

CHRISTMAS

By Alden Truesdell

EACH YEAR at this time we find ourselves in the midst of our most thorough celebration of the year. It is the Christmas Season, the year's most popular and generally observed holiday time. For most of us, it still retains some of its early childhood mystery.

Although we may skimp and save all during the year, because we seem not to be able to afford certain things, either all of this changes or we ourselves become different creatures at this time of year. For suddenly we may find ourselves spending money we didn't know we had for things to give that the recipients didn't know they wanted. It is a time of unrestrained exercise of the productive practice of giving. Those who give receive greater benefit than they know. Even the one who is coerced into giving a reluctant present will receive hidden benefit. The race itself is in part restored to the normal state of spiritual health by the breakthrough of the spirit of giving.

The celebration does seem to get out of hand, with great expenditure of energy, time, and money. It affects everyone in one way or another. Some call it commercial, which indeed it has become; and yet each one senses a deeper meaning, which, before the season is completed, has worn down the most hardened Scrooge.

Regardless of the commercialism and personal inconvenience, the idea of giving, expressed as it is so opulently and even extravagantly, has a therapeutic value in expanding the awareness of the individual. Even the ones who are reluctant to give are benefitted; for their reluctant giving is swallowed up in the Season's acknowledgment of the One who gives not according to measure, but "according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Jesus Christ told us that, if we give, it will be given unto us; or, as Luke has recorded the saying: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." This formula, that Jesus taught, practiced, and proved, is very practical. But we must practice it, to prove its practicality.

We need not wait for Christmas to come to experience the benefits of giving. Any time one has a feeling of lack or insufficiency of any sort, if he will find something to give and someone to give it to, he will experience a - pleasing sense of expansion, a feeling of well-being that woos Providence and promotes prosperity. He will then see how the race itself derives benefit from its periodic splurge of giving.

As we know and hear regularly at this season, Christmas is held in honor of the spiritual birth of a Christ Child into the world two thousand years ago, in Bethlehem of Judea. But the universal popularity of this holiday is due to its individual relevance for the spiritual birth may be duplicated within every human soul. Maister Eckhart, who meditated on this matter, tells us this birth takes place in what he calls the "core of the soul." He says that, in a time of silence, the spiritual word drops into the waiting soul.

This is why each one feels a proprietary interest in the Story of the birth that took place in the manger because there was no room in the inn. The conception of the Divine Identity is in the core of the soul, away from the outer activity. The birth must take place away from localities where people gather, in the less agitated, natural, pastoral area signified by the manger. This is what Jesus called "thy closet." The Holy of Holies of the Hebrew Temple symbolized this core of the soul.

If we could trace the Christmas activities back to their Origin, to see the Spiritual Reality of which they are symbols, all the raucous clamor, the ornate decoration, would direct us to a universal, fundamental fact - that, when the people practice God's laws, God comes and dwells with them.

At heart - or in the soul's holy of holies - each one knows this, as each one knows the Story of the Baby Jesus and the Record of the Man Jesus are previews of his own spiritual promise, his own Christ birth, his own spiritual manhood.

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SPIRITICITY December 1961

A PRAYER

By Nell Truesdell

"O FEAR THE LORD, YE HIS SAINTS:
FOR THERE IS NO WANT TO THEM THAT
FEAR HIM." (Psalm 34:9)

MY FEAR of Thee, O Lord, is reverence. My fear of Thee, O Lord, is respect tinged with awe. My esteem for Thee, O Lord, makes me know that Thy Almightiness reaches far beyond my power to comprehend Thee. Still, I am aware of Thine availability, for Thou art never far from me. With Jesus Christ I may say, "I and my Father are one."

Thy richness, O Lord, enriches me in mind, body, and affairs. I lack for no needful thing, for I believe the promise that whoever seeks Thee shall not want any good thing.

O Lord, I know that Thine Eye is upon me, for I hope in Thy mercy. Comfort me according to Thy Word.

Thy holy Presence is the Substance of my being. Thy holy Presence is the Shepherd that leads me into green pastures of security and refreshes me with the still waters of serenity. Accept, O Lord, the offerings of my mouth, that my praises of Thee may glorify Thee and fill me with the fulness of Thy Truth.

