

SPIRITICITY October 1955

THE CHILDREN OF GOD

By Alden Truesdell

"The Spirit Itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

Few men are aware of their sonship to God. Yet the time will come to every individual when he will have the opportunity to come to himself and awake to his spiritual stature. And when this time comes, if the individual chooses to follow the way of Spirit, he will be stripped of the insulating layer (built up by accepting from childhood the suggestions of others) that hides his real Self. As this covering is removed there will be revealed an underlying individuality far more attractive than the former conglomerate of human misconceptions. For it is not the flesh man that is the son of God, but it is the real Self that is hidden by the belief in the reality of the flesh. "They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God." But the Identity, the I, of every man is the son of God; and the awakening of any person to this spiritual Identity is his second birth.

Just as a newborn baby does not know what he will be, so the man who awakes to his spiritual sonship does not fully know what is happening to him. But as he becomes more and more acquainted with his true Father, he partakes of his Father's qualities. He knows them and he expresses them. As is stated in our Scripture: "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 (to each of us, as we give our attention to Him), we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."

When man is born into the world, he knows not what he will be, and this is true also in spiritual birth. There is, however, a great difference. In the flesh there is a constant resistance, an ingrown anger, an energy blossoming out at intervals in raucous laughter or bitter tears. Life is either high or low, happy or sad, rich or poor. One is either on the heights or in the depths. Seldom does life in the flesh present an easy, well-balanced pattern. But the son of God, who has awakened to his sonship, finds himself enveloped at times in a peace that "passeth all understanding" and a quiet sense of well-being, likened to being comforted "as one whom his mother comforteth." He knows something is taking place. He realizes he is being quickened and changed; but not having seen God, He knows not what the end will be and is able to judge God only by His gifts.

Giving attention to God, the son of God becomes aware of peace. He realizes that God is a God of peace. He remembers that, according to the Beatitudes, the peacemakers "shall be called the children of God." Continuing in the way, he becomes aware of an inner sense of happiness, causing him delight in the way he has chosen to go. He knows no other description for this than joy. He may remember the promise, "The joy of the Lord is your strength." Or he may recall the words of Jesus, "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." He knows that God must be a joyous God, if such a little attention to Him achieves such happy results. As a Son of God, he experiences the Joy of God. He partakes of it and passes it on.

There are any number of indications of spiritual growth, not the least of which is a tendency toward poise. One finds himself reacting differently to things which formerly would have been intensely irritating. He realizes the impermanence of the former irritants and knows each circumstance "comes to pass." It comes to yield its good, and it passes. Soon he is letting "patience have her perfect work." He finds that patience is something more than still submission to tyrannical dictates, and he begins to understand why the disciples rejoiced "that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name."

The word "suffer," as it appears in the Scripture, has a different meaning from the one we know - that of enduring pain. For Jesus told John, "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." Jesus was saying, "Let this obtain at this time that we may benefit later." Even God is described as being "long-suffering," and we know that God does not experience pain, but is patient. One enduring "as beholding the Invisible" and, so enduring, becoming more patient, realizes that God is a patient God. As a child and heir of God, he receives that patience, or endurance, as a part of his legacy.

As man acquaints himself with God, he comes to depend more and more upon God's own method of accomplishment. He seems to become filled with God's own accomplishing quality, which is faith. He receives the faith of God, and this faith is "the substance of things hoped for."

Arrogance has disrupted so many ongoers that true meekness is rare, so rare as to be much in demand wherever it is found. As man turns toward God and finds his competitive nature becoming ever more cooperative and receptive, he understands what Jesus meant when He said, "Come unto Me; . . . for I am meek and lowly in heart." He sees that meekness is majesty; that God is meek; and that this quality of meekness, without which all other gifts are valueless, is the rightful portion of the children of God.

Therefore man finds himself going along, as it were, on an even keel, streamlined, free from cumbersome attitudes, occupied with the business at hand, which is to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his Lord. He has poise and balance, as he walks up boldly to the throne, - looking neither to the right nor the left and saluting no man by the way. God becomes his All-sufficiency in all things and improves daily on acquaintance.

