

JOY

By Alden Truesdell

One of the legitimate goals of mankind is joy, or happiness. Our Declaration of Independence declares: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men . . . are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Thus even the pleasure seekers are, in a measure, justified. Wherever men go and whatever they do, the ultimate object is happiness: the capacity to have and to do that which each one believes will promote his best interest and make him happy.

Joy is not circumscribed by intellectual conclusions nor confined to them, and yet there may be joy in intellectual practice. Much satisfaction is enjoyed by minds which meet on equal terms in what is described as "a meeting of the minds." Joy is not confined to physical expression, and all physical action is not entirely pleasurable, but there is enjoyment in many sorts of bodily exertion. Those of this great nation who are not engaged in physical labor are apt to be found on golf courses or in swimming pools. We seem to be a nation of workers and players. Joy is not dependent upon either work or play activities, but may be found in them in certain degree. But, as the intellects are sometimes pleasantly stimulated and sometimes seemingly beset with broodings and forebodings, so the physical pleasures are prone to become painful if exercised to excess.

The qualities of love and joy (and it is difficult to separate them in spiritual ongoing) are supremely superior to present concepts of affection and pleasure. Paul tried to explain this by saying, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things." And he declared, "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."

Consider the quality of Love. We all have objects of affection, certain things, even people, who are dear to our hearts: so much so that we have become a part of them and they of us. When the magnitude of the Love of God begins to make itself known, we find ourselves considering new horizons and more ample regions for the expression of the God-given commodity.

The nostalgic element enters into the relinquishment of lesser objects than those that the new practice reveals. Thus there seems to be a sadness or a sorrow that comes much as a homesickness or a fondness for something departing or departed, something not present. The Psalmist expresses this idea poetically: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." The broken heart always precedes the heart that is right with God, filled with God-Love and radiating the Joy of the Lord. The Beatitudes call attention to this fact: "blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."

The entire process of growth is a breaking up of old and limiting states of being in order to enter into higher and better ways of life. Thus the promise is that the mourners will be given "the oil of joy for mourning." A sadness attends the breaking up of old familiar habitations; but, except there be a willingness to move up and out, the nostalgia will become chronic. The law accepts the old orders as a matrix to be filled with new and vital materials.

Not only does sadness precede joy, but this seeming contradiction or paradox attends the ushering in of other spiritual gifts: faith, for example, is preceded by fear.

The time is to come in spiritual ongoing when this duality will cease to be, the time when the consciousness will be so imbued with the positive, constructive, and creative qualities of Spirit that there will be no variation. In that day, however, man will be perfect as the Father is perfect. That is actually how man should be, and in that time he will be truly custodian of the Divine Alchemy. In that time love will not be a tender feeling within the little, mortal breast; but will be a dispensation of fundamental qualities essential to the maintaining of God's orderly creation. There will not be my love for you and your love for me as separate and distinct entities. There will be only God-Love and the effect of God-Love.

When God goes wooing, He leaves a trail of broken hearts. Because the little concepts of love are not capable of comprehending the greater, they must be broken up to make room for the newer, finer structure. Thus it is with all man's equipment, even to his senses. These must all be expanded, extended, and stepped up to higher degrees of sensitivity, to detect finer tones and qualities. Thus it is with joy. Our present joys are inadequate to encompass the Joy of the Lord which is strength. When we can conceive of love as God-Love, and joy as the Joy of the Lord; when we find ourselves on the God-side of life, we shall see why all former descriptions have been inadequate and why all worthwhile declarations have been simple.

Joy is a sort of divine satisfaction. It is God's looking upon all He has created and finding it good to look upon and well pleasing in His sight. It is the gratification of the Engineer who has completed His master project; and yet it is more than that; for the pleasure is not alone in the creating, but also in the successful maintenance, re-creation, and reproduction. This is why the expounding of this Reality of Being is "good tidings of great joy." It heals the broken-hearted; it gives the oil of joy for mourning; it heals the sick, raises the dead, casts out demons. It ushers in a new hope for all who have been bound by Law.