I thank Thee, O God, that as I trust in Thee, Thou openest Thine hand and fillest mine with abundance of all good and pleasant spiritual riches.

"Magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His Name together." (Psalm 34:3)

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SPIRITICITY December 1961

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS

By Robert Applegate, Jr.

(Continued from last month)

PAUL HAS said (in the passage translated last month) that as many as are baptized into Jesus Christ are baptized into His death. They therefore share in His death, or rather in His overcoming of death. It is not too easy to explain why this is so.

There are a few presuppositions behind the statements we make in this magazine. If you accept the presuppositions, you will find our statements follow inevitably from them; if you do not accept them, you will probably find our statements incomprehensible. In geometry, there are axioms that are accepted as true, and all the theorems and propositions (the whole structure of geometry) are built upon these axioms. Geometry stands or falls as the axioms stand or fall. So it is in every study. There are always certain basic assumptions (not always clearly stated) upon which the study is built. So it is in metaphysics (which is only an attempt to express in modern language the eternal truths of Reality); there are certain axioms upon which the whole structure is built.

One of these axioms is that, in Reality (or in Spirit), we are all one. Sir James Jeans (who was a physicist and approached this question from the physical rather than the metaphysical angle) used the analogy of waves of the sea. On the surface, we see individual waves that come into being and pass away; but, underneath, they are all one body of water, which is permanent. The waves derive all their substance from the one body of water of which they are inseparable parts; without it they would not exist. Their substance is permanent and only their form changes.

So it is with us. On the surface, we seem to be separate personalities that are born and die; but in the Reality that is beyond time and space, we are all one. It is from this Reality that we derive our only being. Without It we would not be.

This Reality is what we call Christ, or the Activity of God. Since we are all one with It, we are also one with each other. We are, as Paul says, members one of another. Yet (and here is where the physical analogy breaks down) though we are all one in Christ, we still remain separate individualities. Nevertheless, in virtue of our oneness, whatever anyone does is done for all; whatever anyone achieves is achieved for all. So it is that Jesus in overcoming death overcame it for all of us. This overcoming is established, as it were, in that body of which we are the parts. We enter into this overcoming - we receive its benefits - by accepting it: that is, by acknowledging (1) that Jesus did

overcome death and (2) that we are one with that Reality of which Jesus was the perfect embodiment and therefore we share in His overcoming.

Baptism symbolizes our accepting the work of Jesus Christ. So it is - or should be - an entrance into Eternal Life. It is by believing in what Jesus did that we are "dead to error and alive to God" forever.

But the paradox is that, while the work is already done for us and we receive its benefits by believing in it, still we must work. And this type of believing is the hardest work that there is. "By the gift of God you are delivered," we are told. But we are also told, "Work out thine own deliverance with fear and trembling." The work has been done, but we have to overcome all our old habits of thought and feeling before we can fully accept it and so enter into it. Few are willing to try this; fewer are able to do it. So it is that "narrow is the way that leads unto Life, and few there be that find it."

It is as though some friend had given us an uncut ruby. We have the ruby, but still we must work to remove the gangue that clings to it and to cut and polish the stone. This is exacting, painstaking work; it should also be a joyous undertaking.

We may compare work in Truth to the study of Relativity Theory. This theory has already been formulated and also tested and found to be true in that field to which it applies. But if we wanted to work in the field of astrophysics we would have to labor to master the mathematics upon which the Theory of Relativity is based. And only after years of intense application would we be able to work with the theory for our own satisfaction and the advancement of knowledge of the physical universe. In our preliminary study and in the ultimate advancement of knowledge, we would not in any way affect Relativity Theory or the phenomena that it seeks to explain. We would simply be removing from ourselves our own ignorance, so that we could see and enjoy this truth of the physical universe.

It is like that in our ongoing in Truth. We do not establish the Truth or change It, but we come to know it as an eternal Reality of which we are integral parts. Only, in this ongoing, it is not intellectual ignorance that must be put aside; it is our physical appetites, worldly desires, and mental reservations. It is not whoever is the most learned, but whoever "humbles himself as this little child," that is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. So we are told: "Strive to enter in by the narrow gate. . . . Strive to be quiet."

