

THE GOOD FIGHT

By Alden Truesdell

WE BELIEVE that worship of God is good. We believe that understanding of God is the object of worship. We do not believe in, or encourage, religiosity or churchianity; but we do recommend pure religion, which is worship of God with no sectarian or denominational restrictions. We do not believe that God can be patented, copyrighted, or confined to any closed circuit; but we do respect whatever anyone has learned that has caused him to turn to Christ Truth,

The prophet Habakkuk received the instruction: "Write the vision; make it plain upon tablets, that he may run that readeth it." This implies the ability of Truth to make Itself known to those who do not find time for theological study and the orthodox approach to the things of the Spirit. The two requirements seem to be the desire to know and perseverance in seeking.

"Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets," Jesus said to Peter and his companions. They had been casting out and pulling in nets all night, and they were weary and discouraged. But because of their faith in Jesus Christ, they cast out again. "And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes."

This principle of making the extra cast of the net, of walking the extra mile, of ignoring all former failures and trying again in the spirit of desperation - this lesson was taught to Robert Bruce by a spider which would not be defeated in the building of her web; and this unknown spider became inspiration for the well-known slogan: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

Paul (who spent much time in the Greek cities, where athletic contests were frequently held) often compares ongoing in Truth to the running of a race or the fighting of a fight. So to the Corinthians he wrote:

"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible."

If athletes are willing to practice rigorous training exercises, temperate habits, and sensible diets in order to win a wreath or a cup or a citation, how much more willingly should we practice the moderation and integrities which will gain for us the permanent prize of immortality, the "inheritance incorruptible"? Paul emphasizes this by the following verse:

"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air."

Paul reminds us that whether we think of our object as the goal of a race or as the winning of a fight it is worthy of all effort. So the writer of Hebrews says, after cataloguing the heroes of old who through their faith had "obtained a good report":

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

We should run with endurance and keep on as though we were going to win. During the war, the Army Air Force had the slogan: "The difficult we do immediately. The impossible takes a little longer." So in this race, we endure "as beholding the invisible," and we expect the impossible.

Sometimes we are agreeably surprised, as we keep on in the way we have chosen, to find that prosperity has indeed been just around the corner, awaiting the extra surge of energy required to compass "that last long mile."

That very long mile, the four-minute mile, is an example of how concentrated attention of earnest runners, trainers, and spectators - hoping against hope - can actually change a way of believing and a way of thinking. From the earliest records of racing until the last few years, there had been some hope and a great deal of doubt about the ability of man to run a mile in four minutes. This mark had been set for generations of runners, and only during the past couple of years has it been attained - not by one runner, but by many. This is a triumph for persistence, patience, and practice.

But what had been keeping man from running a mile in four minutes? Only the belief that it could not be done. Man always had the capacity to do it, but he had been slowed down by his belief.

The fact of seeming miracles being performed by those engaged in the war effort shows how it is always the fullness of time for God when man's extremity is great enough and his dependence upon God great enough. Yet while we glibly repeat such statements as, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity," we are prone to resist the extremity that will give God His opportunity.

What if man could put aside all the weights with which he has been handicapped? Suppose he could be stripped of every thought of restriction, freed from his own partial knowing, his own limited willing, and his own restricted wanting. What would limit his achievement?

Perhaps Paul answers this question when he says that we shall all "come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Of himself, Paul could say:

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."

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SPIRITICITY, July 1962
PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS
By Robert Applegate, Jr.

(Continued from last month)

I HAVE SPENT more time on Paul's Letter to the Romans than I intended when I started this series of articles over a year ago. I have perhaps not omitted as much as I should have, for nearly all Paul's words have seemed worth

repeating. He was an intense man; he knew what he was talking about and he knew the value of it. I continually marvel at his wisdom and his courage.

I shall finish the letter in this article and then attempt to summarize it next month. In reading over the final part of the letter (which consists of final instructions, blessings, a discussion of Paul's plans, and some greetings to friends at Rome), I have the impression that Paul several times finished the latter and then thought of something more he wanted to say. As a result he produced a mélange of words with little connection between one thought and the next. I shall omit quite a bit.

ROMANS 15:1-16:20

WE WHO ARE strong in faith should bear the weakness of those who are weak, and not just serve ourselves. Each one must help his neighbor for the common good - for the building up of the body of believers. For Christ did not serve Himself - but as it is written:

"The condemnation of those who condemned you has fallen upon Me." (Psalm 69:9)

All that has been written in Scripture has been written for our instruction so that through our own endurance and through the encouragement of the Scripture we might have hope.

May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you, in the Name of Jesus Christ, to agree among yourselves, so that with one heart and one mouth you may praise God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Bear with one another, as the Christ bears with us, for the glory of God. . . .

