

MAN'S SEARCH FOR GOD

By Nell Truesdell

Part IV

Man's sphere of earthly existence can be divided roughly into three departments, or phases: Material, Mental, and Mystical. He lives in all three departments at once; but he consciously determines his mode of existence in the world by choosing to reside and manage his life and affairs from one department in particular. The materialist, for example, regards matter and its motions as constituting the universe, and all phenomena, including those of the mind, as due to material agencies. His is the doctrine of self-interest, which he seeks to preserve without regard for the welfare of others. He believes that the world is mechanical and that material forces or laws control its nature. However, the materialist does not explain Who or What produces the forces, their changes, or their intensity of influence in the realm of things. The materialist loves the things that can be seen, handled, and possessed, and his ambition is to acquire as much of the world's goods as is possible to him. He gives little credence to intellectual pursuits (the Mental realm), and openly scorns spiritual verities (the Mystical realm).

No human being can escape acquaintance with the Material phase of his existence, for everybody is born into the world at that level. Therefore, the first experiences of every person have to do with material things. The young child learns about his world by investigating and evaluating whatever attracts his attention. Consequently, his first thoughts are formulated in terms of materiality because the attention of his mind is directed outward toward the external. He moves around the ponderous objects about him; or, if he has the strength, moves them about to suit himself. In the beginning, his movements among the things of the world are, without definite purpose as he shoves, upsets, lifts, or rearranges everything within reach. A surprisingly great number of adults never outgrow this aimless pushing around of things (and people). Such persons use their wills as battering rams to acquire things and further their own interests, with little regard for humankind.

The first temptation of Jesus Christ in the wilderness had to do with the overcoming of belief in the powers of the Material phase of existence to sustain life. He refused to succumb to the everpresent belief of man that life depends upon or is nourished by material bread. At a time when His human body cried out for food, He remembered not to cater to its demands, but to declare that "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." This is the first great denial, and it concerns every person who is interested in his own spiritual welfare. Unless the consciousness is cleansed of the lust for possessions and the inherent powers they apparently exhibit, a man is chained to the Material phase of his existence. However, the wrench of letting go even the belief that things are essential to life itself is more than any materialist can bear. To set himself free, he must willingly lift his attention toward something higher and more valuable than materiality. To do this, he must rely on Jesus Christ for help, for He is the Man who proved the benefits of such letting go.

But, long before man, struggling for the freedom Christ Jesus offers, is able to ascend to the Celestial Heights in consciousness, he discovers and tarries in the Mental department - often for so long that he forfeits his op-

portunity to enter the Kingdom here and now, in this present world. He reasons that, since there is a department in his consciousness where he can choose to think out his salvation from lack of any needful thing, he ought to investigate that phase thoroughly. In his explorations, he unwittingly enmeshes himself in a tangled web of his own illusions. Because he prides himself in his imagined expert manipulation of his mental equipment, he declares, "All that we are is made up of our thought"; but he overlooks the fact that his thought processes are merely formulative, not creative. "Which of you by taking thought," asked the Master of His disciples, "can add one cubit to his stature?" And again, He said, "Take no thought for your life, . . . nor yet for your body, . . . and why take ye thought for raiment?"

The true function of man's Mentals (his consciousness) is that of an instrument through which Divine Ideas from the Creator can formulate to manifest or show forth God's perfection. In a sense, man has pirated God's Ideas for his own profit; he has plundered the sacred precincts of the Almighty and has reproduced His Holy Substance in destructive ways. In this awful transgression, man has appropriated powers far beyond his feeble ability to understand or to utilize to advantage. And all this has come about because man has withdrawn his attention from God and centered it in the world so one-pointedly that he has separated himself unwittingly from the Source that not only produces the powerful Ideas, but knows how to direct them for man's highest good and most profit. However, though man cannot actually rob God, he does interfere with his own manifest good by insisting on making his own demonstrations. Thus he nullifies God's Ideas in embryo as they touch his Mentals, by aborting them in his eagerness to appropriate them to his own use. "Be not deceived;" warned Paul, "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

The second temptation in the wilderness teaches man how Jesus Christ overcame the avid human desire to misuse (or control) thought. When He was offered the opportunity to cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple, with the reminder that God's angels would bear Him up, He withstood the desire to gratify a deep-seated longing to create a sensation among mankind, by saying calmly and decisively to His tempter, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Craving to satisfy the senses is rooted in the Mental department of man's being. It is something man can never overcome by thinking; for, even a slight degree of mental action stimulates the appetite for sensation, and man falls prey to his own lusts. However, Jesus Christ again offers a solution: "In such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

The practice of stilling the thoughts in order to contemplate God, who in the midst of consciousness ever abides, is called denial. It demands that the attention of man's mind be turned inward and upward toward God, in an attitude of still expectancy. For this is the means by which man turns away from the world of things and of thought so that he can enter the Mystical department, or phase, of his existence. Here, he enters a Kingdom not prepared with hands, not furnished with replicas of worldly riches, not peopled with intellectuals who revel in their knowledge, not resplendent with man's vain imaginations about God, the angels, saints, and an exalted heavenly society that enjoys the perpetual bliss of never having anything to do. The Kingdom of Heaven is no vast housing project for the self-willed, the self-seeker, or the self-satisfied. The Kingdom of God is a realm alive with Life, characterized by Intelligence, energized with Power, abounding with Substance, and possessed by Love. It is the Mystical realm that the Son occupies by the simple practice of High Watch. "Watch! and what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch!"