Christianity has too long been misrepresented as a soft-headed theory that we live in the best of all possible worlds and that, if we are only kind and true, everyone will be kind and true to us. Jesus did not sweat blood in the Garden of Gethsemane to teach men a fatuous code of ethics. And Paul did not face shipwreck, hunger, cold, insults, and beatings to tell men to sit down and wait for God to open His heavens for them. The heavens are already open. Man is already in the Kingdom of God ("in Him we live, and move, and have our being"). But still man must labor to overcome his "dream of the senses," even as Jesus and Paul did. The outer hardships these men went through were as nothing compared with the inner struggle they endured. Modern metaphysics, in its attempt to gain popular acceptance, has neglected to point this out; but read the original accounts if you do not believe it.

The first part of Paul's Letter to the Christians at Rome has been filled with the explanation of the work that Jesus Christ has done for us, which we accept by believing in it. The second half of the letter will be occupied with

descriptions of the work we must do within ourselves in order to attain that state of assured, unshakable believing (or, rather, knowing). Our goal is a constant consciousness of eternal oneness with God, which Jesus called the Kingdom of Heaven. Everything we do should be a means to this end. Paul has already told us what one of these things we should do is: "Consider yourselves to be dead to error and alive to God in Christ Jesus." Paul continues his letter (with what is today Chapter 6:12):

DO NOT let error rule in your mortal personality, so that you obey its desires. Do not hand over your faculties as instruments of irreverence and error; but hand over yourselves to God as men brought to life from the dead. Hand over your faculties as instruments of goodness to God. Error will not rule over you, for you are not subject to (the dictates of) religion; you are subject to the Kindness of God.

What then? Shall we continue in error, because we are not under religion, but under the Kindness of God? Never! Do you not know that you are slaves of whatever you obey - of whatever you hand yourselves over as slaves to obey - either of error, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to integrity? But thanks be to God that you who before were slaves of error have obeyed from the heart the teaching that we gave to you! You have been set free from error; you are now slaves of integrity.

I must speak in human terms because of your weakness. Just as, formerly, you handed over your faculties in slavery to uncleanness and to delinquency upon delinquency, so now hand over your faculties to goodness that leads to spiritualization. When you were slaves to error, you were free from goodness. What profit did you have from those things of which you are now ashamed? The end of those things is death. Now, since you are freed from error and are enslaved to God, you have your profit in spiritualization, and the end is Eternal Life. For the pay for error is death; the gift of God is Eternal Life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

To identify ourselves with our mortal nature (which is error) is obviously to choose death. But to accept our spiritual sonship to God is to receive Eternal Life.

(To be Continued)

SPIRITICITY, December 1961

Q. Playmates have confused my children by describing Hell and Purgatory as places of torture. Please explain these terms.

A. "HELL" IS a term that may be applied to any experience that binds, or prevents you from being free. So sickness, unhappiness, worry, lack are hell. They are produced by fear; fear torments. The tormented person suffers an anguish that burns like fire. All of us have known some degree of mental-emotional-physical suffering that was hell-on-earth. Often repeated vexations are such a hell.

The popular conception of hell is derived from an over-literal interpretation of such passages as Rev. 21:8: "The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and

idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone."

The threat of the pain that the unrepentant "sinners will suffer after death" holds in bondage to the established churches many people, who are taught that membership in, and loyalty to, their church is a guarantee of escape from the terrors of the nether regions. Threats of everlasting punishment strike terror in the unawakened hearts. This terror is hell.

"Purgatory" is a term that may be used to denote the struggle to get out of bondage of any kind. Try to rectify a grave mistake and you suffer anguish, or a condition of purification that you experience as punishment and that you must endure until the mistake is corrected. When a child fails a subject in school, he has to repeat it. The struggle to remedy the failure is a temporary punishment he endures to keep up with his class.

In our dedication to the Christ Truth, we experience the pain of purgatory as the almost unendurable anguish that often besets us because we can see the Reality of the perfect state of Being; but at the same time we still respond through sense desire to the pull of the world. We are torn between two apparent powers in our consciousness: one, a desire for the perfect spiritual state; the other, a desire for a "successful" worldly life. And so long as this struggle exists, we experience purgatory. When the attention is steadfastly set toward God within us, and we understand and accept our relation to Him as His sons, then we shall make the transition from the state of struggle into the state of peace (Heaven).

