

## PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS

By Robert Applegate, Jr.

(continued from last month)

NOTE on the translation: Those who are familiar with the Letter to the Romans may feel that I have taken unjustified liberties in my translation. I have rendered nomos by "religion," rather than "law"; Iudaiou by "religious," rather than "Jews"; ethne by "irreligious" or "all men," rather than "Gentiles." I know of no other way to translate Paul's meaning.

For nomos, "law" is an entirely inadequate rendering. For a Jew of the First Century, nomos (or, in Hebrew, torah) meant not only the Scripture; but, by extension, the entire Jewish approach to God and to other men, based on their understanding of their Scripture. It included the ideas about God, the Temple rites, the Sabbath, etc. In other words, it embraced their theology, their ritual, and their code of conduct. There is no other word for this than "religion." And what Paul says specifically of the Jewish religion, because he was a Jew, is true of all religions.

The most important fact about the Jews was not that they were a certain people living in a certain area, but that they were a religious people. This was their most outstanding characteristic, which distinguished them from all other people. So it is reasonable to translate Iudaiou as "religious." And for the Jews, Gentiles were simply all other people, who were, in their eyes, irreligious. For them, the words Iudaiou and ethne certainly had the connotations of "religious" and "irreligious."

Paul's letter has lived through the ages and moved men of many nations and many eras precisely because the truths that he writes are eternal truths. They are not bound to a particular time and place in history. We may remember his warning to the Corinthians: "God has made us able ministers of the New Covenant - not of the letter (the literal understanding of the Scripture), but of the spirit; for the letter kills, but the spirit gives life."

My translation and commentary of Chapter Four of the Letter follow; the translation is indented.

What shall I say that Abraham (our forefather according to the flesh) discovered? If Abraham was declared good because of religious observations, he had cause for self-satisfaction. But No! - not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed in God, and this was accounted to him as goodness."

For him who works, his pay is not accounted as a gift, but as his due. For him who does not work, but believes in Him who declares the irreligious innocent, his faith is accounted as goodness. So David mentions the good fortune of the man to whom the Lord imputes goodness apart from any religious observation:

"Fortunate are all whose transgressions are canceled, whose mistakes are buried; fortunate is the man to whom the Lord does not impute error." . . .

We say faith was accounted to Abraham as goodness. How was it so accounted? When he was circumcised? or when he was still uncircumcised? It was

not when he was circumcised, but when he was still uncircumcised. He received the sign of circumcision as an indication of the goodness of faith that he had while still uncircumcised. And so he became the father (1) of all the uncircumcised who believe, so that their belief should be accounted to them as goodness; and (2) of all the circumcised who are not only circumcised, but also follow the path that our father Abraham blazed while he was still uncircumcised.

For the promise to Abraham and his descendants that they would inherit the earth did not come through religious observances, but through the goodness of belief. If those only who observe the religious obligations are heirs, faith is of no avail and the promise is void of meaning.

Religion produces Wrath. But where there is no religion, there is no transgression. So the promise is received by belief; it is a gift. It stands firm for all the descendants of Abraham - not only those who are of his religion, but also those who have his faith. He is the father of us all (as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"). . . .

Abraham kept on hoping and believing. So he became the father of many peoples, in accordance with the promise, so will your descendants be. . . . "He did not grow weak in faith when he saw his own body as good as dead, for he was a hundred years old, and when he saw the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not despise the promise of God by disbelief. But he grew strong in faith; he ascribed power to God. This was accounted to as goodness.

It was written not for his sake alone that it was so accounted to him, but also for our sake. Our faith also will be accounted to us as goodness, if we believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. For He was betrayed for our mistakes and raised up for our acquittal.

To keep his presentation of the Gospel from sounding too abstract or wishful or impractical, Paul points to an example his readers were familiar with. Then as now, one valid example was worth ten thousand words. His choice of Abraham as an example was of course dictated by his own upbringing and by the audience he was addressing, which was predominantly Jewish. But he could hardly have found a better example (unless he had chosen himself).

Today we don't give much thought to Abraham; yet, in a real sense, he is the father of us all (and modern archaeology is confirming the accuracy of the Biblical account of him).

