

SPIRITICITY January 1954

WHAT GOAL IS WORTHWHILE?

By Nell Truesdell

A woman said to me, "My mother always hated me." A man claimed bitterly, "I had no boyhood." Another confided, "When I was four years old my mother died; and when I was fourteen, my father gave me \$2.00 and said, 'The only advice I have to offer is that you keep away from whiskey and women.' With that I was set adrift in an unfriendly world."

The woman who knew her mother's hatred rose from average middle-class society to the envied and uncontested position of social dictator in one of our largest cities. The man who feels that he was denied the pleasures and opportunities of boyhood made his way to the highest executive position that one of the biggest distributing companies in the United States can offer. And the boy who had been thrown bodily into an unmerciful and hostile world became a man of distinction in the field of spiritual ministry. As a young man he obtained a considerable measure of worldly freedom by climbing the highest peak he could sight; but, after attaining business success and financial security in a comparatively short period (about six years), he found the achievement to be singularly devoid of life sustaining factors. Baffled by this failure of worldly success to answer his deep longing for contentment, he began a search for deliverance, and, in about two years, stumbled upon one simple practice that offered a way to freedom from the irritations and anxieties of existence. Without question, he immediately surrendered his enviable gains in the world so that he might apply himself to this practice. Rapid progress rewarded his one-pointedness to such an extent that he soon proved to himself that he had made the right choice.

Of the three persons referred to, he alone secured contentment and abiding happiness, not simply because he is working in the spiritual field, but because after having tasted the meanness and disinterest of a cruel world, instead of growing small-minded and ungenerous, he developed a humanitarian interest in people in all walks of life. Wherever he finds himself, his attitude is one of helpful fellowship toward others.

What is the practice that led him into freedom? Simple obedience to the injunction of Jesus Christ:

"Watch ye therefore; . . . And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch."

Watch what? The Scripture answers with straightforward and dynamic instructions:

"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else."

"Be still, and know that I am God: . . . I will be exalted in the earth."

"The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing."

God's Word spoken through the prophets was more than reiterated by Jesus Christ, for He discovered for Himself the fundamental working Principle they embraced. And, because He dedicated His life to revealing and proving that Principle, we now may prove its worth in our lives. He cited the Great Commandment as an imperative requirement to a comprehension of the Principle, and He added a second commandment to it:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."

Jesus Christ taught and demonstrated that God is love; that God's Kingdom is within us; that we must seek first God's Kingdom and His righteousness and all things will be added unto us; that it is God's pleasure to give us the Kingdom; that we may ask anything of God and He will give us our heart's desires; that we must watch, and pray always.

Does this mean that we must withdraw into solitude? No. Jesus Christ lived as a man lives among his relatives, his friends, his enemies. However, He did something more than exist among men; He set His inner gaze toward God so steadfastly that it never wavered. He knew God to be His Father, and He said simply, "I and my Father are one." And one day in talking to the multitude, and to His disciples, He said, "One is your Father, which is in heaven." At another time He prayed, "Our Father which art in heaven."

A person may argue, "I, too, want to be free, but I have responsibilities. I must feed, clothe, and house myself and my dependents." These claims do indeed draw on the vitality and the resources of everybody in the world. But what did the Master say in regard to these demands?

"I say unto you, Take no thought for your life . . . neither for the body . . . neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after."

At first sight, this instruction shocks and mystifies us. However, so does any different approach to problems common to all people in every walk of life collide with, and disturb, already established attitudes of mind and habits of action. Jesus anticipated this and cautioned us not to be of doubtful mind. He realized that Something that hitherto had been concealed from view must be discovered and accepted, for It is the vital factor that imparts freshness, real substance, and the needed impetus to set our feet in a new way of life.

Simple analysis of the word responsibility will dispel the dreary burden it implies. We shall use two words to clarify our meaning: response and ability. Everybody has some special innate ability. His response always should be to that God-given ability, for that is the purpose for which he came into the world. If anyone will wholeheartedly assume his true responsibility, changes will be wrought in and through him, which will affect his outer affairs in such a way that all things will be found to work together for his good. Also he will strengthen in the inner man in such a way that he will have a new spirit in him, with a new power to be and a new will to do. Why? Because he will be giving his attention to, and he will be loving, THAT in him which is his true Source of good in mind, body, and affairs.

Until a person awakes, or comes to himself, he follows the way of the world. Fear is his constant companion. However, where there is a real

determination to feel after God so as to find Him, a new strength, a firmer faith, a surer wisdom, and a deeper love are found to give ready assistance in times of stress. To keep up the practice of recognizing and acknowledging God, depending upon God, and doing heartily for God whatever comes to hand is the secret of growth. In the midst of the greatest trials, Jesus Christ fastened His inner vision on God. As we study His life, so that we may follow Him, we realize that we, too, must practice exactly as He did.

