

TURN TO THE LORD

By A. J. Truesdell

It is natural for man to develop a great eloquence and volubility in explaining his troubles because he is so familiar with them. But no matter how grammatical he is, or how correctly composed his dissertation, he feels no relief until he is willing to turn his attention away from his need to that which gives surcease from pain. The fact that man, when he is in need, may choose at will to turn to what is called spiritual help would indicate that there is something in the scheme of things capable enough to help him out of trouble. No matter what the nature of the trouble or how complex it is, man has through he ages, sensed a Power, Presence, a Being who could give him aid if he but knew how to make contact. The effect of the help that comes even when he turns toward the source in his blind, fumbling way causes him to wonder what it is that works to adjust his problems. If he is interested sufficiently to pursue more than a casual inquiry he begins to wonder if there is any limit to the ability of the All-Power to serve and bless him if he understood it and cooperated with it.

When a man of his own free will turns to Spirit he discovers it to be something entirely different from the popular concept of Spirit. In his search, he goes to religious meetings to learn about Spirit and generally comes away feeling either like a miserable sinner or a self-righteous churchman. In either case he has learned nothing of Spirit. If he fails to find instruction in the prescribed places he is apt to take courses in psychology, or he will attend master-classes in pursuit of the occult where he learns to practice breathing and thinking exercises to improve his spiritual nature. He oftentimes is taught to discriminate carefully in his selection of foods, and how to watch his vitamin and calory intake.

One by one he investigates, tries, and drops inquiries in his effort to search for fundamental help because he senses a lack in each system. Eventually he dismisses all from his mind in order to give attention to what he calls the more important things of life, the practical things, the real things. He drops his attention back into the realm of materiality where he continues to cope with all the problems that originate and exist in it.

But just suppose a man should stop for a little while and give a fraction of his attention to something above the seen, to something that would solve his problems, as he gives to the problems themselves. Let us use this analogy: How would a man use his mind to solve a problem in mathematics? Would he magnify the problem until there was no room in his mind to consider the mathematical principle. Or, would he apply his attention to the principle and let it solve the problem? If he is wise he will give his attention to the principle. Then he will discover he must keep contact with the principle - let it carry through - in order to arrive at the correct answer. The problem always responds to the principle whenever the attention is taken away from the problem and placed without distraction on the principle.

In the case of our life-problems it is we ourselves who constitute the problem requiring adjustment. Each one is his own problem-child. The first thing that must be done is to lift the attention of the mind away from the self and its woes. Since the attention cannot float around in space but must fix or attach itself to something, it should be directed toward the highest possible

objective. To us, this means God, or Principle, or Spirit - it matters little what we call it. The important point is that we lift the attention away from the self, (its environment, and whatever else is involved, knowing it to be subject to change and adjustment), and fix that attention on the Most High God whence comes the help we so earnestly crave. As we do this we find ourselves moving out of our own way and we begin to remember things pertaining to Principle.

We recall that God is Spirit, that God is All-in-all, that God is the Principle of Life. God also is Love, Intelligence, Power, Substance, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Omniscience.

Perhaps we had never thought much about such things before, but now we give a great deal of attention to them in our effort to sustain consciousness of God. If we try to reason about God and can do so eloquently, great is the benefit. However, even though the things we say, or though our line of reasoning seems rather foolish (because it is strange in our practice) we keep on using our mind to think on such things. We say: If God is Spirit and God is Omnipresent, and Omnipresent means the One and Only Presence, then that Spirit which is God is present here and now.

We say: If God is good and God is all, then there can be no evil, for nothing but Good can be present and there is only Good for us to acknowledge and agree with.

We say: If God is Omnipotent, the One and Only Power, then there is no other power to look to or believe in.

We say: If God is All-in-all, there being only God there is no faith but the faith of God. Since faith is a working power, even when we ourselves appear to be working it is really God working through us, for God is the One Worker.

We say: If God is Omniscient, the One guiding and directing Intelligence, then whatever understanding man has is given of God. God is the One Mind, the One thinker, and man, letting God-Intelligence fill him, may know God, for God knows himself in man.

