

THE FOOLISHNESS OF GOD

By Robert Applegate, Jr.

"THE FOOLISHNESS of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men. . . . Let no one deceive himself. If anyone seems to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."

The paradoxes of Paul's Letter to the Corinthians are so clearly true in the light of history that it is amazing that we can still overlook them. As Arnold Toynbee writes, "A study of history reveals in every act and scene of the play the truth that '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.'" Yet egoism and intellectual pride are so ingrained in our makeup that we will do anything rather than admit that of ourselves we know nothing and can do nothing. The Athenians murdered Socrates for showing them that their pretended knowledge was illusion. So would men today, if they could do it, kill anyone who similarly showed them up. Yet these paradoxes are true, and the lesson is for us, if we will accept it. "If anyone thinks that he knows anything, he does not yet know as he ought to know; but if anyone loves God, he is known by God."

"Where is the wise man?" Paul asks, "where is the scholar? where is the debater of this world? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For when (according to the Wisdom of God) the world did not know God through its own cleverness it pleased God through the foolishness of the Message to deliver those who believe."

The brilliance of the Greeks and the organizational genius of the Romans could not save them. When in the Fifteenth Century men began to rediscover the artistic and literary achievements of the Greeks, they were amazed; they have been amazed ever since. The Greeks invented every literary form we use today; they laid the basis of every science. They invented mathematics, history, biology, geology, and physics. They invented philosophy, drama, the dialogue, the short story, the novel. They invented democracy, and made it work for awhile. They produced works of art that have never been surpassed and that we can only stand in awe of. But did this intellectual brilliance save them? They killed the one man who tried to show them that it could not do so, that there is a higher knowledge without which all other knowledge is useless. The Athenians killed Socrates through a judicial murder, and that was the beginning of their downfall. But the teaching of Socrates lived on; it is still alive today.

The Romans conquered the Greeks as well as all their other neighbors. They organized their vast empire and ruled it for centuries with amazing justice and efficiency. They established the Roman peace, for which war-weary men could not thank them enough. Nations recently conquered were effusive in their praise of Rome for the peace that Rome gave. And we still feel the effects of the Roman law and the Roman roads. For our Constitution was greatly influenced by the Greek Polybius' account of the Roman system of checks and balances. And every modern railroad carriage has the same width between the wheels as the old Roman chariot, because in England the first rails were laid on the old Roman roads, which were the best roadbeds available.

The Greeks could not save themselves and the Romans could not save themselves, because they had become infatuated with their own handiwork, their own collective power (of which Caesar was the symbol). So they could not turn and wholeheartedly acknowledge a higher Source of guidance and protection. They perished, is and (again in Toynbee's words) "This lesson is written in the pages of history because it lies at the heart of life." The world through its supposed cleverness did not know God. It thought it could make gods to suit itself and in this it deceived itself. The first command is still "Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: and 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."

"We proclaim Christ crucified - to the religionists an offence, to the nations foolishness; but to those that are called, both religionists and intellectuals, Christ the Power of God and Christ the Wisdom of God, because the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

The foolishness of God that is wiser than men is the acceptance of Christ as the Power of God and the Wisdom of God operative in us and in all our affairs. It sounds like foolishness to those whose attention has been turned outward; yet it has been proved over and over again.

This is what Paul calls "the mystery that has been hidden from ages and from generations, but is now revealed to His dedicated ones, to whom God wished to make known the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you."

"Do you not know," he says, "that Jesus Christ is in you?"

In this indwelling Christ, he says, "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"; in it "dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

The acceptance of this is truly the foolishness of God that is wiser than men and the weakness of God that is stronger than men. The "practical" man says that this is not practical; so he continues to go through his futile motions and goes to his reward. He salves his ego by thinking he is doing something, but his works come to nothing. So God has made foolish the wisdom of this world.

