

SPIRITICITY March 1954

ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD

By Nell Truesdell

This March 1954 issue of SPIRITICITY ushers in the fourteenth year of publication of this periodical by the Christ Truth League. We want to express our appreciation to our readers for their prayers, their good will, and their support of this department of our ministry. We value their interest in our messages and we assure them of our unceasing devotion to the Principle of Truth in their behalf. As all of us together make God the focal point of our attention, we shall see that He alone is the Good that our hearts long for, and that Jesus Christ is the way to our increased understanding, recognition, and acceptance of that Good.

Life in the world is a pleasanter and more profitable experience when we put God on the pedestal of our heart. To exalt Him above all else is to enter into the honor and distinction that are accorded to those who seek God, rather than His gifts; for our consciousness of His Presence not only offers Him voluntary praise and thanksgiving but invests us with the splendor and bliss of His heavenly abode.

Jesus Christ said that God's kingdom is within man. The point to understand is how this is so. What did Jesus Christ mean by His statement, "The kingdom of God is within you"? When we think of a kingdom we envision a domain on earth that is bounded by certain limits and ruled by a king. But a kingdom that is "within you" cannot have physical limits nor can it be ruled by some exalted personality. Jesus Christ had to use simple examples that would impart a meaning that cannot be expressed in words when He wished to illustrate some truth to His listeners. At one time He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field; which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree so that the birds in the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."

When we analyze this statement, we see that Jesus Christ did not mean that a seed is God's kingdom. Neither is the tree that results after the seed is planted God's kingdom. His kingdom is the growing action - the aliveness, the movement within a seed that transforms a seed into a tree. The kingdom of God, then, is the livingness that is hid in the midst of all God's creation. In man, this activity proves to be the Christ by which a human being is transformed into a spiritual son of God.

Our goal of God; the Way to that goal is Jesus Christ; the Power that accompanies us on that Way is God's Love, or the Holy Spirit. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life;" said Jesus Christ. "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

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THE MODERN CHRIST
By Alden Truesdell

Our tendency to stand in awe of our Creator springs from the mystery that has shrouded the religious instructions of all time. We worship God from afar until we begin to apply the spiritual principles that Jesus Christ taught to the problems of our everyday life and work. We let the thief of the past saddle us with the limitations of a religious teaching about Jesus Christ, which is based on man's interpretation of God's Law and the Gospel of our Lord; or we let the thief of the future take us into a realm of vain imaginings regarding our salvation from sin in a "sweet bye-and-bye."

We forget that the teaching of Jesus Christ is always in the present tense; that we are to keep His sayings; that we may ask Him anything and He will do it; that we may prove discipleship by showing love one to another; that we may know the truth that makes us free; that we are to turn and enter the Kingdom of God, now at hand; that by seeking first God's Kingdom we shall have all things added unto us; that by knowing God aright we may enter into life everlasting. This is the day to practice the instruction of Jesus Christ.

The world of affairs has not kept its vision glued to the past. Rather, in all mundane fields of endeavor, men have looked away from the limitations of the past, and consequently the human race has made strides forward, which otherwise would have been impossible. In the very region where Jesus Christ once lived and worked startling changes have been made. In the National Geographic for April, 1934 we read:

"Beneath the cavern where King Saul consulted the witch of Endor runs the pipe line which will carry the mineral oil of Iraq 627 miles, across desert and mountain, to the Mediterranean shore.

"Across the plain of Dothan, whence the Ishmaelite caravan carried Joseph into Egypt, speed high-powered automobiles.

"Long lines of steel pylons, carrying electric energy generated by the River Jordan, bring light across the Plain of Sharon to illuminate countless homes formerly dimly lit by olive-oil lamps.

"Modern machinery, delivering thousands of tons of soap annually, challenges the output of the soapboilers of Shechem, who ply their ancient calling beneath the frown-scarp of Gerizim, where, in accordance with ancient religious rites, the few surviving Samaritans still celebrate their sunset sacrifice.