Jesus answered the question what happens after death when He said: They "shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life (i.e. the supreme heavenly state); and they that have done evil (have failed to make the attainment), unto the resurrection of damnation (i.e. rebirth into the world)."

Existence in the world is hell. The struggle to get out of the world is purgatory. The desired achievement is Resurrection unto Eternal Life.
N.T.

SHORT LESSONS:

By N.T.

I AM GLAD IN THE LORD

CECIL B. deMILLE'S counsel to Gary Cooper was perhaps the most important practical advice that the actor followed. "Never caricature your role," the older man warned. This advice from a wiser and highly trained man was seriously accepted and applied by the younger, who today is a tradition in the field of entertainment.

Many students of Truth make themselves objects of jesting. Needlessly, they poke fun at both their accomplishments and their failures. They do not realize that their levity drains them of Spiritual Substance, strength, knowing, and esteem, and that their ludicrous exaggerations may discourage a beginner with a more serious purpose. I do not mean that we should wear a long face or

assume a somber pose. Far from it. But I have noticed that some Truth students pretend a devil-may-care attitude that does not fool anybody and that does detract from their influence on others. Their frozen smiles, meaningless flattery, and forced gaiety belie God's Presence that never excites hilarity or amusement. God's Presence is Joy, Gladness, Good Cheer; but these spiritual qualities promote quiet good spirits that heal our human tendency to take our heritage of divine sonship lightly.

"Let there be no filthiness, nor silly talk, nor levity, . . . but instead let there be thanksgiving." (Ephesians 5:4) (RSV)

The TRUTH THAT I CONFIDENTLY ASSERT IS ESTABLISHED FOR ME

ARE YOU glad to see somebody succeed? Do you praise another for his accomplishment? Can you rejoice that a relative bought a new car or house or wardrobe, or told you about a planned cruise? Examine your heart. Do you resent somebody else's good fortune? Envy is corrosive; it eats holes in your consciousness and your spiritual Substance leaks out. Consider this lesson and learn that your ability to see and commend another's success indicates that it is possible for you to make a similar demonstration, if you wish.

Much as a tremendous wave in the ocean drags up from the bottom bits of hidden sea-life, so our study and practice of Truth principles stirs up what is hidden in the recesses of our consciousness and brings to the surface unprofitable attitudes, which we may have formerly controlled but never eradicated. For example: any sudden outburst of temper is to be regretted, but it also is to be recognized as our opportunity to overcome deeply submerged irritations. We may deny bad temper and affirm the Truth. We never know how much we lose by giving way to temper or envy or jealousy; but we are certain that we may overcome these and other negative traits through our conscious effort to supplant them with kindness, gratitude, and love.

"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with Good." (Romans 12:21)

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Alphabet Of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day of the Month

DECEMBER 1961

1. AWAKE, AWAKE, put on strength.
2. Receive the BLESSING of the Lord.
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4. I will give You another COMFORTER, . . . even the Spirit of Truth.
5. Now is the DAY of salvation.
6. The Lord shall ESTABLISH thee.
7. Ye are My FRIENDS.
8. Every GOOD and perfect GIFT cometh from above.
9. Lord, be thou my HELPER.
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11. The INTEGRITY of the upright shall guide them.
12. This my JOY is fulfilled.
13. KEEP yourselves in the love of God.
14. He LEADETH me beside the still waters.
15. Follow after MEEKNESS.
16. My God shall supply all your NEED.
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18. OFFER up spiritual sacrifices.
19. Great PEACE have they which love Thy Law.
20. Lead a QUIET and peaceable life.
21. REMEMBER the Word.
22. The Lord God is a SUN and a SHIELD.
23. He will guide you into all TRUTH.
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25. He is able to save . . . to the UTTERMOST.
26. Faith is the VICTORY.
27. WAIT only on God.
28. YIELD YOURSELVES to the Lord.
29. Be ZEALOUS, therefore, and repent.
30. Let not your heart be troubled.

"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."

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