

THANKSGIVING

By Alden Truesdell

GIVING THANKS is regarded as the proper response to the receipt of a gift or a service, and often it is expressed in acknowledgment of a compliment or a kindness. But it need not be confined to these customs; it may profitably be expressed for itself alone. And if thanksgiving is expressed for its own sake, it is liable to become habit-forming.

One of our friends calls the days he has experienced since coming into Christ Truth "golden days," and most of us can testify to a similar feeling concerning this new way of life. It is entirely within the power of our choice to make our days golden, and thanksgiving is a sure means to this end.

The Law of Providence is set in motion by the attitude and expression of thanksgiving. In our Scripture, the Psalmist seems to be the most consistent giver of thanks. He knew his Principle of Providence, and we can benefit by his example.

"Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High."

"O come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto Him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods."

We could do well with a Psalmist as a guest speaker. The joyous expression of gratitude for high Truth and an immanent God would do much to hasten the advent in consciousness of Him who brings "good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."

If we are ever distracted from consideration of self-possession, self-motivation, self-desire long enough to consider God's Being, God's All-capacity, God's Will, we shall feel inadequate to be grateful enough. But, like the Psalmist, we must try to express our thanks - not because God likes to get credit, but because we measure our own well-being by our appreciation of, and thanksgiving to, God.

Whoever has the presence of mind to give thanks for the treasure in heaven and the gifts of the Spirit will be recipient thereof and a witness to the Kingdom of God with men. That is all we have to be thankful for - nothing but God and only God - as Life, Protection, Strength, and Provision; as Love, Joy, Peace, and Power; as the Kingdom within, and as all things added.

How grateful we are for the demonstration of the efficacy of the true practices we have learned! How grateful we are for failure to demonstrate some fancied vanity which might have distracted us from greater glories! How grateful we are for the operation the Great Physician and Surgeon performs on our consciousness and our soul!

When we consider some of the expressions of gratitude of Jesus Christ, His practice seems simple and naive. His appreciation was expressed to a close and intimate Presence for benefits already received (though not yet visible). "I

thank Thee, Father, that Thou hast heard Me." Here is an assurance that bordered on blasphemy, of which He was accused. "And I knew that Thou hearest Me always." Here is expressed the certainty of an established communion.

Jesus Christ gave thanks for the unfailing operation of an all-providing Principle. He thanked the Father when He had occasion to call upon that Principle in the feeding of the five thousand. But He explained that provision is not enough; for "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

The worldly-wise could not be trusted with the knowledge of the Principle by which Jesus fed the multitudes. Therefore He thanked the Father that these things had been hidden "from the wise and prudent" and revealed only "unto babes." For so it seemed good in the Father's sight.

In Scripture, with its symbology of names, we find two phases of everything. "Judah" means praise and "Judas" means praise. But the Judas-praise stands for possessions; while the Judah-praise stands for the Providing Principle. Praise of things, of possessions, so magnifies things in consciousness that eventually the consciousness becomes cluttered; and the individual cannot see over the accumulation. The Judas praise says, "Goods are my prosperity"; and eventually it is weighted down with its own false god.

Judah says, "God is my prosperity"; and although it seems to have no place to lay its head, this unencumbered consciousness skims lightly over rough places; while the heavily laden Judas is weighted down with a self-imposed handicap.

For us, there must be a state of well-being more desirable than that represented by being well-fed, well-clad, and well-housed. The Scripture furnishes us with recommendations as to this state and its attainment.

"Doth not wisdom cry? . . . Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it."

Those who have heeded Wisdom's call know that the Giver and the gift come to him who is of a grateful heart.

Thanksgiving in its highest form is a giving of the grateful self and substance to the Creator of that self and the Bestower of all substance.

Paul said: "Rejoice ever more. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus."

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PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS

By Robert Applegate, Jr.