"To meet growing needs, a new port has recently been constructed at Haifa, at the foot of Mount Carmel. . . . There are speed boats on the Dead Sea and seaplanes on the Sea of Galilee. . . .

"Modishly clad Jewesses from the boulevards of central Europe jostle the comely women of Bethlehem clad in the flowing robes and peaked headdress of medieval times. . . .

"Nowadays modern tractors drawing a dozen plowshares at once are seen beside the camel and the ass drawing the primitive nail plow of biblical times. . . .

"Passengers may now travel in comfortable sleeping and restaurant cars across the desert which Moses took 40 years to traverse and cross the width of Sinai and the Holy Land between breakfast and tea. . . . The Jerusalem-Jericho road has become an industrial highway."

If these advances were accomplished features in 1934, what progress can be described for 1954! And who will deny that the general advancement that is enjoyed by all mankind everywhere on earth stems from the influence of Jesus Christ? For men of today have the advantage of the leavening influence that was put into the race consciousness 2000 years ago by Him who said: "I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." Anyone who is but partially aware of the power and influence of another may use the qualities which that one has set into motion, as any branch of a vine may use the life of the vine to grow itself into fulness and to bring forth fruit.

Man as a whole has not yet turned to Jesus Christ, but the whole of mankind has been favorably affected by His Advent. Though the Divine Potentiality has lain latent in the hearts of men, much progress has been made since Jesus Christ came into the world to teach men that they are sons of the Most High God. Our mechanical inventions and intellectual progress in all fields of endeavor are but evidence of our touch upon the hem of His garment. Finer inventions and developments, which are now inconceivable, are to come as our present unfolds into the future. But the greatest development will be in the realm of Spirit.

The work which the modern Jesus Christ is now doing through you and me and all the other branches who are, consciously, allowing the Vine to renew their minds, bodies, and affairs is bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit, which transcends, and is more lasting than, the fruit of the world. And all mankind is destined to enter the spiritual realm and bring forth spiritual fruit, even though most men, at present, insist on traveling the devious roads through the realms of mind and matter, before they surrender themselves to the leadership and grace of Him who said:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

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THE SAVIOUR
By Robert Applegate

There is only one thing that will avail to heal the ills of mankind, both personal and social; and that is a return to, and a practice of, the teaching of Jesus Christ - not the Jesus of myth and fancy, not "the pale man of Galilee" who told His followers sweet stories about the birds and flowers; but the Jesus Christ of fact, of whom an opponent said, "Never man spake like this man" - the Jesus Christ who was the Word of God incarnate.

We have the teaching of Jesus Christ in the Four Gospels, which are the most precious heritage of the human race; and the accounts are veridical. Many have discredited these reports on the basis of minor differences among them, but such differences are to be expected and in no way detract from the accuracy of

the record. Two eyewitnesses may give different reports of the same event, but both accounts may be accurate, the differences being in emphasis, in the omission and inclusion of details. So it is with the Gospels. One, the Gospel of John, was written by a Disciple who companioned with the Master during His entire ministry. The others were written on the basis of the oral accounts of those who heard and saw Jesus. The Gospels differ in emphasis, but their accounts are accurate. Mark, who wrote his Gospel on the basis of what he heard from the Disciple Peter, portrayed Jesus as the Man of wondrous deeds. Matthew portrayed Him as the Messiah; Luke, as the Saviour of world; and John, as God incarnate. All are true, for Jesus Christ was all of that - and more.

The teaching of Jesus Christ, which is the teaching of God, is contained in the Gospels; yet, throughout the centuries, this teaching has been grossly misinterpreted and misrepresented. This is perhaps inevitable; for the instruction is so revolutionary that it has been unacceptable to men who prided themselves on the ability to reason their way to the answers to the fundamental questions of life. Further, men will always find what they seek. Therefore they have found in the Gospels, not what is there, but what they have wanted to find there. They have taken what they wanted, twisted it to suit their fancy, and rejected the rest. Thus all sorts of queer doctrines have claimed to be Christian that are not so at all.