With such reasoning a man may conclude if this is true then the occasional help he received when he spasmodically turned to something higher than himself should extend into an ever-present help, instantly available at any and all times. And in this realization he becomes as delighted as a child with a new toy.

Because he delights himself in the Lord, he finds unexpected good added unto him. He discovers that the Law deals with man's relations with man and that the Gospel deals with God's relation with man. The Law disciplines man's mind; the Gospel is the working of the Mind of God which working is speedy, sure, and direct in the fulfillment of the Good without interfering with the activity of man's thinking processes. When a man discovers this he finds that the Lord is always one jump ahead of him, that before he calls he already has his answer, and whatever he claims for himself God gives assent, Yes, all this, and more.

Man has forgotten so much. As he gives attention to God his memory is quickened; he comes into remembrance of all things. He begins to know what the promise, If you return unto Me, I will return unto you, means, and he begins to understand that it is a promise sure of fulfillment. He recalls that the Master

said, But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

When he catches glimpses of such dynamic possibilities, it gradually dawns upon man's infantile consciousness that God is actually for him instead of being against him. The more he analyzes or gives thought to the fact the more amazed he becomes and the more magnificent the fact appears to be. His utter helplessness before such beneficence is sensed as never before.

But, the more helpless he feels while giving attention to God, the more help he is bound to receive. For out of man's weakness God is made strong. "Let the weak say, I am strong." This helpless feeling draws man closer to the realization that he does nothing of himself, that it is the Father which doeth his perfect work. He finds his problems adjusted in marvelous ways and often claims that it is too good to be true. He remembers that God has finished his work and is able to rest from all his labors. And he recalls that it was right after this rest that creation began to manifest. So it is with man: he take his rest in God and the works follow. He is satisfied to be what God has made him; he accepts what God gives to him and he rejoices that it is the Father's pleasure to give him the Kingdom of Good.

Such thoughts about God and his Good enable anyone to conclude that it is not necessary to try to reconcile a Good God with an unsatisfactory environment. Neither does he feel called upon to explain the activities of either the prosperous sinner or the self-righteous hypocrite. He begins, over and over again, the practice of being independent of everything but God. He turns to God; he looks to God; he loves God; he has faith in God. By exercising his prerogatives as a son of God he becomes a citizen of the realm of Free Spirit where he sees that it is God's will to make him strong, self-reliant, and self-sufficient because God is strong, Self-reliant, and Self-sufficient. He applies Principle to overcome what is unprincipled.

We do not have to know all about God to get help from God. But the more we know God, the more help we expect, and in consequence, the more help we get. And the more steadfast we are in looking to the Source of help and the more grateful we become, the steadier its flow.

You might feel that you do not have time to become sanctified sufficiently enough to come to know God so surely and so truly. But you do have an instant right now in which you can turn your attention loose and let it fly towards your Lord. And, since one good turn deserves another, you will feel him turn to you. Let the warmth of God's love melt the rigid and static conditions caused by willful misconceptions. Let the will of God wilt the mortal will as the Spring sun's warmth releases the congealed waters back into their original fluidity. You are sanctified the moment you turn to your God in an honest endeavor to contact him. As you make a practice of lifting your attention toward him you feel the shackles of the world snap and from then on your delight is in the Lord who made your heaven and your earth.

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GIVE THANKS

By Nell Truesdell

Thanksgiving is a feast day that recurs annually in the life of every American. All of us know the history of how this country was settled and how the Pilgrim fathers set aside one day in the autumn of each year to celebrate God's goodness to them during the trying times of establishing homes in the wilderness. If ever any reader of this article has tried to gain a foothold in a strange territory he has some idea of what the pioneers in any region go through. He knows that everything is against him from the very start for he is a stranger forcing his way into a place unfriendly and uncooperative.

Perhaps most of the trial is in the mind of him who tries to overcome the apparent resistance in the new place. He knows he is a foreigner and that in itself intimidates him and draws to him all sorts of trials and hurts. Seldom is a stranger who has decided to live and work in a place occupied by others welcomed with open arms. He must prove himself before he is accepted.

As we glance over history we note that the children of Israel had to fight for every inch they gained in the land of Canaan, even though it was a promised land from the Lord. In other parts of the world, through the ages, similar struggles have taken place when one group of people undertook to superimpose themselves on the grounds of another just as, in our own American history, we know our ancestors took possession of this country by displacing the aborigines.

