

I THANK THEE, FATHER

By Alden Truesdell

It is altogether fitting and proper that a great nation should set aside a day to honor a potent Principle; and accordingly almost every successful or prosperous nation has recognized the value of observing the practice of giving thanks. Some have given thanks with feasting or fasting, some with music and dancing. The benefits to be derived from the practice of thanksgiving are further recognized in social behavior, where it is customary to give thanks for any sort of compliment, favor, or service; and where compliments are expected. We find selling organizations extolling the virtues of praise and the expression of social niceties. We all like to witness sincere appreciation in our associates. If, when we give a gift or a service, there seems to be a hearty sense of gratitude, we are likely to want to repeat the experience. Almost everything, in fact, responds to the practice of praise and thanksgiving - so much so that many revert to an insincere praise known as flattery to attain temporary benefits. But habitual flattery and spontaneous praise are products of entirely different causes. The distinction has been so noted that it is generally echoed in the modern saying, "Flattery will get you nowhere." But sincere praise will get results. Thanksgiving will cause even God to respond, and that right speedily and favorably. An attitude of appreciation, praise, and thanksgiving responds to cultivation. Good habits of consciousness and behavior may be developed by practice.

Someone has truly expressed a vital Principle in saying, "If you don't have what you want, start wanting what you have." At first it may seem that what one has is not of a high order of merit; but let someone start to lose that which he has, and his sense of values undergoes a change. An example of this is the causal suitor who sees no urgency in his relationship to his girl-friend until another man becomes interested.

Lack of appreciation is noticeable; failure to give thanks is a regrettable omission, and a costly one, regardless of excuses for that omission. A "Thank you, Sir," takes little time and effort and pays good dividends. A "Thank you" is so easy to say and so fraught with fortunate reaction that it is little wonder the Psalmist cried out in a burst of desperation, "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness!"

A letter came recently from a lady on the West Coast, who has had a series of satisfying and gratifying experiences since contacting the Christ Truth League here many years ago. The reason for her success in these matters is summed up in this quotation from her letter: "I feel like jumping up and down and shouting 'Praise God and the Truesdells!'" There are people who feel after God, if happily they might find Him, touch the hem of His garment, and be made whole. Self-sufficient students of spiritual Principles advise keeping the feelings out of the picture; but as we consider the act of thanksgiving, can we think of a more sincere practice than actually to feel thankful?

The Psalmist seems to have been constantly giving thanks for some desired effect. His appreciation was expressed to a magnificent King, who is above all gods. When we consider some of the expressions of Jesus Christ, His concepts seem simple and naive in comparison. His appreciation was expressed to a close and intimate Presence for benefits already received. He always spoke with the

authority of a rightful partaker. "I thank thee, Father, that thou hast heard me": here is the assurance that borders on blasphemy, of which he was accused. "And I knew that thou hearest me always": here is a casual expression based on an assurance of established relationship. into correct alignment with God.

From Ephesus, Paul wrote four letters to the Corinthian church. The first letter is referred to in I Corinthians 5:9, "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators." This letter has been lost, although a portion of it seems to be contained in II Corinthians 6:14 to 7:1, inclusive. This passage does not fit in the context in which it now stands and is thought to be a fragment of Paul's first letter, which a copyist inserted at this point. The second letter that Paul wrote is our present I Corinthians. The third letter is contained in II Corinthians, chapters 10-14, inclusive, and the fourth letter is II Corinthians, chapters 1-9, inclusive. If we study the passages in this order, we can get a clear picture both of Paul's relations with the church at Corinth and of his timeless message to us.

All that we know of Paul's first letter to Corinth is contained in II Corinthians 6:14-7:1. Since the passage is short, it can be quoted in its entirety:

"Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean; and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

The passage consists partly of quotations from the Old Testament urging the Israelites not to associate with foreigners. Paul applies it to his Christian converts to bring home to them the lesson that they should not waste their spiritual substance by engaging in pleasant social intercourse with non-Christians, who would receive a spiritual quickening from such intercourse, but would not be honest enough to acknowledge it. The message therefore is vital for all Truth students. They cannot afford to dissipate their spiritual heritage by idly passing it out to those who will neither acknowledge it nor give anything in return. They must not cast their "pearls before swine." The practice of Truth requires dedication, and therefore the student frequently must separate himself from his old unnecessary associations, until he is firmly enough grounded in his Principle to be able to move among them without being devitalized.