Yet the message of Jesus Christ is clear to anyone who honestly wants to understand it, and therefore it behooves anyone who wants to know the Truth of God to go directly to the Gospels and to study the message that is in them. We should accept no man's interpretation of Christianity, but go to the source, and read and

re-read and re-read the words of Jesus Christ until they reveal themselves to us, as they will. This is the only logical course to follow; for it is obvious that not all the doctrines that claim to be Christian can be true, for many are mutually contradictory; and, on the other hand, it should be equally obvious that Jesus Christ, whom most of us recognize as the Son of God, taught the Truth. The illogical fallacy that Jesus, as a man, could have been wrong (which is asserted by some) must be completely rejected. The central doctrine of Christianity is that Jesus was the Christ, and the Christ makes no mistakes. He said, "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." God is not wrong.

What Jesus Christ did illustrates what He taught. Thus the details of His life as they are reported in the Gospels are important, not in themselves, but as illustrating and backing up His instruction. The Disciple John, who of all the Apostles had the clearest understanding of what Jesus was, referred to Jesus' works, not as, "miracles," but as "signs." And at the end of his Gospel he wrote: "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." This truly is the significance of all the wondrous works that Jesus performed. "Though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him."

Today many have discovered the futility of looking for happiness in worldly pleasures alone and are seeking spiritual satisfaction, but they turn to organized religion and they find only an attenuated substitute for what they seek. They turn to the teaching of men about God, rather than to the teaching of God. Of such the prophet Hosea said, "They return, but not to the most High." And yet it is possible to return to the most High, but this return can be made only through the Son. For, as He said, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

The great error of organized religion is that it points to itself, rather than to God. It says, "Come to church"; it does not say, "Look to God." Organized religion claims to be the organ of God, "the body of Christ"; but it

fails to fulfill this function. And of that which puts itself in the way of God the judgment is: "Ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered."

The teaching of Jesus Christ is not the teaching of the Old Testament, nor is it the teaching of any modern church or sect. It is not ethics; it is not an opiate; it is not a doctrine of resignation to the status quo. It is a way of life, a way that leads to joy; for Jesus Christ was not a "man of sorrows." He was a man of Joy, who alone could say, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

It is said by some that Jesus taught nothing new, but this is hardly true. Jesus set His seal of approval on the teaching of the Old Testament, but He went so far beyond it that His instruction is radically different. The expression, "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time: . . . but I say unto you," occurs five times in the Sermon on the Mount. This is but one indication of the uniqueness of Jesus' words. And, just as the prophets that preceded Him did not teach the Truth as He did, so no other seer, sage, or philosopher of any land has so taught. Others have said some of the things He said, of course; for Truth is One, and from the beginning of time men have perceived and felt the Truth of God in some measure. But no one has known It, or taught It, as Jesus Christ did; for He was It. No one else in the history of mankind could say, "I am . . . the truth. . . . I came into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."

The teaching of Jesus Christ is so revolutionary that few have dared to follow it in its entirety. Today the usual excuse is that the whole account of the Saviour is a fairy tale, which a rational man brought up on the discoveries of modern science can hardly accept. And yet the whole basis of science is empiricism, which means trying something to find out whether it is true or not. This, too, Jesus anticipated when He said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." If anyone wants to be scientific about the teaching, he has only to try it to see if it works. If it works every time, then he can accept it as reliable. The drawback is that what he has to experiment with is his own life, but he has nothing to lose and everything to gain. Christianity is not something to be talked about or argued about; it is something to be practiced. The promise is, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." This is a fair enough challenge. The instruction is in the Gospels; we have only to try it.