By our modern standards, Abraham (who lived about 1850 B.C.) is not an outstandingly impressive figure. He was a princeling (the Greek Old Testament calls him a "king") - one of the many living in Asia Minor and the area of the Aegean in the Second Millennium B.C. He was a nomad shepherd, a merchant, and the head of a large clan, including 318 soldiers. He was wealthy, but was not in the same class as the great kings of Sumer and Egypt. Yet today, 2800 years later, he alone of all his contemporaries is well known.

The great kings of Egypt and Sumer sought to perpetuate their memory by all the resources of religious and political power, backed by fabulous wealth; today they are all but forgotten names, known only to a small handful of students. But Abraham, who simply had faith in God, is revered by half the world: by Jews, Moslems, and Christians. He is the spiritual father of us all. And so the promise in which he believed has been fulfilled: "I will make you the father of many nations."

Abraham's profitable religious practice consisted not in being circumcised (today this would be "Baptized," "confirmed," etc.), but in believing that God would do what He had promised to do. Abraham kept on believing, even when the promise was "impossible" of fulfillment. He received the fulfillment, and all the nations of the world have been blessed by what he did.

So again Paul emphasizes that whatever we want is a gift of God which we receive by having faith in the Giver - and by enduring in that faith. But this truth is so simple that most people reject it. It is unwelcome (1) because it robs a man of self-importance; (2) because its simplicity fails to satisfy the intellect, which delights in complexity; and (3) because people want something visible (a rite, an institution, etc.) to cling to. This is why Paul repeats his instruction over and over, enforcing it with every example he can lay his hands on.

Paul's expression is sometimes involved, but his thought is simple. The Jews of his day trusted in circumcision and observance of the Mosaic Law to bring them into God's favor, as today we trust in baptism, confirmation, attendance at church, Holy Communion, and charity. Paul points to Abraham who won God's favor by believing in Him, and only later received circumcision as an indication of his status with God. His standing with God derived from his belief, and depended upon it only. And so it is. In reality, everyone is in God's favor always. Each one enters consciously into this state by believing in the already established reality of it. This is what Paul is saying.

"Thou art My beloved son in whom I am well pleased" is God's message to everyone. We will hear this message if we believe in the Good News. "Only believe," Jesus Christ said, "He that believes in Me has everlasting life."

(To be continued)

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SPIRITICITY September 1961

GOD'S MAN IS NOT ANXIOUS

By Alden Truesdell

FOR CERTAIN types of people life is one continuous conflict. These are as yet under Law, but may use the Law under which they live to prepare them for their spiritual release from the Law. "For the Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God."

We have all been born under Law and will be subject to the Law until we begin to demand and exercise the spiritual Freedom we are all entitled to as sons of God. The best way to make this transition is through the practice of praise, thanksgiving, and appreciation for all the manifest blessings enjoyed even under the Law. We do observe the effects of different attitudes of mind, to find praise yielding a happier, more tranquil life than criticism does.

As we look through the record of history to find constant conflict building up into the warring of nations, we see how every misuse of our creature equipment creates havoc. We see these struggles go on until the warring members are exhausted by their own efforts - depleted of their own powers - to be hospitalized until strong enough to break out again.

Probably in each extremity some persons learn to turn back to the one and only Source of freedom from fear. It does seem to be but a token turning. But if one can turn, a million may do so. And if the million turn to Christ, the multitudes will follow.

We have seen mystical science, or Christ Truth, triumph in actual warfare. We had no gold-star mothers among our people. And now conscientious spiritual workers are praying, in Spirit and in Truth, for the leaders of the free world.

We know spiritual work is effective - if for no other reason than that the world always turns to its mystics in times of emergency.

We have come through hot wars and cold wars. Surely THAT which has brought us through can be depended upon to carry us on up - wherever IT is going. Here, we will have gone beyond the point of no return. Here, we will have abandoned hope. Here, we will have been bought with a price. We will have traded in our old mortal ideas for our God-given sonship. We know not what we will be, but we know we will be as God has made us to be, when we are established in Him.