It appears that somebody or something has to be overcome as one state changes into another. In our spiritual development this is especially true, for the old way must change as the new way takes possession of the consciousness. Often there are mighty battles in the struggle for supremacy, but always the new way wins no matter how strong the resistance for somehow the new way has a strength and virility the old way lacks.

In the development of a new consciousness we change our idea of God. Since that idea is the strongest in our constitution, if we are strong-willed and hold tenaciously to concepts, a great struggle ensues when there is a suggestion that our old concept might not be as completely true as we had thought. All of us who read literature such as this have changed or are well on our way toward changing our idea of God. We no longer think of God in the way that we used to, or in the way we were taught as children. We no longer pray in the old way, whipping ourselves into a state of submissive devotion through prayers that tended to make us feel very unworthy of even the opportunity to pray. We have discovered that though our idea of God has changed, and our praying has undergone reformation, the One God remains forever the same, changeless, eternally stable, sure, and real.

It is a wonderful thing to have a God to worship who is not subject to change. "For I am the Lord, I change not." This in itself ought to be sufficient incentive to give thanks. "Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can show forth all his praise." This in itself ought to be sufficient incentive to give thanks. About the grandest gesture we can make toward God is to praise him. We can praise him for his blessings - the things he has given us - or we can praise him for himself which, of course, is the highest praise. Or, we can offer both kinds of praise; the first concerns ourselves and our personal

needs, the second, God and his freedom from need of any kind. It is good practice to check on the sort of praise we offer for its quality will show where we place our values. If we find ourselves habitually praising God for things, our heart is centered in things and eventually we shall be disappointed, for things do sometimes fail to satisfy.

"Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness."

He who can truly praise God faces him without fear. He is joyously devoted. The godliness within him enables him to see godliness everywhere. He loses fear of things, seen or unseen: he is neither afraid of God, nor of things.

This feeling of freedom enlivens his mind and he rejoices. A state of happiness surcharges him, and gratitude moves through him enlivening and quickening everything and everybody he contacts. Brightness fills his world and shadows flee. "Good is the Lord, which hath showed us light. Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee."

Gratefulness toward God fills us with warmth, and we desire to repay for bounteous considerations. It engenders acknowledgment of favors, the only way we can repay the Lord. We should not wait for a yearly holiday to arrive before offering heart-felt thanks to God. Daily practice of thanksgiving will prove itself in that the good things of life will increase. In our private experience, thanking God for the present meal as we sit before it, has provided good meals throughout the years, abundant and satisfying.

Offering a prayer of thanks for money received and money spent is a form of blessing that returns abundance to anyone who practices it. Offering thanks for clothes, house or room, serves to insulate any domain from the rigors of the world. "I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation."

Many people run their bodies into early graves because they seldom have a word of praise or thanks for those bodies. The body needs praise just as much as furniture, or food, or houses, or business. See how readily it responds to the healing balm of praise. Often all it needs for complete recovery from sickness is a word of honest praise and gratitude directed toward it.

While we are thankful for the blessings that make life freer, we continually keep our vision On High, knowing they come from God and are not to be valued above him. We can take God at his word. "Concerning the works of my hands, command ye me." Jesus looked up and blessed and gave thanks and fed the hungry, healed sick bodies, and raised the dead. No one demonstrates anything except the Father gives it. One person might ask for wisdom and his wisdom increases. Another is delighted with strength and goes from strength to strength. Another takes pleasure in his ability to fathom scientific problems which leads him to discover what seem to be new principles. Man's whole operative method for receiving his good might be summed up in two movements: Ask for what you want; and, give thanks for what you get.

The same thanksgiving that increases loaves and fishes supplies the mind with new food that it may be nourished with the things of the Spirit. Any opposition that becomes evident while old ideas are being dispossessed so that the new can be established should act as a challenge that spurs one to renewed

effort. Since the "inhabitants" will not help and help must be had, the vision must be set toward an objective willing and able to supply all needs in a way best suited to the times. We who have discovered that God not only gives us the good things we need but is the Good itself, must be diligent in lifting our inner vision toward him if we would overcome the opposition that abides in our own mind and heart. Thoughts and attitudes long established do not readily give way to the realization that God is a present help; that God is the supply of all our need; or, that God cares for us, and loves us, and approves of us.