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SPIRITICITY June 1952

ROMANS

By Robert Applegate

(Continued from last month)

The subject of Paul's letter to the Romans is the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Before Paul starts into his subject, however, he shows the crying need of mankind for the Atonement. To do this, he divides the race into two great classes, Gentiles and Jews. The Gentiles represent the materialistic and intellectual ideas in consciousness, the Jews the religious ideas. Both, Paul declares, have fallen so far short of any satisfactory attainment that there is no hope for them until they turn to, acknowledge, and accept a higher Authority. There is no deliverance possible to them until they cease from their own efforts and, as little children, accept the deliverance that is freely offered to them by God.

The Gentiles correspond to materialistic and intellectual ideas. Of them Paul says, "Although they knew God they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him." (All quotations are from the Revised Standard Version.) This lack of gratitude and reverence on the part of the materialist and the intellectual is the cause of all the error into which they have fallen. There is a natural awareness of God in all men; and, further, the existence of some kind of Deity is obvious from the existence and the nature of the universe, of life, and of man. Therefore it is not possible for anyone to plead ignorance as an excuse for his lack of response to God. Man has simply fallen in love with his own powers and, accordingly, has forgotten the simple elements of thankfulness and reverence. He has, as Paul says, "worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator." This misdirection of respect is the error of idolatry, which is described by Arnold Toynbee as the "purblind worship of the part instead of the whole, of the creature instead of the Creator, of Time instead of Eternity." This is the common error of the intellectual and the materialist.

Professor Toynbee continues: "In practical life this moral aberration may take the comprehensive form of an idolization of the idolator's own personality, or own society, in some ephemeral phase; . . . or, again, it may take the limited form of an idolization of some particular institution, or particular technique. . . . The idolator who commits the error of treating one dead self, not as a stepping-stone, but as a pedestal, will be alienating himself from the life of God as conspicuously as the stylite devotee who maroons himself on the summit of a lonely column dissevers himself from the world of men."

This alienation from God, to which Arnold Toynbee refers (and to which he attributes the collapse of civilizations), is what Paul refers to as the "wrath." The "wrath" is not an attribute of God at all, but is only the working out of man's refusal to acknowledge his Source. The results of this failure are depicted in stark terms in Paul's letter: "Since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, . . . they were filled with all manner of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless." This characterization is not exaggerated, and it pictures the inevitable results of man's idolization of himself and his own formulations. It should be sufficient to convince us that there is little hope as long as we continue along this course: that is, as long as we permit the materialistic ideas to dominate in consciousness and to pursue their worship of that which is transient, unreal, and unprofitable.

The Jews represent the religious ideas in consciousness. These are the ideas that seek deliverance from negation through formal worship and ritual and through abstaining from certain things and acts that are considered impure. They are also the ideas that condemn all who do not follow in the way that they have chosen for themselves. Of them Paul declares, "You have no excuse, O man, whoever you are, when you judge another; for in passing judgment upon him you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things." This is always true. A person always condemns another for his own faults, because he can see only what is in his own consciousness. Thus all spiritual leaders have warned us to "judge not." This condemnation of those who do not conform is the first error of the religionist. The second mistake is that of believing that he can deserve or earn God's favor.

The attempt to earn one's way into the Kingdom of God is what Paul refers to as the way of the law. At the time that he wrote, his countrymen were trying to win the favor of God by the observance of multitudinous regulations governing

every phase of daily life. Today many modern so-called Christians try to deserve God's grace by the observance of certain moral and ethical standards, by giving to charity, and by supporting and working for their particular church. All this is not only foolish but fatal - not that the acts are wrong, but that the motive is unhealthy. "No human being will be justified in his sight by works of the law. . . . For the law brings wrath," Paul declares: that is, they who seek to merit God's goodness fall into the same error as they who follow their senses. They inevitably become self-righteous. They worship themselves, their church, or their religion; and thus they too commit idolatry. For them also there is no hope as long as they continue in their present course.