It is quite possible we will be anxious when we are off-center, or eccentric; for then there is a good reason for being anxious. We know we are not where we should be. We might have everything our friends think we should have - status, securities, and all the things acceptable to society at large. But if we are off base, we are worried. Although nothing can injure the immaculate soul, it will be uneasy when obliged to depend upon less than God. Thus we hear the wise Psalmist telling his soul, "Wait thou only upon God."

When Jesus gave the Parable of the Lilies to illustrate the unfoldment of man from one state of being to another, He said, "Consider the lilies of the fields how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

Let us than consider the lily, and particularly how it grows. Most of us know the lily comes from a bulb. We know also that the bulb must be planted, preferably in good soil; that, once it is planted, there is little we can do about it except to weed, irrigate, and fertilize it. It is God - or Nature in this case - that does the growing. Nature does the growing; God gives the increase.

Today, at this time, do we need or want for anything? Do we hunger or thirst for any good thing? Well, this is the time we worried about at some previous time. We can see that, regardless of our worries, God had the situation well in hand.

When we choose God for our Way of Life, we are going to be well taken care of, regardless of our lack of faith; for even though we forget God, God remembers us.

How many times have you gotten up in the morning, feeling, "The morn is at seven, the earth is dew-pearled; God's in His Heaven, all's right with the world" - only to pick up the morning paper and see the headlines proclaiming an entirely different state of affairs? Here is our ever-present choice. Which of these reports do you prefer? Which do you feel obliged to subscribe to: the headlines in the morning paper or the heart lines from your inner communication

with the Heart of God? Could we simplify the idea, and say our choice is between the headlines and the heartlines?

Anxiety is caused by lack of balance, or stability. This is why Jesus advised us, as it were, to get back on balance, much as a coach will tell a baseball player to get back on base. As long as the player stays on base, there is no danger of his being tagged out. So the Truth teaches us how to play the game of life without being put out. As long as anyone plays the game according to the rules, he has no anxiety. Rather does he have a sort of professional attitude which knows when and how to take advantage of the breaks. He has a stability, a substantiality, in which there is the confidence and the audacity noticeable in any good player of any game. This is the Love of God casting out all fear.

If a man will forget himself, he will be cared for, supplied, and protected by the Creator, who is responsible for all creation, for every creature.

"Hear the word of the Lord, . . . As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted."

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SPIRITICITY September 1961  
TWO PRAYERS  
By Nell Truesdell

MY VOICE SHALT THOU HEAR IN THE MORNING, O LORD: IN THE MORNING WILL I DIRECT MY PRAYER UNTO THEE, AND WILL LOOK UP. (Psalm 5:3)

THE WORDS that I utter this day shall glorify Thee, O Lord, for I shall speak from my heart, Thy Sanctuary in the midst of me. I shall laud Thee, and offer grateful homage in words that praise Thy Name. My words, clear and true as musical sounds, shall pour from my soul to exalt Thee. Their cheerful tones will gladden my heart, quicken my mind, lighten my labors, and brighten the lives of others around me.

I shall remember all day that a merry heart makes for a cheerful countenance. My face shall shine with the brightness of Thy glory for as I remember Thee, Thy light shines through me and I am glorified with Thy glory.

I shall remember all day that he that is of a merry heart has a continual feast. Thy Divine Blessing shall feed and nourish me in mind, body, and affairs; and I shall show forth well-being in every aspect of my existence.

I shall remember all day that I am Thy child and that Thou art my Father. I shall believe Thy commandments and obey them to the best of my ability. Teach me good judgment and give me knowledge so that I may keep Thy Word. This shall be my act of worship this day. "Glory In His Holy Name."

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BLESSED BE THE LORD, WHO DAILY LOADETH US WITH BENEFITS. (Psalm 68:19)

PROSPERITY is of Thee, O Lord! Thou art my riches. Thou art my sure and certain supply. This day I shall direct my longing for security toward Thee and thus deepen and widen the channels of inflow of Thy Divine Bounty into the stream of my conscious experience. I know that, at the point where Thy

boundless Substance may enter my receptive consciousness, the wealth of Thy resources are banked and will pour into and through me steadily and plentifully as I open my heart to Thee. Therefore, O Lord, I shall raise my voice to Thee in praise and thanksgiving, and thus discharge my debt of gratitude unto Thee.