The deeper message of Paul's letter is in its application to the heart, the center of the affections. A person identifies himself with that to which he gives the attention of his heart, and the practice of Truth consists in completely reversing the direction of this attention. It is by withdrawing the attention from the old destructive associations and their concomitant negative reactions that the Truth student comes "out from among" his old states of consciousness. Paul gives, as the reason why the student should do this, the promise of a far better state: "God hath said, I will dwell in them; . . . and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." As the Truth student removes his attention from the external to give that attention to God, he opens the way

for the awareness of his eternal Sonship to God to descend into consciousness. He thus becomes, consciously, "the temple of the living God."

The first message therefore that the Word of Truth announces to the heart is the call to repentance, the summons to turn the attention away from all that is not of God, the announcement that there is a better way of life.

(To be continued)

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A STUDY IN THE LIFE AND WORK OF JESUS CHRIST

By Nell Truesdell

Part IV, An Interpretation

The life of Jesus Christ represents the step-by-step unfoldment of spiritual consciousness in the natural man who turns the attention of his mind steadfastly toward God. Spiritual consciousness is readily available to all mankind, but acceptance of spiritual consciousness is not common among men. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," as wrote Paul to the Corinthians.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. This Son is the activity of God, which is the life of man. Man is lived by the activity of God, Jesus Christ, which is the Son of God in him. The natural man does not know this. Since this fact cannot be translated into terms that the natural man can understand, he brands it as foolishness and turns away from it.

The thousands of people who followed Jesus during His second year of ministry in Galilee were insincere. They responded almost automatically to stimulation from without. They reacted zealously, even passionately, to the favorable impression Jesus made upon them by making their bodies well and feeding them abundantly. They neglected, however, to analyze their own emotions or His message. These Galileans were possessed by an extravagant religious frenzy that drove them to pursue Jesus day and night with a fervor that reached such a pitch that both the religious and political factions of Palestine were alerted to prevent an uprising.

Never at any step in His career did Jesus want or invite such fanatical devotion as he received. He repeatedly pointed out that He was sent from God to awaken His compatriots to an awareness of the Presence of God among men, and that this awareness would deliver mankind from the limitations of sickness, unhappiness, and want. To back up His promises He told stories, performed miracles of healing, cast out evil tempers, and, on occasion, revealed abundant provision at hand to thousands of persons, who had pursued Him with such ardent zeal that they neglected to bring along their own supplies. His teaching and His works had little effect on the multitudes. On one occasion, after He had fed five thousand people in a desert place in a miraculous manner, the masses, who had now taken on the aspect of revolutionists who wanted forcibly to make Him king, followed Him to Capernaum. To avert the disaster of an open demonstration of their political intentions, Jesus frankly said to them,

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed." When Jesus was asked what men might do to work the works of God, He answered, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent."

This answer was contrary to the desires of the people. They wanted a leader who would deliver them from the double yoke of bondage to the Roman government and their own priesthood at Jerusalem, for both factions were stripping them daily of their substance and, through extortion, were reducing them to virtual slavery. But all that Jesus gave them was instruction to believe on Him, and through Him to return to God, who holds all things secure in His hand. "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me."

From this time on, the masses, who had zealously trailed Jesus, turned as one man, and, prompted by the continuous propaganda against Him by the Pharisees, began and continued to persecute Him until the day of His crucifixion. Their persecutions drove Him into sparsely settled localities for the first six months of His third year of ministry. Then He left His native country to seek refuge in Peraea, where ultimately, he went through another cycle of adulation and persecution during the last six months of His career on earth. Of all the crowds, His twelve selected men and a handful of devoted friends were the only persons who remained loyal to Him.

