

LAY HOLD ON GOD

By Nell Truesdell

IN HIS poem THE MARSHES OF GLYNN Sidney Lanier wrote:

By so many roots as the marsh grass sends in the sod
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of God.

If ever you have tried to pull up a bit of marsh-grass, you know how tenaciously its roots grip the soil. The harder you tugged, the more resistant was the pull of the roots; all you got were a few pieces of broken grass. Unless you had a tool to dig with, you could not pull up the roots.

You will have a similar experience whenever you try to dislodge a negative habit or thought from your consciousness. It is easy to break off the flourishing top growth of negation by repeating a few denials or by breathing deeply to quiet your nerves or by saying a prayer. But you know that, unless the roots are dug up, the negation will reappear at some future time, more lush than before. A temporary relief from trouble is not the same as a cure.

What is the cure? Lay hold on God! Be so determined to lay hold on God that you are able to push your attention past all formulas, all practices, all prayers. After you have done that, do not be tempted to report your trouble in detail to God; for then your false report will dissipate spiritual Substance in empty words. Instead, describe God. Say all that you know to be true about God. Put your strength into the report so that you will believe what you are saying. Remember, whatever you hold to binds you. It is better by far to be bound to God than to be the slave of negation.

Paul found his greatest freedom in being held captive to God through Christ Jesus. Paul used strong language to describe the spiritual might and authority with which God had equipped him, which he dared to use against adverse powers in the world. He said that the weapons of his struggle were not of the flesh, but were "mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (II Cor. 10:4-5)

All of us have forgotten that we are created free, spiritual beings. In consequence, we suffer the discomforts of bondage to the world. Not until we are sunk in the slough of helplessness, do we seem to remember that we possess the one tool by which we may free ourselves. That tool is our faculty of attention.

Why do we neglect to look exclusively to God?

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SPIRITICITY, February 1962

THE INTELLIGENT CAUSE

By Alden Truesdell

ONE YEAR we visited the Texas State Fair and saw, among other attractions, the astronomy exhibit. This particularly emphasized the tremendous distances between the heavenly bodies. The present-day telescopes with mirrors up to 200 inches in diameter reveal terrifying expanses of space with billions of billions of miles of area for future exploration. The stars are as crowded, we are told, as three specks of dust would be in an otherwise empty Grand Central Station.

The Westinghouse Exhibit at the same Fair went to great length with chart and scientific explanation to show the same ratio of empty space within the atom as the telescope reports in the cosmos. There is so much empty space throughout the framework of creation that under sufficient magnifying power a concrete wall would look like a chicken-wire fence. And if the empty space could be squeezed out of the earth, it would shrink to a small sphere with a radius of only about half a mile. If we could eliminate all the unfilled space in a man's body, he would be reduced to a speck just visible with a magnifying glass.

The atom is so small that five million could be placed in a row in the dot you might make with a pen or pencil. Within the atom the electrons whirl around the nucleus more than a thousand million million times per second. Today many youngsters consider these facts quite casually; they can tell you all about them. To me they sound like reports from a foreign land.

But a time of consternation such as brought about by these unbelievable recordings would be a good time to turn back to a believable God. We may console our incomprehension by the thought that we are the image and likeness of the One who caused all these things to be. In God, the astronomical figures are but fractions of the One. In God, there is no space, no eons of time. In God, there is no part or particle. In God, all is One, and One is all.

It is a relief to get back to the simplicity of God after viewing the cumbersome complications of mortal reasoning.

There was a time when science was considered the deadly enemy of religion, and men of original ideas were prohibited from expounding their "doctrines of the devil." Now it is difficult for the miracles of Scripture to compete with the miraculous findings of modern science. In the old, orthodox religious circles, it was believed that the scientific approach to the natural world would foster materialism. But now the more enlightened viewpoint is quite convinced that science has quenched materialism completely. Let me quote from a scientist at Notre Dame, Dr. John A. O'Brien:

"The old world of our forefathers consisted of substances filling space and composed of hard, inert (as we then thought) particles of matter. That world has faded before the discovery that matter consists mostly of vacant space, through which move, at enormous speed, tiny particles of electrically charged matter. Thus, too, the atom is perceived to be a miniature solar system."

The astronomers are reverent before the magnitude of their discoveries and find nothing but evidence of a wise and provident Creative Entity. Robert Millikan has written:

"That there is a unity, an interrelatedness, a wholeness to it all, we ourselves being but parts of that whole, is attested by all experience, including, I should like to add, the amazing new scientific developments in the fields of ether physics, relativity, and wave-mechanics. This is only my prosaic paraphrase of the lines of Tennyson, the poet of science, when he says:

The sun, the moon, the stars, the hills and the plains,
Are not these, O Soul,
the vision of Him who reigns?
The ear of man cannot hear,
and the eye of man cannot see;
But if we could see and hear this vision - were it not He?
Speak to Him, thou, for He hears
and spirit with spirit shall meet.
Closer is He than breathing,
and nearer than hands and feet.!"

