

SPIRITICITY, February 1954

## ATONEMENT

By Alden Truesdell

Until one finds his true relationship with his own God at the center of his own being, he will still have need of spiritual understanding and will still be outside the benefits of atonement.

The generally accepted definition of atonement is: the state of having made amends; or, expiation, propitiation, appeasement, reconciliation. Another definition is: to be at one with, to agree. It is this latter concept of atonement that we want to consider.

Any right-minded person, having made an honest mistake, is usually willing to make amends and to give some sort of service to effect a restoration. True atonement, however, is essentially oneness with God, and this reconciliation is consummated only in the inner being of man. All outer activities are but symbol, or effect, of this inner union.

In the rearing of children we are sometimes confronted with the situation of the offspring's getting lost and stirring the household to a spirited search. When the child is found, there is such a general feeling of relief that the culprit may escape punishment and be the object of expressions of mercy. It is somewhat on this order that there is great rejoicing in the Kingdom of Heaven "over one sinner that repenteth." God requires no sacrifices - simply obedience: a willingness to walk in Spirit and live by Spirit, and a reluctance to walk out on Spirit.

Wholeness, fullness, completeness are the theme of atonement. It is only when one senses a separation from the Spiritual Presence that reconciliation is required. Atonement means union with the ONE, that inseparable Nature, of which there is no second, from which there is, in reality, no apartness. As Paul put it, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, . . . one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Atonement, basically, means that there is only One Presence, only One Power, only One Mind. And our authority for this is the teaching of Jesus Christ, who said:

"I and my Father are one."

"Ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."

It is during the reaction after an intense spiritual experience, when spiritual ideals seem, for the moment, to have become unattainable and one has resorted to the routine of life, that the high concept of oneness settles into all the corners and crevices of consciousness. We seem to be, in these times, at the point where the Disciples were when Jesus had been taken from them. These men, who were to be considered the most fortunate of all men because of their association with Jesus and His instruction, seemed to be the remnants of a lost cause. But all their seeming sufferings were for the purpose of their becoming filled with their own Christhood. They were at a crisis, for which they had been unwittingly prepared and they were to experience complete atonement for the first time. They had seen Jesus intermittently since His

resurrection, had heard His rather cryptic expressions, and were in a state of high tension. Jesus then appeared to them for the last recorded time and advised, or commanded, them:

"Wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence."

The Disciples were still in a questioning frame of mind and asked Him if He would at this time restore the Kingdom of Israel. He answered:

"It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

The account goes on to state: "When he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight." As they watched, two men in white apparel joined them and told them that Jesus would come as He had gone - in due season. After this experience which took place at Olivet, just outside Jerusalem, the Disciples returned to Jerusalem, where they "all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with the brethren."

Jesus Christ did return to His Disciples, as He had promised; for we read in Acts:

"When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit."

This coming of the Holy Spirit is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, and It comes to all who seek It with their whole heart. Each one may keep his heart with diligence to find in it "the issues of life," to the eventual discovery of this Christ in him, saying:

"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?"

"I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."

This is the ultimate atonement.

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OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM

By Robert Applegate

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

"Do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

The ideas which we pick up in our youth become a part of our being. They stay with us as long as we live, and they influence all our lives. It is important, therefore, what children are told and especially what they are told about God. Those who have any dealings with children, whether as parents, school teachers, or Sunday school teachers, have both a privilege and a responsibility. What they teach, both by word and by example, will influence the future happiness of these children more than they may ever realize. Today, many young parents are recognizing the responsibility that comes with parenthood, but they are often at a loss as to how to answer the searching questions that their children ask.

In teaching children, the most important point is, not what to teach them, but what not to teach them. It would be far better to tell them nothing at all than to impress upon them ideas which are wrong and deleterious. Particularly, never, never, never tell a child that God is angry with him or will punish him. To put such an idea into a young and receptive mind is actually a criminal act. Whoever does this is open to the reproof of Jesus: "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones, . . . it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

The idea of an angry and punishing God is an offense, because it sets up a barrier between God and man. You cannot love such a God; rather you fear Him and actually hate Him. Just as you are repelled by a person who is always criticizing you and looking for something with which to find fault, so you are repelled by the idea of a God who is continually judging you and waiting to punish you. The feeling of guilt that comes from this false concept is actually at the base of most human maladjustment and misery, as the psychologists are starting to discover; and yet many churches and Sunday schools do teach this. But children, especially, should not have such an idea put into their minds, for it does incalculable damage and it is entirely wrong.

