

SPIRITICITY, June 1956

FATHER

By Alden Truesdell

In the early Scriptural records, we find that the men who were honored with the title father were first recipients of honor from a Higher Source. Abraham has been honored through the centuries as a patriarch, but his outstanding trait, his staunch faith, was a gift of God.

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said: "I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect. And I will make My covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. . . . Thou shalt be a father of many nations." Then God changed his name to Abraham; "for a father of many nations have I made thee."

We may pass over Abraham's immediate successors (Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph) to consider Moses, the man who fathered the Israelites and made of them a great nation. Not until Moses had been put through many tests did his people recognize his paternal interest in their welfare. How the Lord fought for the Israelites under Moses' leadership is one of literature's epics. When Moses was instructed to lift up his rod, stretch forth his hand, and direct the children of Israel to move forward over dry ground through the divided waters in the midst of the sea, as the Egyptians followed in hot pursuit, it was the beginning of many miracles that commanded the respect of the Israelites for their leader. He guided this large group of people in their escape from an oppressive bondage; and throughout the years of their wanderings in the wilderness, he demonstrated that his interest in their welfare was for him a hard experience.

When Moses and Joshua returned from the Mount after Moses had received the Commandments, the people, under Aaron's leadership, were dancing about a golden calf and singing. "And he (Moses) took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it. . . . And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold; yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin -; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written." After much suffering, Moses again talked with the Lord and said, "Now therefore, I pray Thee, if I have found grace in Thy sight, show me now Thy way, that I may know Thee, that I may find grace in Thy sight; and consider that this nation is Thy people. And He said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."

I touch on these two great men, through whom God worked, and who were honored with the title of patriarch, to bring forward the idea that in their times a man had to do something unusual, something magnificent, to earn the title. Decisions had to be made at critical times, executive abilities were called into expression in unstinting measure. As we scan the many events in their careers, we see that their way was not always easy. Perhaps the primary ability such called-out ones were forced to exercise was an indifference to criticism. "The children of Israel murmured against Moses" - not once, but continually. Yet Moses continued to lead them, to exhort them, and to intercede for them.

Today the race fathered by Abraham and liberated by Moses takes pride in being descended from such outstanding leaders. For the most part, however,

these people (and all people) worship with the expectation that God will provide them with other faithful earthly leaders, who will be talented law-givers and messiahs, filled with divine executive capacities. The ages have revealed that most worshippers desire to receive the spiritual privileges by proxy, through some rugged pioneering soul willing to become the agency through whom God works. This is all right, except for the fact that the wise Father in Heaven is interested in the development of the individual child rather than in the spectacle of an overburdened genius making a vicarious atonement or putting on a one-man show.

How many sons of Abraham aspire to develop the faith required to father nations? How many followers of Moses incorporate the Law into their consciousness to such a degree that knowledge of that Law frees them and their people from foolishness and ignorance? It is enough for them to claim the lineage of such forebears.

With all possible respect to all the giants of the past, we are still forced to go on to higher and finer concepts of Fatherhood. God is interested in you and in me. God expects us to give as good account of ourselves as did Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. The potentialities are implanted in each of us; for the capacities of the Creator, built into His image and likeness, exhibit in this world as the children of men.

As we examine the doctrine of Jesus, we are impressed by the concept of Spiritual Fatherhood characteristic of His teaching. Like an ambassador from some friendly nation, He assumed that His credentials would be received by the people to whom He presented Himself and that the Sovereign Ruler He represented would be honored. As an emissary who visits a foreign country does so in the interest of his native land, so Jesus came to earth (among the Jews, for they were the one nation on earth that looked for a Messiah) to do the will of His Father in Heaven. In so doing, He gave the race such a word picture of the Heavenly Patriarch that all religious dogma that claimed to honor Him was changed, and all vain philosophy was confounded. This most fabulous Character presented a fabulous concept of a transcendent Father.

We remember that when Jesus was baptized by John, the Spirit of God descending upon Him like a dove said: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This established Jesus' divine origin. However, not long after this, Jesus included all men in this same divine sonship to God when, in His Sermon on the Mount, He said: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven"; and when He taught us to pray: "Our Father which art in heaven." He further instructed His listeners not to pray like the hypocrites who stand in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. "But thou, 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."

He admonished all who had ears to hear to do the will of the Father. And He said that whoever does the will of His Father is His brother and sister and mother.

Never in all history has a ruler or a parent received such tribute as this Man paid to His Father - our Father. Like a good ambassador He filled His communications to His Sovereign with the utmost respect and a most glorious gratitude. He explained His seemingly peculiar relation with the Father in these words: "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father: and no man

knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him."

Jesus' works demonstrated His authority as Plenipotentiary from the Realm of Spirit; but He insisted that He did nothing of Himself. "But the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works."