(Continued from last month)

IN THE first five chapters of his letter, Paul has shown the state that man has put himself into by turning away from his Creator. He has gone on to

say that Jesus Christ has acquitted man of his mistakes (which result from his original defection) and has freed him from the results of them. Man accepts this acquittal and this freedom by believing in Jesus Christ and His Redeeming Work. But man's infatuation with his religious affiliation stands in the way of his accepting the simple truth of the Good News. So Paul illustrated the superiority of simple belief to religious observance by the example of Abraham, who knew nothing of ritual or sermon, but won God's favor by believing that God would do what He had promised, and by obeying the Divine directions.

Paul then went on to describe some of the results of believing the Good News, of accepting the Redeeming Work of Jesus Christ: "We have peace with God. . . . We exult in God. . . . We have received the reconciliation (i.e., we have been brought back into a friendly relation with our Creator).

Paul then further describes the results of the Atonement by comparing Christ with Adam. At this point his message becomes obscure for the modern reader for several reasons. Paul's mind is so full of his message that his words can't keep up with his thoughts (we remember that he dictated his letters). So he starts a sentence - then, without finishing it, he starts off on another thought. His balanced constructions do not balance, because he starts out with one thought and by the time he has reached the second half of the sentence he has remembered three more things he wants to say. Further, he speaks of Adam as though he were an individual man, while he is thinking of him as the human nature of all of us ("all have erred").

Whether Paul accepted the Story of Adam and Eve as literally true is of no importance. The Story is an allegory. It is the story of everyone of us (the name "Adam" means "man"), and Paul knew this. But his message is obscured for many because he seems to speak of Adam as an individual whose transgression aroused God's anger and condemnation.

Adam is the natural man (apparently subject to the laws of nature, no different from animals); Christ is the Spiritual Man. Adam is the external of us; Christ is within us. Adam is the personality; Christ is the individuality. Adam is the mortal self we are conscious of ourselves as being; Christ is the eternal Self we must become conscious of ourselves as being. Adam is what we seem to be; Christ is what, in reality, we have been from eternity and will be to eternity. "We are all one in Christ Jesus."

Mankind has condemned itself to death by turning away from God and imagining itself a part of the natural world. "When they knew God, they did not reverence Him as God and were not thankful." This is man's error; the result of this error is death. This is the story of Adam and Eve. Eve lusted for the fruit of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil." So man has turned away from God in his infatuation with his own seeming intellectual powers. He has wanted to have all the experiences. He has wanted to see what he could do on his own without God. "Thinking themselves to be clever, they became foolish."

So man got himself into a hopeless snarl of pride, arrogance, self-seeking, frustration, anger, self-condemnation, and condemnation of others - leading only to death. Jesus Christ cut through the whole mess by showing to man his eternal oneness with God. And so He acquitted man, as it were, of his condemnation of himself, which man had imagined as God's condemnation of him.

Jesus was the perfect embodiment of the Christ that is the true Self of everyone. Jesus was the Christ; and so we speak of Him as Jesus Christ, or Christ Jesus. The Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ make all man's

reasonings foolish. But that is another lesson. The point Paul is making here is that man of his own self-will turned away from his only Source of life, and so brought death upon himself. Jesus Christ, by surrendering His own will, proved man's oneness with God and so restored man to his rightful state of conscious Eternal Life, if man will accept it.

So Paul says:

THROUGH ONE man, error came into the world, and through error, death; and thus death came to all men since all have erred (for error was in the world before religion, but error is not imputed where there is no religion). Still death ruled from Adam to the time of Moses, even over those whose error was not like the transgression of Adam, who was the antithesis of Him who was to come.

But the gift (of Christ) is not of the same order as the transgression. For if by one man's fall, all have died, then the Generosity of God and the free gift in the Generosity of the One Man Jesus Christ have much more overflowed to all. . . . For if by the fall of one, death ruled because of that one, much more will those who have received the overflow of Generosity and the gift of integrity rule in life through the One Jesus Christ. . . . Just as by the disobedience of one, all were established in error, so by the obedience of One all are established in innocence.