In this opening section of his letter, Paul has shown that there is no hope for man as long as he follows his materialistic, intellectual, and religious ideas; and permits them to rule in his consciousness. All this, however, is introductory. To turn from a false way of life is simply preliminary (although a necessary preliminary) to following the right way. "All have sinned," Paul declares, "and fall short of the glory of God." Since the terms are equivalent, and to sin means to fall short of the divine glory, it is obvious that all have sinned. It should be equally obvious that there is little profit in following the way that all have gone. There is clearly need of a better way, and Jesus Christ adequately proved that there is such a way. What it is, is set forth by Paul in Romans 3:22-31:

"Now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, . . . the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. . . . They are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation, . . . to be received by faith. Then, what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On the principle of works? No, but on the principle of faith. For we hold that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law. . . . Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law."

It was explained last month that "the righteousness of God" is His Activity in revealing Himself to the consciousness of man and in thus delivering man from all his imagined afflictions. It was discovered also that justification is the act of declaring a person to be innocent. The figure is that of a judge acquitting a defendant and thus freeing him from the onus of false accusation. In this passage Paul uses two other figures to convey his message. The word translated "redemption" means "ransom" and should be so rendered. In Paul's time the word was used of buying back prisoners of war from an enemy and thus freeing them from slavery. The figure is that of the benefactor freeing a person (or persons) from slavery by paying the price of his release. In the Old Testament, the figure is used of God's act in delivering the Israelites from their Egyptian bondage and Babylonian captivity. In the New Testament, it is used of God's act through Jesus Christ in freeing man from his own false ideas of materiality and mortality, of sin and its retribution.

The figure conveyed in the word "expiation" ("propitiation," in the King James Version) is that of the ancient practice of blood sacrifice. The primitive belief was that, when a man had done something harmful to the common good, he had to sacrifice something which was dear to him, in order to bring himself again into right relation with God. The sacrifice was a fine, as it were, paid to God to prevent the consequences of the wrong committed from reacting upon the head of the wrongdoer. This idea is still prevalent, as is shown by the practice of doing penance, which is still required by some groups, and which many people feel that they should follow, even if they do not do it.

It is declared in the New Testament, however, that Jesus Christ is the expiation for the shortcomings of all mankind: "He is the expiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world." Both Paul and John used this figure to explain the atoning work of Jesus Christ, because it was understandable to the people to whom they wrote.

Paul, then, uses these three metaphors to convey the meaning of the Atonement of Jesus Christ: that of the judge acquitting a defendant, that of the ransoming and freeing of captives from the power of an enemy, and that of the sacrifice which expiates for the errors committed by men. He is forced to speak in figures, because there are no words to explain the Atonement. We can say only that Jesus Christ took unto Himself all the amassed error of the race and dissolved it into nothingness, and that He did this not by what He suffered, but by What He was. Because He did this, He brought into the race consciousness and made available to all men that which is eternally true: that in God's sight we are completely innocent, that in Him we are free from all error and its consequences. All that we are required to do, and all that we can do, is to believe this; and we believe it because Jesus Christ proved it. We believe in Him and in the work that He did.

What the results of faith in God through Jesus Christ are occupies most of the rest of Paul's letter to the Romans. In the passage quoted, however, he mentions two immediate results. First, boasting, or self-righteousness, is excluded. It is eliminated by the clear realization that we of ourselves can do nothing, that we can only receive by faith that which God freely and equally gives to everyone. Second, "We uphold the law." If we believe, truly believe, in Christ, we shall automatically do what is right and profitable, what ministers to the greatest good of all God's children. We shall obey, not the letter of the law that kills, but the spirit that gives life. This attitude toward the moral and ethical law sounds impractical to many; its validity, however, has been proved time and time again. The moralist says, "Be good, and you will get your reward when you die, perhaps." But the Spirit says, "God is Love. He is continually giving of Himself to His creation. Believe in Him, and you cannot do wrong. He gives you eternal life now." The paradox is that they who seek to do right by their own efforts fail to do so; while they who forget about right and wrong, who seek God and rely on Him, act, speak, and think correctly always. Jesus proved it, Paul proved it, and many who have followed in the Way that Jesus led have proved it. Now it is up to every individual to prove it for himself. "This is the work of God," Jesus proclaimed, "that you believe in Him whom He hath sent." And Paul wrote, "By grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God."