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A NEW RELIGION

By Robert Applegate

(Continued from last month)

Last month, it was pointed out that there must be, in this day, a new religion, which will not be just another sect, but will be an entirely new way of life, as the original Christianity was a new way of life. This new religion in fact will be a rebirth of Christianity, a new statement of it in modern terms and a new and honest practice of it. That this new religion is imminent is manifest from three considerations. First, in every comparable period of the world's history, there has arisen a new religion, and there is no reason for assuming that the present time is an exception to this general rule. Second,

men are hungry for the Truth of God, and, they are not finding it; for the churches have buried the simplicity of the Gospel under a complex ritual and an elaborate theology. And, third, of the many new movements that have sprung up in recent years, none has uncompromisingly stated and practiced the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Since there are today many voices saying, "Lo, here," and, "Lo, there"; and many ministers and evangelists are proclaiming diverse teachings with vehemence and authority, we should be clear about our point of departure; for if we are to keep from being confused, we must have a basis from which to start our reasonings and our questionings, a standard by which to judge the pronouncements that are poured upon us from all sides. And we have such a basis - the only one there can be - in the Teaching of Jesus Christ, who certainly, if any man ever did, proved the truth of what He said. We call ourselves "Christians"; and, if this word means anything at all, it means those who believe in Jesus Christ and practice His Teaching.

If we want to know what Christianity is, we would do well to ignore everything that is said by every minister and every evangelist, and turn with open mind to the Message of Jesus as it is recorded in our Gospels. Jesus said that He came into this world "to announce the Good News." This Good News, or Gospel, which has been lost sight of by the churches, is what men want and need today; and they need it in a form that they can understand. That is why there must be a new statement of Christianity. There can be no higher teaching than that which was given to us by the Son of God who spoke the words of God, but there can be and there must be a new and an honest presentation of that Teaching.

History does not repeat itself exactly; but, as Arnold Toynbee has clearly shown us, certain patterns do repeat themselves in the course of the world's history and it is remarkable how uniformly they repeat themselves. Thus it is possible, by the study of the past, to predict in general what will happen in the future. And one of the predictions that it is safe to make is that there will arise shortly a new world religion; for it is precisely in the periods of history analogous to our own that all the world religions have come into being. Judaism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Islam, and Christianity itself - every one of these arose in circumstances that were closely similar to those of today; and there is no reason for supposing that the present time will provide an exception to this phenomenon of the birth of world religions. All the signs indicate, rather, that the world is in travail with such a birth. We may therefore confidently look forward to the coming of this new religion; and since we already have the highest possible spiritual message in the Gospel, the new religion can be nothing but a modern statement of this Gospel.

It is of course true that all established churches claim to be teaching the Gospel of Jesus and evidently believe that they have never departed from it. Yet a short glance at them shows that this is not true. And here again we can learn from a study of the past; for history reveals that all organized religions, particularly those that have been organized for a long time, have certain features in common, which are not only unhelpful in the revealing of God to man but are deleterious to this purpose, which is the one function of religion. "Woe unto you, lawyers (i.e., religious leaders)! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." Organized religion loses itself in its symbols, so that it forgets what which is symbolized. It becomes engulfed also in the weight of its organization. But, worst of all, in its desire for popular acceptance, it compromises with human desires; it accommodates its message to

what men want to hear. Further, it puts itself in the place of God - the worst form of idolatry - and thus it becomes a stumbling block in the way of those who are honestly seeking to find God.

Organized religion glorifies the idea of sacrifice and the idea of doing for God, but both of these ideas are un-Christian and un-godly. Jesus Christ never said anything about sacrifice; He did not call us to be martyrs. "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." Does that sound like sacrifice? The idea of sacrifice produces self-righteousness, which inevitably alienates one from God, who would give us joy, peace, and eternal life.