May the God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace in your practice, so that you may be more than filled with expectation and with the power of the Holy Breath. . . .

I have written rather frankly to you in order to remind you (of what you already know). I have done this by the authority of the gift that has been given to me - that I should be the servant of Christ Jesus to the nations, that I should present to them the Good News, so that they might offer themselves as an acceptable offering, purified by the Holy Breath. I have this ground of boasting before God in Christ Jesus - for I will not dare to speak of anything except what Christ has worked through Me to persuade the nations. He has worked in me in word and action, in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Holy Breath, so that I have fully proclaimed the Good News, from Jerusalem clear around to Illyricum. I have worked where the Name of Christ had not been heard, so that I should not build on another man's foundation. . . .

And so I have wanted much to come to you. I now have nothing more to do here in Corinth, and I have longed for many years to come to you that I might go on to Spain. (I hope in passing through to see you and to be sped on my way by you, after I have in some measure fed you.)

But right now I am on my way to Jerusalem to serve the followers of Christ. For the Macedonians and Achaean have been pleased to make up a purse for the destitute followers in Jerusalem. They have been pleased to do this, and indeed it is a debt. For

if the nations have shared in the Jerusalemites' spiritual riches, they owe it to them to minister to them in material things. . . .

I urge you, brothers: Look out for those who create divisions among you and who put stumbling blocks in your way, contradicting the teaching that you have received. Keep away from them, for such men serve not our Lord Christ, but their own stomachs. Through their specious words and their smooth blessings they deceive the innocent. But your perseverance has been reported by all; in you I rejoice. I want you to be wise to the good and innocent of all evil.

May the God of Peace crush all adversity beneath your feet.
The Kindness of Our Lord Jesus be with you.

We need Paul's instruction to "bear with one another" and his prayer for our concord, for any animosity robs us of our power and our substance. Paul tells us to be magnanimous "for the glory of God." To most people today the phrase is meaningless; to Paul it was not. But just as parents tell their children that people will judge the parents by the way the children behave, and schools tell their students the same thing, so Paul tells us that men will judge God by the way those who profess to know Him conduct themselves. This is so and is perhaps why so few men today take God seriously.

There are as many today as there were when Paul wrote who profess to represent Christ, but truly serve their own stomachs.

Paul's words about the debt owed by those who receive spiritual instruction are universally true. It is a measure of his stature that he, who received little encouragement from Jerusalem, was willing to risk his life to carry an offering.

We do not know whether Paul ever reached Spain or not. It is not important, for today he speaks to the world.
(To be concluded)

SPIRITICITY, July 1962

MAN'S SEARCH FOR GOD

By Nell Truesdell

PAUL WROTE to the Corinthians, "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. . . . The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

(I Cor. 2:11, 14)

The natural man is the growing, learning man. He changes from day to day, from year to year. He understands other natural men, for he and they have common aims. Together they pursue similar goals in the world, and they obtain "practical" results from their efforts for which they feel justly proud. Because they are acquainted with the same things and work in the same way to carry through to successful ends the same enterprises, they have the same spirit. And that spirit in them knows "the things of a man."

Any child born in any given period in any community in the world goes through a growth and development (physical and mental) common to all children. From the day of his birth, the adults with whom a child is closely associated begin at once to force his attention outward toward the things of the world. Through a gradual awakening of his primary senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch) he becomes aware of his world and of himself in relation to it. As his impressions congeal, his personal will sets and tends to become inflexible concerning the things that appear. He believes that his world and all that is in it are the only reality. Consequently he has the spirit of the world.

A child at the beginning of his experience in the world is seldom encouraged to investigate his God-like Nature within. He is not taught to direct the attention of his mind (consciousness) inward toward his true Identity, the changeless One within. He is taught to direct his attention outward; consequently he gathers, and fills his consciousness with, knowledge of his world and of himself, as he understands himself. This knowledge envelopes him in a way that insulates him from the urge to search out the Source of his true Being.

One might ask, "Is not man taught about God through his religious connections?" Of course he is. We observe, however, that his attention is directed to his parents' and his church's idea of God. Such an idea based in human concepts of the Nature of God, His attributes, and His relations to man and the universe, is unreliable and often far from the Truth. People have failed to realize that what they report about God reflects their personal, limited opinions only, and is not the Truth of God.