Religion entered so that error might be magnified. But where error abounded there Generosity over-flowed; so that, just as error had ruled and produced death, so the Generosity (of God) should rule and produce Everlasting Life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Today a surprising number of "Truth students" feel that they can do anything at all. They have been freed from the spectre of an angry God waiting for them to commit a breach of His law, so that He can consign them to everlasting punishment. They have realized that they cannot incur God's disfavor because God is Love and can know nothing but love for His children. So these people have felt that all things were permissible to them and they have given free rein to their worldly desires, and frequently to an unscrupulous cruelty. Like some children who have been much overprotected for too long, they have gone on a protracted spree. They overlook the simple and inescapable law that what a man sows he invariably reaps, that what he gives out eventually returns to him with increase. They have also missed the whole point of the Gospel.

The situation was the same in Paul's day. Many who were told that they could find God by accepting the Work of Jesus Christ rather than by trying to follow a rigorous and impossible code of conduct felt suddenly freed, and they gave full rein to their suppressed appetites. They used the words of Paul about being declared innocent by faith rather than by religious observances to justify their conduct.

There were also those who did not go overboard in self-seeking, but who felt no great compulsion to change their attitude toward their Creator. For had not Jesus Christ done the work for them? So they felt no compunction about their insensitivity to the Giver of all good. They were content to rest on their oars, to continue in their old, self-centered, luke warm, ungrateful ways of thinking and feeling.

Paul has strong words in every one of his letters for both of these classes of people. He addresses them now as he continues his letter:

What then shall we say? Shall we continue in error so that Generosity may abound? Never! How shall we who have died to error any longer live in it? Do you not know that all who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? We are buried with Him through baptism into His death, so that, just as Christ rose from the dead through the Power of God, so we should walk in newness of life. We will belong to the company of the Resurrection if we have shared in His death. We may know that we have been crucified with Him, so that the body of error is dissolved and we are no longer enslaved to error. He who has died is freed from error.

If we die with Christ, we believe that we will live with Him. We know that Christ, having risen from the dead, will never die again; death has no more power over Him.

In that He died, He died to error once for all time; in that He lives, He lives to God. Therefore consider yourselves to be dead in error, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

(To be Continued)

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FOR BEGINNERS

Q. I study Truth and realize that unnecessary discussion of business projects interferes with their immediate success. What answer can I give to relatives and friends?

A. TRY USING words to this effect: "This is a time for earnest prayer. Will you pray (in your own mind and heart) for the successful outcome of this venture? Discussion will dissipate spiritual Substance. Prayer will give strength to us and our projects."

Q. Please give your views on the practice of fasting.

A. IN THE religious sense, to fast is to abstain from any activity or indulgence that gives personal pleasure. E.g., some persons eat sparingly of certain foods during Lent; others do not eat at all on certain days, and contribute the cost of uneaten meals to their church. Such outer observances are incidental to the true fast, which is a surrender of detrimental habits of thought, action, and speech that may hinder our spiritual progress. We curb our desire to force others to measure up to our standards for them; we cease to criticize or condemn others; we banish anxiety about family, friends, business, and world conditions. In short, we discipline ourselves to be more steadfast in our inward purpose to know and love God. We stop trying to run the world. OUR ASKING for anything is but the echo of the fulfilled blessing already moving toward us.

Q. What do you mean by "spiritual Substance"?

A. ALL PHYSICAL things are composed of combinations of the 102 chemical elements. These elements are the physical substance of the things we see in the world.

Similarly spiritual Substance is the elements that God is composed of. Jesus said, "God is Spirit." Spirit, then, is the Substance of God.

What is Spirit? Spirit is the sum of all the Divine Ideas that make up the Being of God. We call them "Divine Ideas" because we do not know any other terms to describe them. They are Life, Love, Intelligence, Power, Peace, etc. They are the "stuff" of Spirit, out of which God creates His universe. They are the elements that make up spiritual Substance. So spiritual Substance is the Divine Ideas: Life, Love, etc., etc.

