloak with a pride of resignation that only the supposed "Will of God" could inspire. So history is filled with accounts of those who have blindly endured for Christ's sake.

Truly the Will of God is borne on us by decrees; yet it has been inborn from the beginning.

Redeeming himself atom by atom, thought by thought, life after life, man moves from transient glory to glory everlasting - a son of the Most High.

Thus the Cycle of Necessity has become the Path of Attainment, whereby each soul, as the over-comer, receives illumination and ultimate freedom of being. This is the Will of God.

(To be continued)

Alphabet Of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day Of The Month

DECEMBER 1955

1. If ye shall ASK ANYTHING in My name, I will do it.
2. BLESS the Lord, O my soul.
3. For this CAUSE CAME I unto this hour.
5. Let us love . . . in DEED and in truth.
6. Walk with Me in peace and EQUITY.
7. The Lord make his FACE to shine upon thee.
8. The Father may be GLORIFIED in the Son.
9. I Am the Lord that HEALETH thee.
10. The Spirit maketh INTERCESSION for us.
12. The God of hope fill you with all JOY.
13. As the Father KNOWETH Me, even so KNOW I the Father.
14. He that LOVETH Me, shall be LOVED of my Father.
15. I will MANIFEST MYSELF to him.
16. Walk in NEWNESS of life.
17. Ye are all ONE in Christ Jesus.
19. I go to PREPARE a PLACE for you.
20. Make (me) of QUICK understanding.
21. Put Me in REMEMBRANCE.
22. SEEK ye first the Kingdom of God.
23. Where I am, THERE ye may be also.
24. When I was a child, I UNDERSTOOD as a child.
26. VERILY, VERILY, . . . your sorrow shall be turned into joy.
27. It shall be WELL with thee.
28. Whither I go YE know, and the way YE know.
29. Where is thy ZEAL and strength?
30. Keep yourselves in the love of God.
31. Where is your faith?

"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."

* * *

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