Through the ages man has been taught that thinking is his most important activity. He is seldom warned about the pitfalls of thinking based upon false standards and foolish notions. As in the past, man continues to engage himself in this stimulating exercise of his mental, unmindful of the harvest he must eventually reap; for thought is formulative, and all that man experiences and possesses in body and affairs are the formulations (out-picturings) of his thought. Even his knowledge of God is nothing but formulated thought. Since, in his search for God, he has been directed far afield, his formulations are that God is a vindictive, cruel overlord who exacts punishment for sins. Man, bound within the limits of such false knowledge, worships that knowledge and subjects himself to a hard taskmaster. As long as man attributes to God human, personal motives, he will dwell in sorrow and darkness. As long as he tries to cram God into the limited measure of his personal misbelief, he will impress the oncoming generations with his misconceptions and set the pattern for them that he himself copied during the formative period in his own physical-mental development.

"The Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not," declared Jesus Christ. The Son of man is the Identity (Image) of God within that reveals Itself suddenly when man leaves off thinking about God and quietly waits on God at the center of his consciousness. "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty." So spoke Zephaniah hundreds of years before Jesus, who, in turn, announced, "The Kingdom of God is within you."

How does man get to the center of his consciousness to find God? and where is that center? Such questions demand answers; for he who is awakening spiritually perceives changes taking place in a definite manner in consciousness and he sets himself to gain sight and knowledge of Something previously unseen and unknown.

When an earnest student first approaches any subject, he is very quiet. Often the quiet is so intense that he is filled with awe. As man stands on the threshold of the Sanctuary in which he hopes to learn of the things of Spirit, he is gripped with expectant stillness. In that timeless state, his attention (the inner visional faculty) detaches itself from the tentacles of intellect (the region in the forehead where man does conscious thinking) and it drops gently, almost imperceptibly, to a place just back of his heart. In this secret place, this Holy of Holies, man meets with his God in reverence and adoration. This reversal of attention is the key to spiritual freedom. "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

The center of consciousness, "the closet," within which we are to pray to the Father in secret, is not a physical point in the flesh or a set of nerves. To pray "back of the heart" suggests that one leave the region of the front brain, where the tumult of intellectual doubt and questioning is never satisfied or stilled, and enter a place already prepared in consciousness, where one can commune with God in silence and repose. "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." In this Sanctuary, one waits on God. Prayer, here, is quiet expectancy (with good reasons) that God is nigh. "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth."

As one confidently waits, one feels the urge to look up from within, for the inner sight opens and the attention flies upward. One then realizes what is meant by the words: "The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath." "The highway of the upright is to depart from evil." "The prayer of the upright is His delight."

Man has not been told that he contains a faculty, or instrument, that transcends thinking, by which he may know the Truth without the need for thought. Attention always precedes thought; and it is man's greatest achieving power. For he first looks toward, and then goes on to know and to do whatever he has given his attention to. This faculty of attention is part of man's equipment at birth and it remains with him all the days of his existence, though it is held in the bondage of intellectual ignorance and worldliness that pass for understanding. The faculty is impersonal, will-less, and instantly responsive to man's direction. It is man's one skill that obeys orders without quibbling or questioning the consequences. With it man makes contact with objects of his choice (for he has free will), and by it he collects all his knowledge. The purity or impurity of knowledge does not concern this immaculate, tireless, submissive, uncontentious servant.

When man learns to release this faculty from the grip of intellect by simple desire to know God, it leads him at once to the center of his own consciousness. At this place it becomes the means of his learning the Truth about God and about himself in relation to God. Here, too, the Master, Jesus Christ, helps him to be steadfast, and points him to the Father, for, as He said, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."

Alphabet Of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day of the Month

JULY 1962

- 2. Solomon . . . was not ARRAYED like one of these (lilies).
- 3. Upon this Rock will I BUILD.
- 4. His COMPASSIONS fail not.
- 5. Can Ye DRINK Of the cup that I DRINK of? asked Jesus.
- 6. Be ENCOURAGED in the law of the Lord.
- 7. Look on the FIELDS ripe for harvest.

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- 9. The works of the Lord are GREAT.
- 10. The earth brought forth by HANDFULS.
- 11. He was INDUSTRIOUS.
- 12. A man is JUSTIFIED by faith.
- 13. The Lord KNOWETH the way of the righteous.
- 14. LAUNCH out into the deep.

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- 16. I will sing aloud of Thy MERCY in the MORNING.
- 17. Let down your NETS for a draught.
- 18. Be not righteous OVERMUCH.
- 19. Show thyself a PATTERN of good works.
- 20. I come QUICKLY and my reward is with Me.
- 21. He will also RAISE up us by His own Power.

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- 23. The Lord is good . . . to the SOUL that SEEKETH Him.
- 24. Be ye TRANSFORMED.
- 25. O I will UPHOLD thee.
- 26. Walk worthy of (your) VOCATION.
- 27. Talk ye of His WONDROUS WORKS.
- 28. Jesus Christ, the same today, and for ever.

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- 30. He was ZEALOUS for his God.
- 31. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

"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.