Incidentally, while Christianity is certainly not dependent upon modern science for verification, it is interesting to note that the most advanced scientists are forced by the results of their investigations to agree with the teaching of Jesus Christ. Thus Sir Arthur Eddington writes:

"The idea of a universal Mind or Logos would be, I think, a fairly plausible inference from the present state of scientific theory; at least it is in harmony with it."

"The world-stuff behind the pointer readings is of nature continuous with the mind."

"Recognizing that the physical world is entirely abstract and without 'actuality' apart from its linkage to consciousness, we restore consciousness to the fundamental position."

Similarly, Robert Millikan has declared, "The childish mechanical conceptions of the nineteenth century are now grotesquely inadequate."

What the scientists cannot discover, by the methods of science, is that the Mind which they perceive behind the changing phenomena of the physical world is the "living God," with whom man can communicate, just as he can with a living person.

There has been entirely too much romanticizing about Jesus Christ and too little honest effort to find out what He was and what He did. And yet one point should be abundantly clear: The central fact of Christianity is not the Crucifixion but the Resurrection. Many have been crucified - it was a common form of

Roman execution only One has been resurrected. And the significance of the Resurrection is twofold. First, Jesus Christ is no longer a man who died upon a cross; Jesus Christ is here. "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." And, second, Jesus Christ is the Saviour, the One Teacher, the Son of God.

From early times men have felt that someone should be able to overcome death, and that this one would be the guide to mankind. They have perceived also that this one could not be human, but would have to be divine; and they have concocted myths about the god who died and rose again. The myths have been the expression of what men felt ought to be true. Jesus Christ gave them actuality. He went through death and emerged on the other side, not dead, but glorified, visibly.

Arnold Toynbee is not a minister nor a theologian but a student of history, that is of the lives of men in the world. At the end of his survey of the so-called "saviours of mankind" (who have appeared as prophets, religious leaders, philosophers, emperors, and gods), he writes:

"When we first set out on this quest we found ourselves moving in the midst of a mighty marching host; but, as we have pressed forward on our way, the marchers, company by company, have been falling out of the race. The first to fail were the swordsmen, the next the archaists, the next the futurists, the next the philosophers. . . . In the last stage of all, our motley host of would-be saviours, human and divine, has dwindled to a single company of none but gods. . . . At the final ordeal of death, few, even of these would-be saviour-gods, have dared to put their title to the test by plunging into the icy river. And now, as we stand and gaze with our eyes fixed on the farther shore, a single figure rises from the flood and straightway fills the whole horizon. There is the Saviour; 'and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand; he shall see the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied.'"

We have the teaching of the Son of God. May God give us grace to follow it.

Alphabet Of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
FOR EVERY WEEK DAY OF THE MONTH

MARCH 1954

1. Lord, who shall ABIDE in thy tabernacle?
2. BECAUSE He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
3. I will bless the Lord who hath given me COUNSEL.
4. DO good.
5. The Lord my God will ENLIGHTEN my darkness.
6. In Thy Presence is FULNESS of joy.
*
8. Hold up my GOINGS in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.
9. My HEART is glad and my glory rejoiceth.
10. The Spirit maketh INTERCESSION for us.
11. We also JOY in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.
12. He that KEEPETH thee will not slumber.
13. I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy LIKENESS.
*
15. MIGHTY works are wrought by His hands.
16. We have NOW received the atonement.
17. We know not what we should pray for as we OUGHT.
18. Seek PEACE, and PURSUE it.
19. Study to be QUIET.
20. The Lord RECOMPENSED me according to my RIGHTEOUSNESS.
*
22. I have SET the Lord always before me.
23. Do all THINGS without murmuring.
24. With an UPRIGHT man Thou wilt show thyself UPRIGHT.
25. God hath VISITED His people.
26. It shall be WELL WITH thee.
27. We bless YOU in the Name of the Lord.
*
29. Be glad, ye children of ZION (peace).
30. He restoreth my soul.
31. Give unto the Lord glory and strength.
* * *

"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.