Antony of Alexandria (later St. Antony) was an "impractical" man. He gave away a good inheritance and gave himself to seeking God. He gave up everything and went away into the desert by himself. And ever since then, to the present day, men have been attacking him or seeking to defend him. He needs no defence, and it is folly to attack him. "By their fruits you shall know them." Antony went into the desert to get away from men and to be with God. But "a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." Men followed him; they risked their lives (and sometimes lost them) to do so. They come to him for healing; they came to him for advice; they came to him for teaching. They took the door off his fortress and made him come out to teach them. They built huts around him, so they could stay near him. And when he moved off further into the desert, they followed him there.

Antony lived a hundred and five years in peace and serenity and the consciousness of God, and he went to join the angels. Bishop Athanasius, who was perhaps the greatest mind of his age, wrote the biography of Antony at the request of those who wanted to know about him. And this work was translated and read and studied and loved for centuries when there was little else for men to hold onto. Antony was a light to the Dark Ages.

Yet men still continue to attack him and his followers. They say these men should have gone into politics to save the tottering Roman state. Neither they nor anyone else could stop the dissolution of the Roman Empire. But without seeking to do so, they founded something that took its place: the Monastic Movement that for centuries was the source of light and security and hope for Medieval Europe. It was from this movement, started by Antony, that our own civilization evolved. "By their fruits you shall know them."

What then to do? "Honour those who labour among you in the Lord," said Paul. If we cannot be an Antony and give up everything for Christ, the next best thing we can do is to honor those who have done it. "Give, and it shall be given unto you," said Jesus. This is one law that never fails. If you want something more, see what more you can give.

Of the Jerusalem church Paul said, "If the nations have shared in their spiritual riches, they ought to serve them with their material riches."

And to the Corinthians he put it plainly (quoting in part from Proverbs): "He who sows sparingly will reap sparingly; he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Let each one do as he has decided beforehand in his heart - not with regret and not under compulsion; for the Lord loves a willing giver. And God can make all goodness overflow to you, so that you may have all-- sufficiency for all things and have enough over for every good work."

"He that boasts, let him boast of the Lord."

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SPIRITICITY January 1961

HOPE THOU IN GOD

By Alden Truesdell

A GOOD time to practice a principle is when we have a problem; they that are whole have no need of a physician.

We are all familiar with the urge to tell our troubles; we are all familiar with the troubled soul indulging that urge. This is a disability worthy of diagnosis and prescription. And we find the Psalmist setting forth the proper treatment:

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
and why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope thou in God."

This is the command of one who knew that man should be master of his soul, rather than its slave.

It is in the outer soul of man that the grumbling, groaning, and griping take and hold the stage. There is often a sinking feeling in this outer soul, which enjoys disquietude, much as an invalid enjoys, poor health - as Adolph Menjou, when he was hospitalized, claimed he had "the greatest pain known to medical science."

When we set out to correct these chronic habits of negation, we must be positive; we must not have sympathy with the negation. So the command is issued to the soul: "Hope thou in God." The Psalmist goes on to explain: "For I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

Having to wrestle with negation is a situation familiar to those who aspire to practice the Way of Truth. How many times, through prayer and affirmation, we have reached a high consciousness only to find something dragging its feet in the inner nature! This is equivalent to a good government's maintaining a positive and constructive policy, only to have subversives attempt to tear down that which has been laboriously built up.

If a major development is taking place in the spiritual ongoing of a man, there will frequently be this reaction within. We are reminded of Jesus' having a similar experience shortly before His greatest achievement: the overcoming of death and the Resurrection into Eternal Life. This experience took place when Jesus was trying to prepare the disciples for what was to come, explaining that the Shepherd would be smitten and the sheep scattered. "But after that I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee," He said. It was after this preview of tremendous events that Jesus, experiencing the reaction, said: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here and watch with me."

These trying times, when souls seem to be in ferment, are the tempering periods for the transmuting of mortal into immortal. Here is the purging out of gross materials, the non-essentials in spiritual ongoing. We can see how an adequate hope is essential to keep a man attuned to Principle during such times as these.