"Delight thyself in the Lord." As our gratitude increases, we discover new things to be grateful for; praise of and delight in God begets abundance. It really is a way of proving God who has promised to open the very windows of heaven and pour out blessings in such profusion that there shall not be room enough to receive all of them. That is the kind of blessing that hurts. Frequently we get so much from the Lord that we begin to complain; not that he has been short, but that we are pained in that we are not yet ready to receive the fullness of good so generously given. Praise is one practice that will alleviate the pain. Thanksgiving enlarges the capacity to use, for unused blessings become quite burdensome.

"Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High." Give God the glory. Old, tired, narrow thoughts of God must give way before the enlarge vision toward him. He comes into the mind and heart ready to receive him and what cannot abide his mighty Presence is displaced that room be ample to accommodate his abundance of all good and pleasant riches.

All of us in this country have so much to be thankful for. Not only for opportunities, freedom to live as we choose, and for a multitude of labor-saving devices to free us from strenuous work, but for the privilege of living in a land made ready for us, here and now, where we have time to consider the things of God in a way best suited to our present development. Let us always remember that "the things of God knoweth no man, ... they are spiritually discerned."

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SPIRITICITY November 1946

PLOTINUS AS A SPIRITUAL GUIDE

By R. A. Applegate, Jr.

(Chapter 1, Continued from Last Month)

The All-Soul is Omnipresent even as the Good and Divine Mind. It is the divisible and indivisible: divisible in that It is the individual souls and indivisible in that where a part of It is, the whole is. "Why then need we hesitate to think of Soul as ... Omnipresent, indwelling in totality at every point throughout the All?" Soul contains all the individual souls and is, in fact, the individual souls. It is as a light which shines into many houses at one time yet remains one light. Since Soul, being partless, is full present at every point, each soul contains potentially all the qualities and powers of Soul. The question arises as to how there can be one Soul and many souls. Plotinus answers that the difference is one of differentiation (heterotes) not of spatial distance. It is as when a principle of judgment is applied to different cases. It is the same principle yet with different applications. Similarly one soul in many persons, though undivided, can have many experiences. Another example is that an individual soul can comment simultaneously upon a

pleasant experience in the finger and a pain in the head. "Diversity within the Authentic depends not upon spatial separation, but sheerly upon differentiation; all Being, despite this plurality is a unity still. So, too, when the Soul-Principle enters into bodies - or rather they into it - it is thought of as distributable only because the animating force is to be recognized at every point. For Soul is not distributed out to the various parts of the body; there is integral omnipresence manifesting the veritable partlessness of that Principle. The souls are apart without partition; they are no more hedged off by boundaries than are the multiple items of knowledge in one mind; the one Soul so exists as to include all souls."

The ideas are not separated from the soul which contemplates them, but being omnipresent, they are in every soul, "in a manner peculiar to this sphere." "For the ideas are not set apart in some defined place; wherever there is a soul that has arisen from body, there These too are; the world of sense in one-where, the Intellectual Cosmos everywhere. Thus if in the sense-world we include Soul and the things of soul, then all is here that is There." This is a radical departure from Plato. It has been objected to as reducing the Ideas to the status of ideals, but it must be remembered that Plotinus is not talking about the human intellect, but about that part of every man that is one with the Divine. If the individual soul is one with the All-Soul, what objection can there be to saying that it contains the Divine Ideas? Jesus himself said, "The kingdom of heaven is within you." "I and the father are one." "Where I am, there ye may be also."

The Soul, since it is one with the All-Soul is above pleasure, pain, and all emotion. It is completely unaffected by anything except that which is higher than itself. "We may think then, of the soul (in man) as an immortal - imperishable, impassive, giving out something of itself, but taking nothing from without except for what it receives from the Existents prior to itself, from which, in that they are nobler, it cannot be sundered." All the "human" experiences are the province of the animate, the couplement of soul and body; but the soul does not share in the experiences, but remains independent even in the association.