The idea of doing for God is equally fallacious. A prominent ecclesiastic writes: "True religion puts God first and us second; its true prayer is: 'Thy will be done with our help.'" Where did anyone ever get the idea that he could do anything for God, that God needs his help? This sense of doing is but a disguised form of pride, and it, too, will separate us from God, if we indulge in it. We cannot do anything for God, and actually we cannot do anything for another person, because the life of each one is determined by his own attitude towards the Almighty. To those who came to Him with the desire to do something, Jesus Christ said, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." That is all we can do for God - believe on Jesus Christ; and, believing, obey and follow Him.

The purpose of our life in this world is to know God. It is not to help God. It is not to be models of propriety and virtue. It is to know God. The Good News is that this is possible, that Jesus Christ has shown us that it is possible, that He has made Himself the Way. The Scripture speaks of "serving" God, but this "service" is worship and reverence; it is not glorifying ourselves by the thought that we can do anything for the Creator of the universe.

The theologians tell us that the purpose of religion is "to serve God and find His purposes." We have already seen that we cannot "serve" God in the sense of doing anything for Him. As to finding His purpose, we know what that is. "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." If we want to fulfill God's purpose, then we must accept His Gift of the Kingdom of Heaven, which is the Awareness of His Presence, of His Oneness with us. We accept this Gift by faith by believing in it, by believing that God is giving it to us. For it is by faith that we are justified, and never by works. The works that we do are for our own benefit, to keep us occupied; for we must do something. They earn us no merit. They will not bring us into the Kingdom of Heaven. But "whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven."

Organized religion and even our Scriptures no longer speak in the language of our day. The Scripture has been so interpreted and misinterpreted that many of its key words have come to have purely theological connotations. They do not mean at all what they meant to the persons who wrote them. They do not convey to the average man the message that they were designed to convey. Such words as sin, righteousness, salvation, redemption, meekness, church, have come to have meanings different from those originally intended. The result is that many have an erroneous ideas or at best a vague and nebulous idea, of what the Gospel of Jesus Christ is. This is another reason why there must be a new statement of the Gospel, in the language of today - a language that must be as precise and unmistakable as is the terminology of the scientists.

To many people today the Scripture is "beautiful," but it is not "practical." But the Scripture was written by men who knew what they were writing about and who had experienced the practicality of what they said. We must recapture their message and state it, as they did, simply and in the language of the day. Thus, as is always the case with a new religion, there must be a new Scripture, which will have all the vitality and transforming power that our present Scripture has had through the ages.

(To be continued.)

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PRAISE AND GIVE THANKS

By Nell Truesdell

"How beautiful are the feet of them that . . . bring glad tidings of good things!" wrote Paul to the Romans. Just to read these words over several times gives us a lift. The feet symbolize that phase of a person's understanding that comes in direct contact with the world. The feet that carry praise - honest praise - are welcome everywhere they go. Even the ground upon which they tread springs lightly as if by some inherent, elastic force. The simple act of walking is transformed into pleasurable exercise.

Have you noticed how heavy is the step of him who sadly drags along the way? how the step of the willful person pounds the pavement deliberately, painfully, even mercilessly? how the furtive steps of the uncertain waver? how the fearful sneak around by circuitous paths? how the shiftless dodge every opportunity as well as difficulty?

The upright man walks with assurance. He may be carrying burdens grievous to bear, he may have responsibilities tugging at him that test his resources and all his skills, but his step remains firm, and he walks with a kindly grace that bespeaks sound character and a dependable nature. Such a man carries praise in his bearing. Even his counsel is felt to be considerate of the welfare of others. His praise is worthwhile; for it draws to him the support of those around him, who sense that, as he upholds them, they are honor bound to further his interests.

Praise is an independent and particular item in consciousness. True praise stimulates and brings into play every skill, so that the whole consciousness, or organism, performs as a harmonious unit. The person who is dexterous in his use of praise has a zest and spark that quicken and vitalize his being. As he walks among men, he enlivens them and fills them with gladness of heart. His super-abundant joy spreads outward and affects everything and everybody with whom he comes in contact. He is truly a light-bearer.

