

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS

By Robert Applegate Jr.

(Continued from last month)

YOU ARE without excuse, O man, whoever you are who judge; for wherein you judge another, you condemn yourself, for you who judge do the same things.

We know that the Judgment of God is rightly against those who do such things. And do you think, O, man, you who do these things and condemn them that do them, that you will escape the Judgment of God? Do you despise the wealth of His Goodness and Patience and Endurance? Do you not know that the Goodness of God should lead you to turn about?

With your hard and unrepentant heart, you lay up for yourself wrath on the day when the Judgment of God shall be uncovered. He shall give to everyone according to his work. To them who through endurance in rectitude seek glory and honor and immortality, He will give Eternal Life. For them who because of ambition and self-seeking disregard the Truth and are unscrupulous, there will be Wrath.

There will be vexation and lack for everyone that transgresses - the religious first and also the intellectual. There will be glory and honor and peace for everyone of integrity - the religious first and also the intellectual - for there is no respect of persons with God. . . .

Do we religionists have any advantage? Not at all. For I have already said that all - both the churchy and the intellectuals - are in error, as it is written: "There is no one that is good; there is no one that understands; there is no one that seeks God. They have all departed from the Way; they have all become useless. There is none that does good - not even one. Their mouth is an open grave; they deceive with their tongues; the poison of snakes is under their lips; their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; they leave destruction and wretchedness in their wake; they have not known the Way of Peace. THERE IS NO REVERENCE FOR GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES."

This does not sound like the sweetness and light, the social do-gooding, the psychological jargon that are so often peddled in place of the Gospel today. Paul is telling men as clearly and as forcibly as he can that without God - not without religion, but without God - they have no hope. His words were true when he wrote them; they are equally true now. Let us consider them in order.

Vituperation, denigration, and slander are among our favorite indulgences today. Everyone's motives are suspect; everyone is guilty until proved innocent. It is very sobering to realize that whenever we condemn anyone, we are declaring that we either have done or would like to do the thing that we are condemning. But if we honestly look into our own hearts we find that this is true; and as Paul says, we are without excuse.

The "Judgment of God," like the "Wrath of God," is not a quality of a God who thinks and emotes like a man. It is not His anger. It is the automatic, inescapable outworking of the Law. And Paul's words are an attempt to convey to people who had no other vocabulary what we would express today in terms of cause and effect. It is precisely because the universe is run by Law that the

"Judgment of God" is inescapable. No one can escape this Law any more than he can escape the law of gravity or the laws of thermodynamics.

Our Victorian forebears came down hard on the Severeness and Anger of God. Their fulminations were not only obviously wrong, but also destructive of any honest reverence for God. In compensation, we have gone to the other extreme. We regard God - if we regard Him at all - as an indulgent, permissive parent who will let us get away with anything. This also is wrong. God is Infinite Goodness, but He will not force Himself upon us. If we do not have the sense to value that Goodness, we are at perfect liberty to cut ourselves off from it. There will be - there always is - vexation and dissatisfaction for those who because of personal ambition deny the truth of their entire dependence on their Creator. This play has been acted out so often that it should be the most obvious datum of experience, but we choose to go on ignoring it. The Goodness that is God is the only thing worth seeking, for it is the only thing that will satisfy. They that by their lives deny God hurt themselves. They that center their lives about reverence for their Creator find peace, honor, and eternal life.

There is abroad today a feeling that it does not make any difference where you go to worship, so long as you go somewhere. The unspoken presupposition behind this attitude is that God does not really exist (or else He is pretty remote), but that churchiness is a good thing because it makes us feel better, and maybe act better. "If I or an angel from heaven preach unto you any other gospel than the Gospel I preached unto you, let him be accursed," Paul wrote to the Galatians. It makes all the difference in the world what we believe about God. It makes all the difference in the world whether we recognize those who are honestly, sincerely teaching the Truth of God, without fear or compromise.