God does not condemn or judge anyone. God is Love and Love cannot condemn or punish. People are punished when they forget God and become sufficient unto themselves, but God never punishes. If you disconnect an electric light, it will go out; but it would be ridiculous for the light to complain that the electric circuit was punishing it when it had simply lost its connection. It is just as ridiculous for people to think that God is punishing them (or anyone else) when all that has happened is that they have lost their connection with God.

God never punishes anyone. The idea that He does is false and has done much damage and caused much grief. This idea should be rejected by those who are mature, and it should never be taught to the young. We do not need to use God as a policeman to make children behave. Children should not be taught to do right from fear of punishment if they do wrong. They should be taught to do right because it is more fun to do so; for it is. Children instinctively know that joy is good. They should be taught that God wants them to have joy and that, if, they do what is right, they will have more joy than if they disobey.

Children should be taught that God is, that He is with them, that He loves them. They should be taught that they can talk with God as simply and directly as they talk with their own parents. Children are responsive to this sort of instruction, for there is That within them which knows that it is true. They will also practice it because, being unsophisticated, they are already close to

God. The place to teach this, moreover, is in the home; for, although it often does not seem so, it is what a child learns at home that he remembers and that stays with him. Jesus took little children in His arms and blessed them, but there is no record that He ever taught them or tried to teach them. This was not His office. It is the office of parents. It is the parents who should instruct their children in the basic verities of life; and they can rest assured that, if they do not do it, it will probably never be done.

Children, above all, should be taught honestly. They should not, in matters of the Spirit, be placated with fairy tales; for they will soon see through the pretense, and children are always sensitive to pretense and repelled by it. Therefore it is incumbent upon parents to know the truths of God. Moreover if they do know them the children will assimilate this knowing, even without anything being said. It is an observable fact that children who are brought up in a home where the parents know God as an ever-present Reality and worship God "in spirit and in truth" have a light about them; whereas those who are brought up under the specter of a punishing God and are told myths about Satan are dark.

It should hardly be necessary to say that teaching and raising children is a two-way affair. As the parents give the child shelter, support, comfort, affection, and instruction, so the child brings joy into the home. And, as the parents should tell the child about God, so the child can teach the parents the lesson of directness and simplicity. For it is true that we should approach God with the same directness and expectancy with which our children approach us. Just as your child asks you a question and expects you to know the answer, so you may turn to God with the same assurance. You may lift up your heart to God, who is within your heart, and speak to Him as a child speaks to his parent. Why else did Jesus teach us, when we pray, to say, "Our Father"? If you need guidance in any matter, large or small, you can ask God with full assurance that He will answer and that His answer will be right. This answer will come as an inner conviction, a knowing that will carry with it its own certainty.

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God who gives to all men generously and without reproaching, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting."

Faith grows with exercise; and, if we trust God for guidance and help in small matters, we will soon trust Him in larger ones. Therefore we should lose no opportunity to speak to God. Just a little remembering of Him, a little lifting up of the heart to a higher Something within itself, even in the midst of activities, is often enough to give a new perspective, a sense of peace and of joy. The daily routine that we all go through is not important in itself, but it can be invaluable as a developing-ground for our faith. And, to give us enough faith to take the first step, we have the promise of Jesus Christ, who is the one Teacher worth listening to:

"Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man of you, if his son asks him for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then . . . know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him?"

We do not need an advanced education to turn to God. We need, rather, to forget all our learning and to "become as little children" before Him. If we

will remember this, particularly when children annoy us, not only will they respond, but also we will receive an invaluable lesson, which will bring with it a healing balm of peace.

Above all, whether we have children of our own or not, we should observe the young and find out what Jesus meant when He said:

"Unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

"Of such is the kingdom."

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SPIRITICITY, February 1954

VICTIMS OF REACTIONS

By Nell Truesdell

In every household, no matter how pleasant the atmosphere appears, there is dissension and strife - not openly serious, but sufficiently intense to cause reactions of struggle and resistance in the hearts of those concerned. Though outwardly controlled, the silent conflicts write themselves indelibly upon the flesh, so that the physical bodies reveal the prevailing discord. The affairs also exhibit the disturbed reactions, for they are extensions of the physical bodies.

People who love each other dearly appear to make each other sick. The word appear is used advisedly because one person cannot really make another person sick. It is each one's reaction to the other that affects his mind, body, and affairs in such a way that they exhibit disorder: mental, physical, and financial. Another person cannot make you sick; your reaction to another does.