Surely every normal person must want to believe in a relationship such as that experienced and expounded by Jesus, the Son of God. Who would not gladly accept a Father whose pleasure it is to give His children the Kingdom? And who would not respond to Him who linked all mankind as brothers in His statement: "Call no man your father upon the earth: for One is your Father, which is in Heaven."

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SPIRITICITY, June 1956

STUDY TO BE QUIET

By Robert Applegate

Man is so constituted that he forever desires something and strives for it. In this present day, many seek simply to conform to the generally accepted notion of what constitutes "success," so that we are becoming a nation of conformists. In fact, in a world that is increasingly inhospitable to the average person, many give their lives to seeking merely to "get along," to live out this earthly existence with a minimum of friction and - if possible - with a maximum of comfort and ease. That this is so is amply indicated by the popularity of books that offer a "practical philosophy of life": that is, books that promise to teach the reader how to achieve success, health, popularity, and tranquility; or, in other words, how to get through life with a minimum of pain and maximum of pleasure. If we have nothing better to seek than this, we are indeed in a sorry way - not that these things are not desirable, but they are certainly not worth giving our lives for.

Christianity states unequivocally that there is only one thing worth desiring and contending for and that is "the Kingdom of God," or in modern terms the consciousness of God's Presence, the knowing of oneness with the eternal Love that is God. This is really what everyone desires, although few seem to know it or even to believe it. "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth," we are told. "The things which are seen are temporal (temporary); but the things which are not seen are eternal."

To change one's desire and the direction of one's seeking from the material to the spiritual, from that which is temporary to that which is eternal, is "repentance." That such a change is desirable is easy to say, and it is easy to see, intellectually, that it is so. But the change is hard to make. "Straight is the gate, and narrow is the way"; and those who would make it seem otherwise are not teachers of the Christian Gospel. Nevertheless, it is the way "that leadeth unto life" - eternal life - and there is assuredly no other way worth following. How then can we "repent"? How can we change the whole pattern of our desire and of our seeking? First, this is entirely an inner movement; and this cannot be emphasized too strongly. Repentance does not mean joining an organization, nor is it something that we can do once for all time. It is a complete reorienting of our desire, a reversal of all our values;

and because of the force of habit and the pressure of those around us, we must turn again and again and again, until we can honestly say, "I desire only one thing - to know my God, to surrender myself to Him"; until we can say with Paul, "I count all things . . . but dung, that I may win Christ."

All our practice of Truth, all the instruction that we receive, and all the strengthening and inspiration that we derive from worshipping together are for the purpose of turning us to God, or to Christ, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

I should like here simply to emphasize one point of practice, which will be helpful to us in attaining our desired goal. It is that which is stated by Paul in his First Letter to the Thessalonians: "We beseech you, brethren that . . . ye study to be quiet." This short statement contains a wealth of instruction which, however, is somewhat obscured by the word study. This word is derived from the Latin studeo, which does not mean to delve into books, but to be ambitious, to strive hard. In its original meaning, it was a good rendering of the Greek word that Paul used, which is a strong word meaning to desire greatly, to endeavor earnestly. Paul is telling us here what to strive for, what to set our hearts on; and that is "to be quiet." We must seek and strive for something, and the Apostle is wisely telling us to seek to be still - to make inner quietness the goal of our lives.

That Paul does not mean physical stillness or inactivity is amply shown by the rest of his statement, which is "and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands." In other words, we are to strive to be quiet within while we tend to our own affairs (not concerning ourselves with what others are doing), and while we do our own work with our own hands. This is not easy to do. It requires sincere effort, but the effort is infinitely rewarding. The practice has been described by H. Emilie Cady: "Your mind shall be continually in an attitude of waiting upon God, an attitude not of clamoring for things, but of listening for the Father's voice and expecting a manifestation of the Father to your consciousness." It is possible to maintain this attitude in the midst of any kind of work; and when it is maintained, the work is done quickly and well, and you are not tired by it. Furthermore, you know a peace and satisfaction that are indescribable.

"Study to be quiet." What else can we do to receive God's help and guidance? He is always instructing us, and the only thing that keeps us from receiving the instruction is our inner clamor, our mental and emotional turmoil. Yet if someone should walk into the room to tell any one of us that he had inherited a hundred thousand dollars, he would be still and attentive. God wants to give us more than this. Shall we not pay Him the courtesy of listening to Him?

We are all familiar with the statement of Isaiah: "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." The quietness comes first, and it is that inner expectant waiting upon God and listening for His voice. The confidence invariably comes with the preserving of this attitude. It is a confidence, not in our own personal ability but in the Spirit which we feel working in us as we are inwardly still. This confidence is energizing and sustaining; it is the strength that achieves without tiring. Isaiah declared: "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall (as long as they rely on their own power): but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not be faint."