The churchy person has no advantage over the unchurched. The Law will Judge him more harshly for his lack of honest reverence for his Creator, because of his pretense. "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, we see; therefore your sin remaineth," Jesus Christ said.

Paul's long quotation is made up of pieces from Psalms and Isaiah. The words are not overly pretty, but do they not fit our day, as they did Paul's day? I have put the last sentence in capitals, because, for Paul, it explains the cause of all that precedes. As he said earlier, "When men knew God, they did not reverence Him as God and were not thankful. . . . Therefore their foolish hearts were darkened." Man's moral turpitude is the result of his lack of reverence (which amounts to self-worship). This is why all the social and political reforms of the do-gooders do no permanent good: they deal with symptoms, not with causes.

The overriding problem of our time is not juvenile delinquency, or moral decay, or communism, or even international tension and the threat of self-annihilation. The overriding problem, the original disease, of our time is lack of reverence for our Creator, from which all these other problems have arisen.

The similarity of the present age to the First Century A.D., when Paul wrote his letters, is striking. There is the same decay of ethical standards; there is the same search for a workable philosophy to get one through the problems of everyday life; there is the same cynicism; there is the same superficial intellectual brilliance; there is the same thirst for entertainment; there is the same "vulgarization and barbarization" in art and literature, in dress and manners; there is the same lack of discipline with the same muddle-headed philanthropy; there is the same insane search for status; there is the same looking back on the part of many to the good old days; there is the same

thirst for something to give true satisfaction; there is the same plethora of new religious bodies claiming to have the solution to this thirst; there is the same religious complacency of those who cannot, or will not, see the sickness of the times, in which they are involved as parts of the whole.

To those who say that these attitudes have always been with us, the answer is No; they have been with us at certain periods, and those periods have been the times preceding the collapse of the social structure that had seemed so permanent and reliable. To Saint Jerome, who should have expected it, the news of the collapse of the "eternal city" of Rome before the invading Goths came as a stunning blow - he couldn't believe it. Yet the handwriting had been on the wall for centuries. "Can you not see the signs of the times?" Jesus cried out.

If Paul's analysis of the sickness of his age, and of ours, is right - and all the evidence says that it is - then it is time for us to turn back not to religion, not to organized institutions, but to God, to our Creator. Those who do so are "the light of the world" - even though they may be despised during their lifetime, as was the case with Paul.

In the rest of his letter Paul will tell us how to make this all-important turn and will again emphasize how essential it is. Why else did he give his life to proclaiming it?

(To be continued)

SPIRITICITY July 1961

WITHOUT CARE

By Alden Truesdell

"HUMBLE YOURSELVES therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you."

God has been running His universe for longer than man can remember, seldom asking for advice from even the wisest of men.

Those who have loved God have anticipated a betterment of being. They have received even more than they had expected. Those who have been otherwise-minded have found the world putting up a struggle before yielding the same benefit as is freely given to the cooperator with Christ. The unbelievers judge themselves and pronounce sentence upon themselves.

We remember Jesus' being tempted in the wilderness with the urge to use His powers of Sonship to assuage His hunger by commanding the stones to become bread. We remember how He rejected this solution by saying, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Food is not enough. The spiritual aspiration requires much more than a satisfied appetite. It hungers and thirsts after fullness: after life, strength, protection, love, joy, peace. Any one of the gifts is not enough, if we are to show forth the full promise of the man of Spirit.

There does not seem to be any stopping point. Indeed if man is to express the image and likeness of God, there can be no stopping place short of the expression of the "fullness of the Godhead bodily." This has been called "the exhibit of Jesus."

It is certain that if anyone chooses this as his goal, if he relies on his own personal mental and emotional talents, he will fall far short of his goal. He can strain every ounce of energy, rack his brain, and belabor his muscles; it will not be enough. He will need help. He will need divine help - the help of God. This is what he is urged to seek; This is what he is invited to accept.