The All-Soul, like Divine Mind, has a double function. It contemplates Divine Mind and, by its contemplation, creates nature. It has been objected that, at this point, Plotinus suddenly snaps the chain of creation; and that, whereas before the Divine had created only the Divine, now the Divine produces the physical, the mortal, and the perishable. However, there is nothing inconsistent in this. St. Paul said, "Those things which are seen are not made of things which do appear; the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." And it is obvious that the physical world must have had a Divine Origin if we are not to postulate it as the work of fortuitous circumstances or of a force opposed to the Divine intention: either of which solutions creates more difficulties than it solves.

Plotinus' All-Soul is modeled on the World Soul of the Timaeus; but here again, as in the case of Divine Mind, Plotinus has departed from Plato. In the Timaeus, the World Soul is presented as composed of the Same and the Other, or of that which is indivisible and that which is divisible into parts. It is suffused throughout the length and breadth of the cosmos; or rather, as soul was created first, the cosmos meets It at every point. The individual souls are not identical with the World Soul nor one with It, but they are composed of the same ingredients, and a mixture of human desires, hopes, and fears. Since, however, the World Soul is omnipresent, it follows that It must be immanent in the

individual souls as well as outside of them, although this is not specifically stated.

Plotinus took this conception of the World Soul and adapted it to his own monistic ontology by making soul the emanation of Divine Mind and, in turn, the Creator of the visible world. He claimed to find this in Plato, and by combining passages from *Philebus*, *Letters*, *Timaeus*, and *Republic*, he does derive it from him. However, it is a neat piece of exegesis, but it is not Plato. Plotinus, with his greater spiritual insight, conceived a monistic ontology and then proceeded to read it into his forerunner.

Just as the All-Soul, according to Plotinus, contemplates Divine Mind and by so doing, creates nature; so the individual soul by contemplation of the All-Soul produces the animate or the complement of soul and body. The body itself is inert matter, but it is touched to life by soul shining upon it. At this point, Plotinus postulates a division of the soul, "the disjointed being or user, the conjoined part ranking with the instrument or thing used." This two-fold division is, as the tripartite division of Plato, not an absolute one but rather a necessary accompaniment of the incarnation of soul in body. The animate is the province of all the passions, of pleasure, and of pain. The body alone, being inert matter, cannot have these experiences, nor can the soul experience them because it is not of their order. This animate is formed by a descent of the soul, but the descent constitutes no sin in the soul so long as it remembers its source and keeps its vision turned in that direction. Most souls, however, in the desire for self-ownership, forget whence they have come and become immersed in the bodily. This is the origin of evil in the soul. Once the process has started, the soul finds that the body needs more and more attention. It becomes like a sailor who is so intent on saving his ship that he forgets his own life is in danger. It is possible, however, for the soul, no matter how far sunk in the bodily, to turn about and to win its way back to the "Fatherland," its conscious oneness with the All-Soul and its joy-giving vision of the One.

(To Be Continued)

Alphabet of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day of the Month

November 1946

1. AWAKE, AWAKE, put on strength.
2. Receive the BLESSING from the Lord.
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4. The COMFORTER ... shall testify.
5. Now is the DAY of the Salvation.
6. The Lord shall ESTABLISH thee an holy people.
7. The FATHER is with me.
8. The Lord will GIVE GRACE and GLORY.
9. Lord, be Thou my HELPER.
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11. The INTEGRITY of the upright shall guide them.
12. This my JOY is fulfilled.
13. All shall KNOW Me, from the least to the greatest.
14. Ye are the children of the LORD.
15. Follow after MEEKNESS.
16. His NAME shall be in their foreheads.
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18. OFFER up spiritual sacrifices.
19. Ye shall POSSESS that good land.
20. The word is QUICK and powerful.
21. REMEMBER the word.
22. The Lord God is a SUN and a SHIELD.
23. He will guide you into all TRUTH.
*
25. He is able to save ... to the UTTERMOST.
26. This is the VICTORY, even our faith.
27. Ye also shall bear WITNESS.
28. YIELD YOURSELVES to the Lord.
29. Be ZEALOUS, therefore, and repent.
30. Let not your heart be troubled.

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