Praise and the giving of thanks go hand in hand. Praise is a manner of giving thanks, and the giving of thanks is a manner of praise. Just as genuine praise reveals uprightness and fairness of character, so the giving of thanks unveils a generous nature and also subtly confers honor on the recipient. When we thank someone for something, we reward him openly.

In human relationships, praise and giving of thanks are practiced because they bear rich rewards. Man is not loath to praise his fellows when he knows that he is the ultimate beneficiary. To express thanks is easy for most men because one of the first niceties of life that every child is made to learn is that of saying "Thank you." Even a superficial expression of thanks has beneficial effects. In the myriad of human transactions that beset us daily, we feel more kindly toward the persons who say, "Thank you," than toward those who do not. The sound of the gracious words implies unspoken praise; tensions lessen, tempers cool, impatience diffuses. A "Thank you" sincerely spoken pleases the receiver and glorifies the giver. Appreciation thus expressed is on a level with a direct compliment. It warms the heart and encourages the hopes.

While the practice of praise and the giving of thanks is comparatively easy among human beings, it is somewhat difficult for men to offer praise and thanks to God. All too frequently, a person will approach God with anger in his heart and complaint on his lips. He may go so far as to reproach God, and he may even address the Almighty in abusive language. But the speeches of one who is desperate are as wind. Whether they blow hot or cold, they have neither substance nor form; nor do they affect God, to move Him one way or another.

It is fortunate for the whole of mankind that God is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on (or hear) iniquity (untrue reports)." Every negative report made to God is an untruth, and the one who speaks is himself the victim of his own accusations.

To be so alert as to catch and discipline the self while it is seething with discomfort and make it offer praise and say, "Thank you," to the Almighty is to redeem the whole man from negation. Then as the cloud of dissatisfaction is scattered, the light of understanding wraps the person in its golden glow and fills him with a vital radiance. He is, literally, saved from suicide by his own words; for each time that a person rails against God, he threatens his own existence.

God is Love. When God created man and set him over the lesser kingdoms of the earth, He gave man the power to name (describe) everything. And as man describes things, to this day, so they are to him. He may praise them into fruitfulness, or he may denounce them and thus bring himself into desolation.

Do not accuse God. His hand is lavish, his supply, limitless. He is more willing to give blessings to man than man is willing to receive them. He who addresses himself to the Almighty in praise and thanksgiving makes himself a proper vessel to receive the outpouring of God's good. Each person may prove this truth for himself.

"Praise ye the Lord. . . . Both young men and maidens; old men and children; let them praise the name of the Lord: for His name alone is excellent; His glory is above the earth and heaven."

"Sing unto the Lord a new song, . . . for the Lord taketh pleasure in His people."

"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise."

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Alphabet of
DAILY MEDIATIONS
For Every Week Day Of The Month

OCTOBER 1955

1. ARISE, shine; for thy light is come.
3. The Lord God will go BEFORE thee.
4. Ye shall be COMFORTED.
5. I will carry, and will DELIVER you.
6. My servant shall be EXALTED and EXTOLLED.
7. He shall FEED His FLOCK.
8. The GLORY of the Lord is risen upon thee.
10. HEARKEN diligently unto Me.
11. He made INTERCESSION for the transgressors.
12. My soul shall be JOYFUL in my God.
13. By his KNOWLEDGE shall My righteous servant justify many.
14. The LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting LIGHT.
15. With great MERCIES will I gather thee.
17. He is NEAR that justifieth me.
18. Ask of Me the ORDINANCES of justice.
19. The PLEASURE of the Lord shall PROSPER in his hand.
20. QUICKEN us, and we will call upon Thy name.
21. I will greatly REJOICE in the Lord.
22. In the Lord have I righteousness and STRENGTH.
24. THOU shalt delight THYSELF in the Lord.
25. Thanks be to God for His UNSPEAKABLE gift!
26. My sheep hear My VOICE.
27. He WAKENETH mine ear to hear as the learned.
28. My YOKE is easy.
29. He was clad with ZEAL.
31. Bring glad tidings of good things!

"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.