(To be continued)

SPIRITICITY June 1952

WHY DOES MAN PRAY?

By Nell Truesdell

Prayer, frequently, is an expression of man's desire to praise and worship God for His goodness and for His Holy Presence among men. Prayer, too, is a response in man's consciousness to some stimulus either from outside (the world) or from within (distress of intellect or emotions) which arouses him in such a way that he is compelled to turn, voluntarily or involuntarily, to an unseen Force or Presence for relief and satisfaction. In the natural man, the stimulus appears to stem from an immediate need to adjust to an outer adverse condition, such as flood, fire, famine, earthquake, threat of enemies, or other menace to life and property. The form that prayer takes is incidental. Prayer itself is the effort, prompted and sustained by forces welling up from the depths of consciousness, to reach toward Help with the hope that it may be forthcoming. Whether man believes that the Help sought appears to lie outside or within him depends on the degree of his development. The primitive man seeks help in stones, trees, streams, mountains, images, or in the sky (heaven). The spiritually awakened man seeks the Help that abides in the midst of his consciousness, though he understands that that Help is not limited by his consciousness.

The natural man, conscious of his great need, prays without gratitude. His prayer is an outright demand for immediate relief. It is the bold command of a child unawakened to the fact that his orders automatically impose upon him the need to make a recompense equal to his demand. Like a child, spoiled by doting parents, he takes whatever he can lay hold on without any sense of appreciation or indebtedness, and returns to his source of help only when another pressing need arises which he or his resources cannot satisfy.

By successive stages, man grows in the realization that the stimuli in the outer realm are not the true cause for prayer. As his understanding increases, he associates the urge to pray with Deity. He comes to know that the urge to pray is the very Presence of God invading his consciousness so that he is aware only of his need to acknowledge that Presence. The need, then, is understood not to be the result of an apparent lack in the world or in his body, but a demand for conscious connection with Deity Itself. The real stimulus is God Himself; but man erroneously interprets it as a pressing need in body or in affairs. When this is understood, the need for outer things vanishes, and man is filled with wordless gratitude that pays rewards in praise and thanksgiving instead of exacting tribute.

Alphabet Of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day Of The Month

JUNE 1952

2. Ye shall ABIDE in My Love.
3. I have BROKEN the BANDS of your yoke.
4. I will CAUSE thee to ride upon the high places.
5. I have DECLARED My ways.
6. I bare you on EAGLE 'S wings.
7. I will get them praise and FAME.

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9. Ye shall be GATHERED one by one.
10. Ye shall be HOLY; for I Am HOLY.
11. Nothing shall be IMPOSSIBLE unto you.
12. He that KEEPETH thee will not slumber.
13. Many nations shall be JOINED to the Lord.
14. Ye shall be LED forth with peace.

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16. The Lord thy God in the MIDST of thee is MIGHTY.
17. The hour cometh, and NOW is.
18. The Lord shall OPEN to thee His good treasures.
19. The Lord's PORTION is His PEOPLE.
20. It is the Spirit that QUICKENETH.
21. He will REJOICE over thee with joy.

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23. Let the SAINTS SHOUT for joy.
24. With TRUMPETS make a joyful noise before the Lord.
25. The Lord is good and UPRIGHT.
26. I saw the VISION of the Lord.
27. The WORKMAN is WORTHY of his meat.
28. The promises of God in Him are YEA and Amen.

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30. He hath a great ZEAL for you.

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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.