Each of us has built, and continues to build, his consciousness according to one of two patterns, the world or the Spirit. To choose the world is to limit achievement to worldly dimensions and to pay the price that the world demands in health and happiness. To choose the Spirit is to face the Unknown. This is a terrifying prospect for anyone. All his past training, accomplishments, and associations rise up in violent opposition to his first step toward the untried realm. At this point, a man must abandon himself utterly to Something that he feels is right and good, but that he has not yet proved to be practical.

Many men have wanted to follow Jesus Christ. One record will suffice to illustrate the personal difficulties that must be surmounted:

"And it came to pass, that as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him
. . . Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell which are at home in my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of God."

Said Jesus of Himself: "I can of mine own self do nothing: . . . because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."

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THE SECOND COMING

By Robert Applegate

"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

The Second Coming of Jesus Christ has been a stumbling-block to many. Even serious students of the Bible say that Jesus taught that He would come again with power and glory to reward His followers and punish the wicked.

At the time of the Advent of Jesus Christ the Jews were dejected and defeated. For centuries they had been ruthlessly maltreated and exploited. They, who were God's chosen people, who had God's Law and God's Scripture, had been pillaged, robbed, taxed, and murdered, first by the Assyrians, then by the Babylonians, Greeks, and Romans. They, who had once enjoyed prosperity and power under David and Solomon, had been crushed and impoverished; while the ungodly had flourished and grown rich. In desperation, they searched their Scriptures, and they interpreted them to foretell the coming of a Messiah, who would overthrow the heathen and establish the righteous in eternal wealth and power.

The expectation of the coming of the Messiah had a strong hold on men at the time of the earthly life of Jesus Christ. Even He had to overcome the temptation to take the path of violence and to set Himself up as the temporal ruler of the world. And repeatedly He had to resist the efforts of His countrymen to force Him to lead them in revolt against the Romans. After He had fed the five thousand beside the Lake of Galilee, He perceived that they were so impressed by this demonstration that they wanted to "take him by force, to make him a king." But Jesus turned His back on them and went away into the hills to pray. When He returned, He told the people, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." This refusal to gratify man's lust for material wealth and power was the turning point of Jesus' life on earth. "From that time," we are told, "many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."

Jesus definitely repudiated the idea of a military Messiah and the way of violence. But so persistent are men in looking for their good in outer events that they foisted these false ideas onto His teaching. They said that Jesus had come once, but that His followers were still despised and mocked. Therefore He would come again with violence to overthrow the scoffers and throw them into a lake of fire, where they would suffer in eternal anguish; while the righteous would be established in eternal blessedness. There are many statements of Jesus that could be interpreted to justify these ideas, and they were so interpreted. This doctrine has a peculiar appeal for those who are frustrated or disappointed, and it has been revived century after century.

But are we to suppose that He who was, and is, the Son of God was mistaken when He said that He would come quickly? And how are we to reconcile His statement that He would come again with His promise that He is with us always "even unto the end of the world"?

The Second Coming of Jesus Christ is His coming into each individual consciousness, as He came to Paul on the Damascus Road, to John on Patmos, to the Disciples at Pentecost. Sometimes the coming is overpowering, as it was with Paul; more often it is gentle and gradual. Jesus Christ, the King of the Kingdom of God, is within everyone of us; but how conscious are we of Him? It is our awakening to our eternal oneness with Him that is His Second Coming. This is "the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest: . . . Christ in you." Listen to what Paul says about this indwelling Christ:

"By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. . . . In whom are hid all the treasures of Wisdom and knowledge. . . . In him dwelleth all the fulness, of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power. . . . Christ is all and in all."

Would it not satisfy all longing to be so conscious of this that you were never conscious of anything else? Would not this be the Kingdom of God?

When anyone first hears the Truth of His oneness with God, he is greatly elated. The whole world seems rosy; he wants to tell everyone the good news. Then after a while the elation wears off. Truth sounded easy, but the practice of It turns out not to be so. He is apt to become dissatisfied with His progress and to wonder why he is not more conscious of God. He may want to cry out like the saints in Revelation, "How long, O Lord, holy and true?" But, if

he becomes quiet, he will hear a voice telling him, as it told them, that he "should rest yet for a little season."

Nobody knows when Christ will appear in consciousness. "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." It is not for us "to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power"; but it is for us to look to God and to wait upon Him. At times it may seem that we are making no progress, but this is our testing. This is the time that proves that we are the good seed that brings forth increase, "some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred."

It is when the wait seems long that it is the time to watch, for to all the promise is: "Behold, I come quickly."

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SPIRITICITY January 1954

GOODNESS

By Alden Truesdell

"The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord," declares the Psalmist. And Paul lists Goodness as one of the fruits of the Spirit, adding, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also Walk in (the consciousness of) the Spirit."