Here we find Jesus praying: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

As in all life's developments, Jesus gives us the perfect formula: Relieve us if possible, Father; if this is not possible, let Your Will be done - let this be done Your Way.

Our problem may not be as world-shaking as was the Crucifixion of Jesus, but it is important to us. And if properly solved, it will open the way for us to receive the full benefit of what He did.

Here is the formula: when you are in travail, let the Will of God be done. Acceptance of His Will has been the turning point in the lives of many great men.

The low-pressure periods of life must be considered in respect to the topic of hope; for if everything were ideal, there would be nothing more to hope for. But it is also true that out of the low periods comes the greater good.

The first thing that a healer tries to do with a patient is to encourage a hope - some sort of belief that the curative power is at hand and will respond. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." So we find the patient bringing his desire for health into conjunction with the assurance of its accomplishment. His anticipation turns into hope, his belief matures into faith - and the miracle is well on its way.

Because of the changes taking place in self and circumstance as one is exposed to Truth, there is a tendency to consider Truth practice as a sort of

legerdemain. A person asks for help, direct from God or by way of a practitioner; in time the feelings change from negative to positive, spirits are lifted, health improves, and circumstances change for the better. The person may think some sort of magic, some secret abracadabra, has been set into motion to get such results. There is a mystical word that does the work, but the reason it is secret is that few take time to become acquainted with it, so that they may use it. Few are willing to prove it.

Healing deals with an illusion; but the illusion is in the disease and the negative emotions that caused it, rather than in the positive release of healing energies that appears as health. The cure depends on the patient's willingness to transfer his attention from the negation that is causing his disease to the positive Reality that the healer, by his faithfulness to the Truth, is exposing to the patient's view.

As a magician proves that the hand is quicker than the eye by making a rabbit appear from nowhere, so the practitioner proves that Reality is stronger than the illusion by summoning health from its apparent absence. In either case, the object appearing was there all the time. Both the rabbit and the health were waiting to be brought forth by him who knew the technique.

None of the adepts in any field does anything of himself; no one has made a law except the Lord. But whatever any man gives his attention to exposes its laws to him. He then has the privilege of applying his knowledge of those laws and seeing them work.

Just as the master mathematician has given deep study to the principles of mathematics to discover how they work, so does the spiritual practitioner study the One Creative Law back of all visible things. The mathematician did not create the laws of mathematics; he is an observer, a researcher, an experimenter. So it is with him who aspires to the spiritual proficiency. He works to prove a premise before he teaches it, and in so doing, he does nothing but conform to the working principles that have been established from the beginning.

All of us are - or should be - observers - witnesses. Our art of observation teaches us how God works. The promises of Scripture are statements of what happens to those who keep His laws.

The first law of Spirit is "Hope thou in God." If we maintain this hope, and rejoice in the prospect of its fulfillment, we shall "see greater things than these."

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him: for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him (God) purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

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SPIRITICITY January 1961

BRING THEM HITHER TO ME

By Nell Truesdell

WHEN JESUS was confronted with the need to feed 5,000 people who had been with Him all day, He disregarded His disciples' suggestion that He dismiss the crowd so that they might go home to eat. Instead, Jesus calmly said, "They need not depart: give ye them to eat." When the men anxiously reported that all that was on hand was a boy's lunch of five small loaves and two fish, Jesus, untroubled, said, "Bring them hither to Me."

The boy's heart must have leaped with joy; perhaps he thought that the Teacher Himself would eat the lunch. We do not know. But we do know that, without seeming to notice the limited supply, Jesus looked up, blessed, and broke the bread and fish. He gave pieces to the disciples, who in turn, passed the food to the multitude until all had eaten. Then, how astonished they all must have been to find that there were twelve baskets of fragments left!