Man may comprehend Divine Ideas. He may coordinate with them in such ways as to lift himself out of the realm of sense (the world) into the Realm of God (the Kingdom of God). But no man will ever wrest the Substance of God from the Creator. An analogy may help to clarify this. When you say something to another person, to whom do the words belong? to you? or to the hearer? They belong to you and can never be taken from you, though a million people hear your words. In like manner, the spiritual Substance belongs exclusively to God; man may enjoy the benefit of It by putting himself in right relation with It and with God.

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SPIRITICITY November 1961

A LESSON

By Nell Truesdell

I AM WILLINGLY OBEDIENT

IF AN older person will not correct a child, how will the child discriminate between right and wrong? Far-seeing educators today say that the detrimental effects of excessive permissiveness on the part of parents toward their children will not be checked for many years.

Jesus Christ did not hesitate to take Peter to task for a grave blunder. All teachers of any worth rebuke their students for errors, then help them to correct their mistakes. The benefits, not the punishments, of discipline should be stressed.

As followers of Truth we are our own disciplinarians. If we have not known how to apply the principles of Truth to our problems because we have not been taught them from childhood, we may still feel that God is a stern judge of our mistakes and that He is severe in His punishment. But we must understand that our mistakes punish us, not God. God loves us; and because we have loved the right and good and true, we have been led into a new awareness of His Love. Our task now is to remain steadfast in our decision to live in the shelter of Truth and to obey God's counsel.

"My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of His correction: for whom the Lord loveth He correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." (Proverbs 3:12)

A PRAYER:

STUDY TO SHOW THYSELF APPROVED UNTO GOD. (II Timothy 2:15)

MY DAILY work, O Lord, is but a reflection of Thy Activity that moves through me to fulfill Thy purpose in my life-experience. Right where I am,

there art Thou. My work is Thy work. My purpose is Thy purpose. I am the instrument through which Thou dost reveal Thyself in all that I do.

The type of labor matters not. My willingness to let Thee be active through me is my rewarding practice. For I know that no person works by his own power. Thy Power alone enables me to perform successfully in all my doings.

As I grow into an awareness of my sonship to Thee, I see that I am appointed to be the means of Thy expression right where I am. Work, to me, is not a matter of rank or position among others. Work, to me, is my opportunity to prove myself worthy of Thy Presence and Power working in me to will and to do Thy Will. As I refine and perfect my thoughts and language, I discern an improvement in all the activities of my life. I am equipped with new resources and powers to perform. Whatever my hands find to do, that shall I do, for this is my dedication to Thee, O loving God!

"Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (I Corinthians 15:58)

Alphabet Of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day of the Month

NOVEMBER 1961

1. I have set the Lord ALWAYS before me.
2. The BEAUTY of the Lord our God BE upon us.
3. My heart CRIETH out for the living God.
4. Thou hast DONE wonderful things.
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6. My EXPECTATION is from Him.
7. Hold FAST the FAITHFUL word.
8. The earth is full of the GOODNESS of the Lord.
9. HOPE thou in God.
10. INNOCENCE was found in me.
11. Take nothing for your JOURNEY.
*
13. KNOW . . . that the Lord He is God in Heaven.
14. He satisfieth the LONGING soul.
15. He is God that . . . MAKETH MY way perfect.
16. Blessed be His glorious NAME forever.
17. I also OVERCAME.
18. The Lord is my PORTION, saith my soul.
*
20. QUICKEN us, and we will call upon Thy Name.
21. God is a REFUGE for us.
22. Pray to thy Father which is in SECRET.
23. TRUST in Him at all times.
24. UNDO the heavy burdens, and . . . go free.
25. I am the VINE, ye are the branches.
*
27. Thy WILL be done.
28. YE have consecrated YOURSELVES.
29. Where is thy ZEAL and thy strength?
30. Blessed are the merciful.

"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."

SPIRITICITY is the working Power of the Spiritual Principle,
As electricity is the working power of the electrical principle.