I know a man whose background is a cultured one, which stems from colonial times. He married a girl who was brought up on the average social level of a small town. This couple love each other. But she is often perplexed by what to her seem to be meaningless observations of formalities; while he is so acutely disturbed by her frank disregard of them that his body is showing forth a digestive disorder, which plainly exhibits his silent antagonism.

Similarly, I know a woman who, during three decades of married life, has built up a serious liver disorder, because she cannot control her severe criticism of her husband's smoking habit.

So it goes: a husband against a wife, a wife against a husband; children against their parents, parents against their children. For what? Nothing really. The rivalries, the disputes, the strong silent dissatisfactions are nothing but personal reactions. Yet the friction that is generated through intimate association and through the sense of responsibility that one person feels toward another is actually the source of the bad health, the disturbed minds, and the declining finances everywhere plainly visible.

That we gather unto ourselves what we give out is an undeniable truth. If we permit ourselves to give way to promptings of rage or ill will, which can arise only in our own hearts, we alone suffer the consequences. Actually, it is not what another person does or does not do that should concern us; our own reactions should be our only concern, for they write plainly upon the tablet of our bodies whether we are jolly or sour. As the Master Jesus Christ stated:

"From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, . . . blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man."

We live in the outer fringe of consciousness, until we learn how to reverse our attention so that we may live from our spiritual center. Consequently, we are in process of growth; and, of necessity, we experience the changes incident to growth. In the changes that occur, we gradually learn that we cannot, honestly, blame others for our unhappiness, sickness, or poverty; that these experiences are but manifestations of our own negative reactions. If we wish to show forth a more satisfactory manifestation, we need only control our reactions and direct them into more wholesome channels.

In our human relations, we clash against one another; and, like stones in the bed of a rushing stream, we are buffeted about so that intense friction is generated. However without this buffeting action, we should lie still and gather moss. In such a quiescent state, we might appear to be having an easier time, but we should be acquiring an ugly covering, which would conceal our native beauty. Life with its ups and downs is an interesting experience, even in its worst phases. As we mature in understanding, we realize that the people with whom we are thrown in direct, personal contact are our best friends (although they seem to be our worst enemies). Because we want to live in a state of harmony, we are frequently forced to readjust our points of view, our inclinations, and our personal desires. It is these inescapable readjustments that buffet us, often mercilessly; but we are, through this action, polished to a degree that would not otherwise be possible.

In our practice of Truth Principles we learn to outwit our natural disposition to oppose others by meeting our own critical attitudes with strong statements of Truth. Since all behavior is learned, we know that we can (with effort if need be) change our reactions from negative condemnations to constructive appraisals. We can thus pull ourselves from the mire and throw ourselves into the central stream of living waters, so that we are washed clean of all negation. But dirt is adhesive, and, once established, it is not easily removed. By our own effort we cannot clean ourselves; we must turn to Something at the center of our own consciousness and let It wash away our limitations. That Something is God.

It is amazing that we oppose the people we love. We hold them, and they hold us, tenaciously in the grip of personal affection. We struggle against this invisible, imprisoning action and it is this struggle that condemns us to human limitations. The only freedom to be gained is that which comes from our determined effort to withdraw our attention from the points that cause negative reactions and place that attention on God in our midst. He is the Reality, not only of ourselves, but of all others. We must therefore react to Him, who is the Truth of our being. God is love, and every person is God-Love made manifest.

Alphabet Of  
DAILY MEDITATIONS  
For Every Week Day Of The Month

FEBRUARY 1954

1. Keep me AS the APPLE of the eye.
2. As for me, I will BEHOLD Thy face in righteousness.
3. CLEANSE Thou me from secret faults.
4. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my DELIVERER.
5. The fear of the Lord is clean, ENDURING for EVER.
6. Do not I FILL heaven and earth?

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8. I have a GOODLY heritage.
9. My flesh also shall rest in HOPE.
10. INCLINE Thine ear unto me, and hear my speech.
11. Walk worthy of the Lord . . . with JOYFULNESS.
12. I am with thee to KEEP thee.
13. Thou wilt LIGHT my candle.

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15. Thou MAINTAINEST MY lot.
16. Thy NAME is from everlasting to everlasting.
17. So run, that ye may OBTAIN (the prize).
18. I am PURPOSED that my mouth shall not transgress.
19. QUIT ye like men.
20. If thou wilt RETURN, RETURN unto Me.

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22. Thou wilt SHOW me the path of life.
23. TEACH us what we shall do.
24. Hide me UNDER the shadow of Thy wings.
25. Love VAUNTETH not itself.
26. Now WILL I sing to my WELLBELOVED.
27. Multitude of YEARS should teach wisdom.

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