I understand that the things of the Spirit are my truest riches: eternal, changeless, undividable, indestructible. All that is in heaven and in the earth is Thine. Thou art Lord of all and Thou dost give to the waiting heart riches and honor, power and might, greatness and glory. As I pay attention to Thee, O Lord, I am rewarded. I rejoice in being a conscious witness to the continuous flow of Thy Divine Ideas, which in turn unfold into substantial, gainful, and rewarding demonstrations of good in my life and affairs. I resolve this day to look up and be active in acknowledging Thee as my Source of all good.

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

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SPIRITICITY September 1961

OUR STAND

By Alden Truesdell

THE CHRIST TRUTH LEAGUE as it stands today has evolved from thirty-five years of metaphysical ministry, mostly in Texas. A number of years were spent in cooperation with other metaphysical movements; but for the most part, we have kept close to our own Christ-Truth concept. The League has done little fraternizing.

The aim of our work is to teach and practice a higher, deeper, and more practical understanding of the Gospel as taught and lived by Jesus Christ, that man may receive full benefit of the Work of the Savior.

Our aim is to express the Truth of Christ; our purpose is to prove it. We of course believe in the One God of the Hebrews and the One Father of Jesus Christ. We believe in the Gospel of Jesus Christ as a record of His works, by which He ushered a more excellent way of life into the experience of the human race.

We believe this better way of life means a new, more vital life that we may live in the present time. We believe all future benefit is dependent upon present application of the Life Principle.

We believe a conscious, confident practice of the true Christ Doctrine on the part of those who consider themselves Christians would be such a vital force as to solve many of the problems of humanity. We believe that such a conscious, confident practice of the Christ Truth Doctrine is the only guaranteed solution to the problems of the nations.

We believe that Christians have a secret weapon in the understanding use of impersonal love: a weapon capable of subduing all the forces of the world - which, in reality, have already been overcome by Jesus Christ. In this we include ungodly or dictatorial ideologies. Our goal is to practice this quality of love, while recommending it to all of God's people for practical use.

For our work we retain the designation "metaphysical," because it releases us from complicated theology. But we also retain the concept of orthodoxy because of its denotation of true doctrine. We could be described as inter-denominational, because we adhere to the ideas of the Kingdom of God within everyone and Christ in all of us - our "hope of glory."

Years ago we made a statement of purpose. It still stands: "The CHRIST TRUTH LEAGUE is a fellowship of sincere students seeking practical application of the Law of Life as taught and lived by the Master of Life, Jesus Christ. We aspire to that saving grace that teaches, preaches, and heals; that quickens with life the dormant hopes and unfulfilled ideals in the individual and in the race."

\*\*\*\*\*Unrewarded labor is man's greatest punishment.\*\*\*\*\*

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Alphabet Of  
DAILY MEDITATIONS  
For Every Week Day of the Month

SEPTEMBER 1961

1. Shall He not render to every man ACCORDING to his works?
2. BE BLAMELESS.  
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4. CONSIDER the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, CHRIST  
JESUS.
5. He shall give thee the DESIRES of thine heart.
6. The ETERNAL God is thy refuge.
7. Have we not all one FATHER?
8. The GLORY of the Lord shall endure forever.
9. Thy HANDS HAVE made me, and fashioned me.  
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11. The Spirit maketh INTERCESSION for us.
12. I will make thee . . . a JOY of many generations.
13. He that KNOWETH God, heareth.
14. He LOVETH righteousness.
15. My MEDITATION of Him shall be sweet.
16. Put on the NEW man, which after God is created in holiness.  
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18. Whatsoever is born of God OVERCOMETH the world.
19. In Thy PRESENCE is fullness of joy.
20. I have . . . QUIETED myself, as a child.
21. The Lord shall REJOICE in His works.
22. Thou wilt SHOW me the path of life.
23. The TABERNACLE of God is with men.  
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25. Give me UNDERSTANDING, that I may learn Thy Commandments.
26. Be VALIANT.
27. The WORLD is Mine, and the fullness thereof.
28. Let . . . YOURSELVES (be) like men that wait for their Lord.
29. My ZEAL is for the Lord.
30. We are the children of God.

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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.