Instead of demanding impossible tasks from limited equipment, man is advised to turn in his do-it-yourself kit to the Artisan of the universe, whose business it is to do easily those things that are impossible to man. If a man aspires to do these things that are ordinarily impossible he must let God do the work.

How much then is this man responsible for the successful culmination of his project? Is it not taken out of his hands as he becomes a cooperator rather than an originator?

It was in this manner that Jesus performed His miracles of healing, His blessings of bounty, His expounding of His Way of Life. He accomplished all of this by His ability to let God work through Him.

Just about every miracle imaginable has been attributed to Jesus Christ. One account says that if all of His exploits could be written, the world itself would not contain the books. But as far as Jesus was concerned, the magnitude of the work made no difference. If one miracle could be accomplished, a million miracles could be accomplished as easily. For if some Supernatural Agency is doing the work anyhow, it does not make much difference how much work is done.

So it is with our learning of this Way and turning to this Way. We are not responsible for the patient, the cure, the miracle. All we are responsible for is our cooperation with God through our Christhood. The Holy Spirit which does the work is subject to no pressure group, no ecclesiastical lobby. It is non-denominational; it is inter-denominational; it is omni-denominational.

With the Almighty Spirit working for man, why should he be anxious about high matters pertaining to God, or about the smallest detail of daily living? He is urged to let the Holy Spirit be his servant in all things. This does not mean that man is to be lazy or negligent, but that he is to be concerned for nothing. He is not to be careless, but carefree.

It is good for a man to keep on doing what he has learned to do in the most capable manner he knows. But as, in his development of his present efficiency, he has learned better and better ways with practice, so there are even better ways of achievement.

It is good now and again to take account of what may be expected from the practice of this more excellent way we have chosen. What can we expect from the laying down of a limited method of getting limited results for the taking hold of limitless methods of attaining unlimited effects?

We see in this that our problem is to so prepare ourselves as to be able to conceive the greater possibilities of Christhood.

Man is to join Jesus in His attainment and eternal prolongation of being one with God. Of this He said: "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him. . . . Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."

With everything in heaven and on earth biased in man's favor, with nothing less to anticipate than the coming into consciousness of God and His only begotten Son, man should indeed be carefree - if he does not become careless. With all the life, strength, protection, and provision in the universe at his service, so long as he behaves himself and, shall we say, tries to please God, he does indeed seem to have it made, he is indeed of all creatures most fortunate. He is anxious for nothing; he gives thanks for all things.

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SHORT LESSONS
By Nell Truesdell

A NEWLY adopted five-year-old Korean boy clung desperately to his American father's hand as he was gently led into kindergarten. Until he had been adopted he had known only fear, famine, violence, and loss. Now he faced one more terrifying experience; for change had meant only hardship to him.

Like this orphan, we who face the Unknown outworkings of the principles of Christ Truth in our lives are often filled with misgivings. We are not yet fully established in a new and untried way of life. However, now that we have a new realization of our Heavenly Father's love and care, and are learning to invoke the changeless principles that govern His Realm, we are confident that everything that happens to us is for our highest good and most profit. We cannot see around corners, but Principle can. Like the little boy, we must cling to our Father's hand, trust Him, and be obedient to His leadings. Though at first the new ways of Truth are strange and somewhat awesome, now that we have been "adopted," we must be willing to adapt ourselves to a better way of life.

"He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust: His truth shall be thy shield and buckler." (Psalm 91:4)

Affirm: I TRUST GOD
I AM WISE WITH THE WISDOM OF GOD-MIND

Do you expend your funds and your energies on gadgets? Your desire for something may result from the cunningly hidden persuasions of highly paid advertisers. Many a man has bought an expensive tool only to find that it has little value. Many a woman has demanded a bigger house only to discover that the burden in upkeep drains her of beauty and good nature. Many a college boy supports a jalopy by working every spare hour, instead of concentrating on the studies that will forward his career later on. Many a girl fritters away her allowance on trivialities.

"Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding." (Proverbs 23:23)

Who will buy the Truth? It is costly, for it demands a dedicated heart and hand. Yet its eternal rewards are as nourishing as honey and as satisfying as peace. You who read SPIRITICITY have already made your down payment on the Truth that increases in worth as you possess its spiritual values. Set yourself

to gain the Truth. Then share your spiritual benefits with those around you who may not have awakened to their spiritual heritage. Give yourself, with the abandon of a child, to God whom Jesus Christ addressed as "Our Father." He will give you His love, wisdom, instruction, and substance.

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God." (James 1:5)

THANK YOU, FATHER

WHAT IS your first thought when you awake from sleep? Many persons wake up grouchy and face the day with discontent in their hearts. Their habit has become so well established that they are hardly conscious of it. Use the statement, "Thank you, Father," for a few mornings. You need not have some specific thing in mind to feel thankful about. Just remember God and say the words.

Throughout the day keep the words going in your mind. Vivify them with genuine gratitude, if possible. If it is impossible for you to feel thankful, just speak the words. Try this as an experiment. There is magic in the words; so do not raise a shield of doubt and skepticism. If you do, the unsuspected good set in motion by your saying the words will be deflected.

Thoughts and words are like the fork and knife you use at table. They do not provide the food you eat. They are instruments by which you feed yourself. Just as you use a knife to cut food and a fork to convey it to your mouth, so you feed spiritual Substance into your consciousness by means of thoughts and words. Therefore, by gratitude, provide your thoughts with substantial good with which to nourish your consciousness. Learn to let your thoughts and words flow from a grateful heart; soon you will have much for which to be thankful.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." (Proverbs 4:23)

GOD IS PROSPERITY

WHEN WE pray to God for something, our prayer is an echo of the thing itself moving toward us. Its push stimulates our sense of want. The process is similar to that of our feeling hungry after we smell unseen food.

God's promises of bountiful supply are familiar to us. We must understand the underlying principle in them: that man is to magnify God, not his own sense of need. All too frequently man frustrates the outworking of supply by telling God exactly how he wants the supply to be made manifest. Too, he prays for what he feels he does not have, and his feeling of emptiness reproduces itself.

The object of prayer is that man accept the opportunity to set his attention on God to the exclusion of all else. The Divine Presence is always with man, but when man's attention is fixed on the things he wants, he is not conscious of that Presence. He does not then pray to God; he prays to images of things he thinks he lacks. All this is changed when a person realizes that God will satisfy all his desires if he will steadfastly keep his attention on God. We are admonished to worship the Lord our God, and Him only.

"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." (Zephaniah 3:17)

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Alphabet of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day of the Month

JULY 1961

1. ACQUAINT now thyself with Him and be at peace.
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3. Come BEFORE His Presence with thanksgiving.
4. Seek His Face CONTINUALLY.
5. God is MY DEFENSE.
6. EVERY man . . . should ENJOY the good of his labour.
7. He FILLETH the hungry with goodness.
8. It is GOD that GIRDETH me with strength.
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10. All men should HONOUR the Son.
11. I know Whom I have believed.
12. By thy words, shalt thou be JUSTIFIED.
13. We KNOW that the Son of God has come.
14. LABOR not for the meat which perisheth.
15. MAKETH MY way perfect.
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17. Hold fast My NAME.
18. ONLY believe.
19. Thou wilt show me the PATH of Life.
20. Make me of QUICK understanding.
21. I have hid Thy RIGHTEOUSNESS within my heart.
22. God is my STRENGTH.
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24. Blessed is the man that TRUSTETH in the Lord.
25. The highway of the UPRIGHT is to depart from evil.
26. Pay thy VOWS unto the Most High.
27. WALK in the Spirit.
28. Thy YEARS shall have no end.
29. Be ZEALOUS therefore and repent.
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31. With God nothing is impossible.

"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.