"Bring them hither to Me." Can you hear those gracious words being spoken in your heart when, fearful of rejection, you offer God your meager supply of talents, your limited capacity to carry out His Will, your uneasy hope to please Him?

Whatever you have to offer, give it generously, without thought of reward. Listen for the words: "Bring them hither to Me." See what might happen.

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SPIRITICITY, January 1961

FOR BEGINNERS

Q. When I look up, how high do I gaze overhead?

A. You look in to look up. Your heart center is where you meet God knowingly. Jesus Christ said that the Kingdom of God is within you. This "within" is the Sanctuary in your midst where you and God meet together, when you give your attention to Him there, wait on, and worship Him in holiness. This "within" is not a physical point, but we use the term heart center to give you a point in consciousness toward which you may train yourself to look. When you achieve this you will then know how to look up from within.

With practice you can learn to "close the door" of your intellect and to enter the closet in your midst. Here you may touch your Christhood, through which you may come to know that you are a son of God, created in His Image and Likeness.

Q. Will you please explain in simple terms what Jesus meant when He said, "God is Spirit"?

A. Think of biscuits. The substance of biscuits is flour, baking powder, salt, shortening, and milk. Think of man. The Substance of man is the spiritual Essences (Life, Love, Intelligence, Power, etc.) out of which

man is created by God. These Essences, rooted in God and used by Him to quicken and make substantial His highest creation (man), are never subtracted from God but eternally remain in Him. They are Spirit, the Substance, of God. God is Spirit.

Q. How can I forgive a person who has hurt me?

A. If you carry your heart on your sleeve, it will be scratched as you walk the crowded path of human existence. Your heart symbolizes you feeling nature, the part of you that is affected by the words and actions of others, when your attention is off center. Learn to expose this receptive and sensitive area to God in your midst by paying more attention to Him; He will protect, strengthen, and enlighten you as you walk among people.

If your overcoat were splashed and soiled you would take it to a cleaner. Take your feelings to the Divine Cleaner for renovation. Remember how wonderful He is, how well He treats you. Drum up an overwhelming love for Him in your heart so that, as you walk among people, that love will spill over to them. You will discover how dry and parched they are and how much they need your sweet word, kind touch, and earnest prayer. Remember that when you are looking at people you are looking at you. As you keep your attention centered on God and as you begin and continue to bless and help others you will be so busy that you will not be aware of any but good words and acts toward you.

The overcoat-self, the outer area of you, feels hurt. But you are not that exposed fraction of being. Say: "I am not misjudged, nor do I misjudge others. God is my Supreme Arbiter and I rest all judgment in the Divine Law of Justice."

Alphabet Of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day Of The Month

JANUARY 1961

2. Peace be unto ALL that thou hast.
3. Hallowed (is) this house which Thou hast BUILT.
4. The Lord lift up His COUNTENANCE upon thee.
5. DISCRETION shall preserve thee.
6. EXCEPT a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom.
7. FOLLOW righteousness.

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9. The Lord GIVE thee peace.
10. The HARVEST truly is plenteous.
11. Unto the King Eternal, IMMORTAL, INVISIBLE, . . . be honour.
12. Be perfectly JOINED together in the same mind.
13. He that KNOWETH God, heareth us.
14. Thy Word is a LAMP unto my feet.

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16. MY MEAT is to do the Will of Him that sent me.
17. Let My NAME be NAMED on them.
18. I spake OPENLY to the world.
19. We are His PEOPLE, and the sheep of His PASTURE.
20. Avoid foolish QUESTIONS, . . . and strivings about the law.
21. All should come to REPENTANCE.

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23. The SERVANT of the Lord must not STRIVE.
24. TAKE no THOUGHT for your life.
25. UNDERNEATH are the Everlasting Arms.
26. Lift up thy VOICE with strength.
27. Peace be WITHIN thee.
28. YIELD YOURSELVES unto the Lord.

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30. Have a Zeal for God.
31. We are all the children of God.

"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.