The Goodness of God is omnipresent; in It "we live, and move, and have our being." Nevertheless there is in mankind a perversity, a tendency to renege in making the acceptable plays in the game of life. This perversity is known by many names, including "Satan" and "the son of perdition."

We remember how this perversity tried to get Jesus to use His powers for making bread out of stones, for self-exaltation, and pseudo-worship; and how Jesus told it to get behind Him. The son of perdition thrives on attention and grows with opposition. The reverse is also true. If the lie is rejected in favor of Truth it dies of its own nothingness.

When Jesus was in the wilderness being tempted of the devil, He went into no long tirade. He was quite polite to the devil. He agreed with His adversary without accepting his directives. He said, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." He said, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." And finally He said simply, "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

Here is a pattern for the critical decisions that occur in the life of every man, and here is the basis for the profitable way of life. At some time or other, each one will have the opportunity to make his decision regarding the fundamental ways of life. To everyone the offer will be made: "I have set before you life and death: . . . therefore choose life."

Everyone has to choose between "the works of the flesh" and "the fruit of the Spirit." We are all somewhat familiar with the results of the popular choice even though few of us have actually experienced "the depths of Satan." This popular choice, of Satan choice, has a way of presenting its benefits so attractively that anyone seems naive to neglect the splendid opportunities. On

the other hand, the choice of the Spirit seems almost to require apology. This is because the fruit of the Spirit is not spectacular, getting none of the headlines and comparatively little publicity. The big, black letters across page one of our newspapers proclaim many reactions on the part of man to Satan's blandishments, but we seldom see in headlines where the angels of the Lord have come and ministered to man. In other words, it is difficult to sell a bill of goods unless they can be displayed, and the fruit of the Spirit is unpretentious.

Not only are the gifts of the Spirit unassuming; Spirit Itself is even more so. "No man hath seen God at any time," John declares. Since this is true, any seeker of God must seek Him sight unseen. This would discourage most seekers, were it not for the fact that man soon tires of that with which he is familiar, both the gadgets of man himself and the machinations of the devil. Man is an explorer, who will tire of Satan in due season as a child tires of his toys, and he will be found seeking adventure and succumbing to the lure of the unknown. Man, however, has explored the world and investigated the realm of mind. Now, as he seeks new fields, he must turn toward Spirit; and in so turning, he will order the devil to get behind him.

The last frontier is in the spiritual nature of man; the greatest adventure, in the hidden treasure hunt within this nature. As man's soul and spirit are unfolded and revealed, he will find himself as eager for new spiritual revelations as are the explorers eager for new lands to discover. He will find that only the infinite Goodness of God can satisfy his inner hunger. With Zephaniah, he will cry out, "How great is his beauty!" In fact, when he tries to describe his discoveries, he will feel an acute inadequacy of language. Even the most mystical phrases -- even the unlawful, indescribable, unfathomable, wordless expressions will seem banal and inadequate to describe the Goodness revealed.

Without freedom, the greatest gifts are of little value, but only in God is there perfect freedom. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Just as the Polish pilot, who flew his plane from behind the Red lines to neutral territory, found freedom from the terrors of totalitarianism in the asylum of democracy, so anyone who turns from the world to seek the Goodness of God "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

Man's insatiable desire for the best, his pursuit of perfection, is God's greatest drawing power. As Jesus Christ said, "There is none good but one, that is, God"; and man's desire for goodness must eventually lead him to God. Here he will find that God's Goodness is so comprehensive as to make the entire realm of the unknown amenable and beneficial. Here he will find satisfaction.

"Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness."

Alphabet Of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day Of The Month

JANUARY 1954

1. By the grace of God I AM what I AM.
2. BE BLAMELESS, as the steward of God.
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4. He CARETH for you.
5. The heavens DECLARE the glory of the Lord.
6. He may EXALT you in due time.
7. Hold fast the FAITHFUL word.
8. GOD GIVETH GRACE to the humble.
9. HUMBLE yourselves therefore under the mighty HAND of God.
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11. The Lord is the portion of my INHERITANCE.
12. The JUDGMENTS of the Lord are true.
13. God is of great KINDNESS.
14. Be a LOVER of hospitality.
15. Show Thy MARVELOUS lovingkindness.
16. God shall supply all your NEED.
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18. Be not righteous OVERMUCH.
19. PRAISE Him for the help of His countenance.
20. QUENCH not the Spirit.
21. The statutes of the Lord are RIGHT, REJOICING the heart.
22. The testimony of the Lord is SURE.
23. I will give THANKS unto THEE, O Lord.
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25. I shall be UPRIGHT.
26. He heard my VOICE out of His temple.
27. I will call upon the Lord, WHO is WORTHY to be praised.
28. I shall YET praise Him.
29. Where is thy ZEAL?
30. Gird up the loins of your mind.

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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.