The Galileans represent the thoughts and feelings which abide in all humankind and which, when aroused, follow enthusiastically after whatever attracts their attention. Their shift from ardent adulation to violent persecution of spiritual authority is a symbol of what takes place in the consciousness of every human being at some point in his life. It may happen in childhood, or it may occur in adulthood. The time does not matter. The pattern is the same at any age, unless, by some miracle, a person is awakened sufficiently to the import of an impending spiritual change in him to be able to take conscious hold on himself and force himself to be amenable to the action of this change in him. If he does take hold on himself, he will divert his natural tendency to turn away from the movement of God within him, and will undertake the trek inward and upward in consciousness at the direction of Jesus Christ, the Identity, who points out the straight path that leads to full awareness of God. If he is sincere, Jesus Christ will provide him with all necessities, as he slowly makes the transition from the natural man to the spiritual Son. Thus is a man born anew that he may enter into the Kingdom of God.

When the first flush of reaction to the Christ (the Messiah) comes, the consciousness of the natural man is stimulated beyond the limits of its previous experiences. It is awed and thrilled by the revolutionary message and its terrific impact. However, when secret motives for self-aggrandizement are thrown into bold relief by the bright light of Spirit, the reaction usually is violent. The natural man begins to doubt, then to condemn that which unveils his secret sins. The life of any man is the product of his hidden motives. If these are centered on self alone, they are false; if they tend toward God they are the means that lead man out of the wilderness of human endeavor into a realm rich in spiritual verities just as fast as he can travel the upward way. Transfer of the attention of the mind from things in the outer to things in the inner realm of Spirit demands reorientation of the Identity in consciousness. Formerly the man accepted outer values as incontrovertible; now he knows them as shabby imitations of fact. Where before he was held in bondage to material and

religious laws, he now is free to pursue his true destiny: full consciousness of Sonship. The changes incident to this achievement are multitudinous and are often baffling because of their obscurity.

When we read the life of Jesus Christ in Scripture, we are disturbed by the way Judas Iscariot betrayed his Master. However, a like betrayal goes on in the consciousness of every man until he is awakened. Judas represents a specific section in the consciousness of the natural man that has jurisdiction over the Life Principle in the body. Driven by the passions which exhibit as a lust for accumulation, the Judas in man bargains with the religious forces that apparently have the power to kill the body. (The body of the natural man is gripped fast in his belief about God and about his relationship to God.) However, though the body is the victim of Judas' betrayal, its destruction has no effect on the Identity.

The outer disaster had no power to extinguish the identity of Jesus Christ. His Life is forever because Jesus Christ has overcome the limitations of the natural man. We recall that He taught, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth"; and, "No man taketh it (Life) from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."

Jesus Christ loved God so much that He never thought of advantaging Himself. Whatever His experience among men, He remembered God and kept the attention of His mind on God so persistently that God spoke and acted through him at all times. That Jesus was killed is no sign of failure. The human consciousness must be killed; that is, it must be cleansed of all false knowledge that is gained through the senses; then it must be filled with the treasures of the Kingdom. Had Jesus not gone through the experience of death and resurrection, the race would have no hope for deliverance. That the race has failed to understand Jesus Christ does not discredit Him; it reveals man's unwillingness to obey Him and His command, "Follow Me!"

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Alphabet of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day of the Month

November 1951

1. AWAKE to righteousness.
2. That which is BORN of the Spirit is Spirit.
3. Ye are of God, little CHILDREN.
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5. If any man will DO His will, He shall know of the DOCTRINE.
6. EVERYONE that loveth, . . . knoweth God.
7. Christ hath made us FREE.
8. GLORIFY your Father which is in heaven.
9. Whatsoever ye do, do it HEARTILY, as to the Lord.
10. Receive the reward of the INHERITANCE.
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12. The Father JUDGETH no man.
13. Let us KNEEL before the Lord our Maker.
14. Ye have been called unto LIBERTY.
15. Be careful to MAINTAIN good works.
16. Do all in the NAME of the Lord Jesus.
17. OFFER an OBLATION.
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19. We have the PETITIONS that we desired of Him.
20. They came to Him from every QUARTER.
21. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you RICHLY.
22. By love SERVE one another.
23. We may know Him THAT is TRUE.
24. This Man hath an UNCHANGEABLE Priesthood.
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26. The VEIL shall be taken away.
27. I am the WAY.
28. A thousand YEARS in Thy sight are but as YESTERDAY.
29. There shall come out of ZION (peace) the Deliverer.
30. The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory.

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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.