We are acquainted also with the statement: "The joy of the Lord is your strength." Since this is true, and since it is also true that supernal strength comes from quietness, it must be that in quietness and in confidence shall we know the Joy of the Lord. Then shall we not give ourselves to seeking this quietness?

Just as quietness is not inactivity, so it is not the absence of outer friction. Such a state would simply indicate that we were successfully conforming to the accepted, stultifying pattern of thought and belief. If we listen to the Spirit rather than to public opinion, it will make us different from those around us, and they will resent this difference. But the inner peace that we shall know will be more satisfying than the acceptance of our associates. In Jesus' last instructions to His disciples, He said: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." The "tribulation" is simply the friction, which can sometimes be galling, from those who believe differently than we do and who oppose us because we are different. This should serve to turn us more steadfastly to our Principle and make us evermore aware of the inner peace that we have in Christ.

Jesus had to contend not only with the virulent opposition of the established religious authorities but also with the obtuseness of His chosen disciples, which occasionally wrung from Him the address: "O fools, and slow of heart!" But He let all opposition and vexation turn Him to more complete communion with His Father, so that He could say at the end: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." We may know this peace and carry the contagion of it wherever we go, if we will obey the injunction: "Study to be quiet."

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SPIRITICITY, June 1956

WISE GIVING

By Nell Truesdell

Are you a victim of gifts? We knew a couple who would have enjoyed attending our Sunday morning services. But Aunt Mary would not have approved, and Aunt Mary paid the household bills. Since she had been doing this for twenty-five years, there was little chance that the pattern of life would change.

Was Aunt Mary really generous? Were the couple happy and in good healthy spirits as persons? A resounding "No!" would answer these questions correctly.

With Aunt Mary, it was more convenient for her to live with Ann and John in their well kept home than it would have been to take an apartment in a hotel (which she could well afford). With Ann and John, the situation developed simply enough. At first, Aunt Mary's contributions to the household expenses eased the economic situation, for John was starting out in business; and anyway, during the "depression," everybody doubled up. However, as Aunt Mary grew to feel that Ann and John were her responsibility, she gradually dominated the entire household. The relationship became more and more parasitical as she attached herself firmly to the couple and drew on their youth for emotional nourishment and social satisfaction.

Eventually, Ann died of cancer, a condition that was generated and supported by her inner resentment toward Aunt Mary. John is now bereft of the companionship of the one person whom he loved most in all the world. And Aunt Mary? Why she is still going strong. In her seventies, she bustles about, doing the things that she enjoys doing. Since she is well able to pay servants to tend the house and gardens, she is off to her club meetings twice a week and attends to her church duties on Tuesday mornings. Even in the sanctuary, her money talks, and her opinions are respected with the proper degree of reverent submission.

Perhaps, if Ann and John had not succumbed to the temptation to fall victims to easy living in their younger days; perhaps, if Aunt Mary had been truly generous and had permitted the couple to struggle through the difficult economic period that faces nearly every young married couple in the beginning of their careers, all of them would have developed an inner strength and reliance on God that would have lifted them above mediocrity. Who can predict what heights of achievement might have been reached?

Another aunt, acting more wisely, gave a niece a diamond ring for an anniversary present. "Why couldn't she have sent us fourteen tons of coal to see us through the winter?" the niece cried out in the privacy of her home. But this aunt knew that if the young husband had to earn that coal, he would be the richer for having done so.

Are you robbing yourself by accepting too much for your own good?

Alphabet of  
DAILY MEDITATIONS  
For Every Week Day Of The Month

JUNE 1956

1. We ALWAYS thank God.
2. He (Christ) is BEFORE all things.  
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4. Look CAREFULLY how you walk.
5. Let the Word of Christ DWELL in you richly.
6. He who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap ETERNAL Life.
7. FOR FREEDOM Christ has set us FREE.
8. GRACE was GIVEN to us according to the measure of Christ's GIFT.
9. Christ loved us and gave HIMSELF up for us.  
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11. Be IMITATORS of God.
12. Thy JUDGMENTS are good.
13. Be KIND to one another.
14. Know the LOVE of Christ which surpasses knowledge.
15. The Voice of the Lord is full of MAJESTY.
16. The Lord is Governor among the NATIONS.  
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18. ONCE you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.
19. Learn what is PLEASING to the Lord.
20. QUENCH all the flaming darts of the evil one.
21. I the Lord am thy REDEEMER.
22. Be STRENGTHENED with might through HIS SPIRIT in the inner man.
23. Let there be THANKSGIVING.  
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25. Maintain the UNITY of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
26. When anything is exposed by the Light it becomes VISIBLE.
27. Let us also WALK by the Spirit.
28. Remember thy Creator in the days of thy YOUTH.
29. The ZEAL of the Lord will perform.
30. Forget not all His benefits.  
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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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SPIRITICITY is the working Power of the Spiritual Principle,  
As electricity is the working power of the electrical principle.