In His third temptation, the Master refused rulership over all the kingdoms of the earth, for He knew that His spiritual safety lay in rulership of His own spirit. "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." With this masterly pronouncement, He turned His back forever on the world and its enticements of things, thoughts, and powers, and entered the Mystical realm where "the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth."

The grace of God is His gift whereby any man is delivered from the snare of the Material and the Mental departments of existence and ushered into a new state of Being that human eyes do not see nor human ears hear. Though the awakened man remains in the world, he ceases to be of it. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.

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PAUL'S CORINTHIAN CORRESPONDENCE

THE THIRD LETTER (Continued from January 1952)

By Robert Applegate

To the church at Corinth, Paul wrote at least four letters of which we have one complete and parts of the other three. Of the first letter there is preserved only a small fragment, embedded in II Corinthians. The second letter is our present I Corinthians. Of the third we have a part, which is contained in our present II Corinthians, Chs. 10-13. The fourth letter comprises II Corinthians, Chs. 1-9. Paul wrote these four letters on papyrus rolls, which, after they had been received and read at Corinth, were evidently laid aside and forgotten. Many years later, when the writings of Paul had come to be regarded as inspired Scripture the rolls were found to be frayed, torn, and partly lost. The editor who put them together did the best job he could and the result is the present arrangement into two epistles. It is clear now, however, that there are parts of the original four letters contained in the two books.

Paul wrote his first two letters to Corinth both to answer questions that had been asked him and to check the factionalism and immorality that were prevalent in the Corinthian church. The letters, however, failed to achieve their purpose, and Paul made a hurried and painful visit to Corinth. Even in person he was unable to stop the strife within the church or to silence the malicious attacks upon himself and the denials of his authority and instruction. He therefore wrote a third letter, of which he says, "I wrote you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you." (All quotations are from the Revised Standard Version.) The letter was painful for Paul to write, but it accomplished its purpose; for he reports of it; "I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. . . . For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, what eagerness to clear yourselves! . . . At every point you have proved yourselves guiltless in the matter."

In this third letter Paul is concerned mainly with re-asserting his authority and reproving those who had countermanded his instruction. He dispenses with his detractors quickly by laying bare their self-seeking motives: "When they measure themselves by one another, and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding. . . . For it is not the man who commends himself that is accepted, but the man whom the Lord commends." These words are a good tonic for anyone who has become important in his own eyes.

To support his own authority and thereby his instruction, Paul points to three facts: his preaching of the Gospel at his own expense, the sufferings that he had gone through to fulfill his mission, and the clear signs that he had given of the depth of his spiritual understanding. One of the main reasons why Paul refused to accept support from those to whom he preached was that there might be no question of his sincerity. He did not care particularly what people thought about him as a person, but he did not want any doubt about his motives to hinder the acceptance of his message. To remove this doubt he was willing to work night and day in order to support himself at his trade and at the same time carry on his ministry. He knew that the message that he had to give is the one hope of mankind, and he was willing to undergo any hardship in order to commend it to the greatest number of people.

The same desire to support his instruction by showing his own sincerity led Paul to recount the hardships that he had gone through to fulfill the ministry that had been assigned to him: "Five times I have received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I have been beaten with rods; once I was stoned. Three times I have been shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been adrift at sea; . . . in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure." Here Paul has also another motive. He desires to show the protection and power of God: that when his own strength was insufficient, he was enabled by God to continue on, unharmed and undaunted. He actually rejoices in his hardships, for when he was the most helpless, he received the greatest help. He relates how, in a time of distress, he had prayed to God for release from pain and had received the answer, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." He had thus learned, and he went on to prove, that when the human will is helpless and becomes as nothing, then the Divine Will is done quickly.

Because Paul was sincere and because he was able to surrender his personal will, great works were done through him. He mentions them as the third confirmation of the validity of his instruction: "The signs of a true apostle were performed among you in all patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works." The ability to do spiritual healing is always a sign, or an indication, of true spiritual understanding, which is what Jesus meant by the statement, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Of all the followers of Jesus Christ Paul gave the greatest evidence by his works of an understanding of the power of God.

Paul represents the Word of God. This Word is in everyone; and it is necessary for It often to rebuke and to silence all self-seeking motives within the individual. It must be permitted to continue this process, though the outer man wail and complain, until all selfishness and willfulness are laid quiescent and the Word Itself is accepted as the only Authority, the true Leader within consciousness. The Word must assert Its dominion, as being of God, and that dominion must be accepted by all the warring motives and must be submitted to by them. The result will be an abiding consciousness of the indwelling Christ, after the attainment of which the works will be done. "Do you not know that Jesus Christ is in you?" Paul asks, " - unless indeed you fail to meet the test!"

Paul represents also the human will, and this is the significance of his dwelling upon his own weakness and at the same time the works that were done through him. The human will is always weak. When it recognizes this weakness and surrenders itself to the Will of God, then nothing is impossible. Moreover it is only when the human will is surrendered that spiritual understanding is attained. It is only then that the warring motives within become still and the Word of Truth becomes operative in the individual. The message therefore of

this letter to Corinth (which represents the heart) is the call to let go of the personal will. The promise that it contains is that God's power will be revealed in exact proportion as the human will is surrendered. His grace is sufficient for everyone.

(To be continued)

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MAN IS THE OFFSPRING OF GOD

By Alden Truesdell

"Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

Our fundamental proposition is that there is only one Mind, one Name, and Nature - over all, in all, through all. If the Mind that is God is Spirit, it follows logically that whatever is produced by that Mind is spiritual. Thus, the mind of man, being produced by Spirit, is a spiritual commodity. Man, therefore, is a spiritual being, the reproduction of a spiritual Creator, the Image and Likeness of God, possessing like nature and character with God. Man, the manifestation of God, is good, as God is good; intelligent, as God is intelligent; eternally alive, as God is eternally alive. Every person believes himself entitled to good, but not everyone realizes that he is eternally one with the good that he desires; that, by the fact of his Sonship to God, he exercises a rulership in the realm of Spirit, which is far superior to the rulership of all the kingdoms of earth.

One of the great differences between man and the animals is that man can direct the attention of his mind toward an objective and know what he is doing. With animals the direction of movement is governed by the power of sight: that is, an animal moves in the direction in which it looks. In man, however, the outer discernment can be translated into an inner visual perception, which can be used to lift him above the realm of sense and appearance into the realm of Spirit. By lifting his inner visual faculty, man can go straight to the throne of God, if he so pleases.

Man is in this world to discover and express his divine characteristics. "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. As the lily bulb planted in the garden sends down roots, and bursts forth as sprout, leaves, and flower to fulfill its divine destiny; so man is pressing his way forward and upward toward fulfillment of his Divinity. This whole arrangement is God's idea. The more it is left in His hands, the more successful it is likely to be.

Does it seem hard to consider your real Self as the direct offspring of God? Do you feel that you actually belong to God? It is easy to conceive of belonging to a church, a group, or a movement; of thinking right, doing right, being right; of developing, growing, and unfolding. But, to come directly to the point and actually see ourselves as being in God, knowing our Divinity in the Holy Trinity; no longer standing in awe of place, person, or doctrine; preferring to be the least in the Kingdom rather than the greatest in the world

- who can do that? Who is doing it? And yet, in our hearts, we know that this is every man's privilege. We know that, having put our hands to the plow, we cannot, we dare not, turn back.

The sages of India announce that memory is the thread that draws man upward to rest and home. On the material plane, the very thought of home is restful. The next time you are away from your home, and find yourself tired from exertion, notice how you immediately begin to recuperate the moment you turn homeward. The simple remembrance of home is rest to tired mind and body. It is the same in Spirit. Whenever you remember God and His good, you are returning to your true Home, the abiding place you enjoyed with God before the world was. Entering into the rest of this haven, you find the poise and balance and the exact order of God's own state of Being, made manifest in you.

All instruction, all knowledge, is made nothing in the light of Christian Scripture understood. This Light is breaking upon us, and all former teaching and beliefs are as nothing. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ."

Alphabet Of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day Of The Month

MARCH 1952

1. Preach the ACCEPTABLE year of the Lord.
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3. They that BE wise shall shine as the BRIGHTNESS of the firmament.
4 CHOOSE you this day whom ye will serve.
5. Your redemption DRAWETH nigh.
6. The Lord hath called EVERYONE.
7. FREELY ye have received, FREELY give.
8. God hath dealt GRACIOUSLY with us.
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10. In HIM we live, and move, and have our being.
11. I will INSTRUCT thee, and teach thee.
12. JESUS is the Christ.
13. His KINGDOM shall be exalted.
14. LIFT up thy prayer.
15. Deck thyself now with MAJESTY.
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17. The Lord is God, there is NONE else.
18. OWE no man anything.
19. Be PARTAKERS of the Lord's table.
20. Thy word hath QUICKENED me.
21. Why REASON ye among yourselves?
22. We will SERVE the Lord.
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24. I TELL you the TRUTH.
25. Is not the Lord among US?
26. Prepare a VOLUNTARY offering unto the Lord.
27. My WORDS do good to him that WALKETH uprightly.
28. Thy YEARS shall not fail.
29. The LORD is great in ZION (place of peace).
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31. Thou shalt love the LORD thy God.

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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.