Similarly Banesh Hoffmann in his book about the new discoveries of quantum mechanics has written:

"A meager handful of men is vouchsafed each generation the precious gift of scientific insight, and we marvel at their powers. How much more, then, shall we marvel at the wondrous powers of God who created the heavens and the earth from a primal essence (energy) of such exquisite subtlety that with it He could fashion brains and minds afire with the divine gift of clairvoyance to penetrate His mysteries. If the mind of a mere Bohr or Einstein astounds us with its power, how may we begin to extol the glory of God who created them?"

Everything to which man gives his attention will reveal to him its nature, and continued search in any direction will of necessity bring one to a consideration of the Principle back of that which he examines. Therefore any enlightenment in any field will bring man into a reverence toward the Maker of perfect phenomena. In this respect, all roads lead to God, but some are round-about and some are direct.

The astronomer with his telescope and the physicist with his cyclotron and cloud chamber find new and marvelous realms for exploration, which emphasize again the existence of an Intelligent Cause. Each examination reveals the wonderful works of God, but neither reveals God Himself. This realm of search responds to no man-made instrument, but calls forth our own God-given equipment which outperforms and outreveals the instruments made by man and used in his study of the wonders of the least and greatest areas subject to his exploration. There is a direct route to the Ultimate Object of every search; there is a perfect God-given instrument the searcher may use - not the telescope nor the microscope nor even the outer eye of man. The searcher of soul and Spirit uses the eye of the mind, the visionary faculty. As an Oriental sage discovered, "Thou canst not behold Me with thy two outer eyes; I have given thee an eye divine."

In the light of this inner method of investigation, by the eye of the mind and the Light of the Father, it is clear that the investigators in outer fields of research are coming closer and closer to those realities that the illumined have expounded down through the ages. The search must converge, in the fullness

of time, at the Center of Reality Itself, which is Christ Truth, "the same yesterday and today and forever." It is as though men of science were eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, which could not help but reveal the wisdom of partaking of the tree of life, to be found in the midst of the Paradise of God - within man. We remember that "the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God."

The report of the religionists is that science is making them ever more religious; and the report of the scientists is that, with every scientific revelation, they are becoming more reverent. Let me quote Professor O'Brien again:

"The scientist who has peered even a little way into the unfathomed and mysterious depths of a particle of matter will stand with reverent eyes before a particle of dust or a grain of sand. The findings of nuclear physicists sound the death knell of materialism as an explanation of the universe and as a philosophy of life. Moreover, they offer new and striking confirmation of man's age-old belief in God. To the real scientist there is no common clay. Every particle of matter is aglow with miracle and mystery, singing a refrain in homage of infinite Power, from whose creative hands it came."

It is to be hoped that the fervor and discipline of research may be turned to man himself - to his Origin and his place in this divinely ordered universe - and that the Creating Wisdom may reveal, for the glory of Its own Name, the creature It has made in Its own image and likeness.

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SPIRITICITY, February 1962

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS

By Robert Applegate, Jr.

(Continued from last month)

LAST MONTH I made what may be regarded as some unjustified remarks about organized religion. Since then I have read Nicolas Berdyaev's *The Fate of Man in the Modern World*. This book, which came out in 1933, has just been reissued. Many of the events that Bardyaev prophesied have already come to pass; so he is a prophet worth listening to. He says:

"A whole epoch is ending, and a new one, as yet without name, is beginning. . . . All the old religious sanctions for the power which held great masses in organic order have vanished: no one believes in them any more. . . . The decadence of the world is evident in all modern literature, in philosophical thought, in political and social life. . . . Modern bestialism and dehumanization are based upon idolatry, the worship of technics, race or class or production, and upon the adaptation of atavistic instincts to this worship. . . . We are witnessing the paganization of Christian society. Nationalism is polytheism: it is incompatible with monotheism. . . . We are witnessing a judgment not on history alone, but upon Christianity (i.e. organized Christianity) in history. . . . Too much of the merely relative and unworthy has been declared sacrosanct. Only a new spirituality, which has not yet defined itself as an historical force, can bring real recovery." (Italics mine.)

All this should be obvious. The whole Western Christian (or ex-Christian, as Arnold Toynbee calls it) Society is sick; it seems bent upon destroying itself. The only reason for pointing to this is to emphasize the transcendent value of the Gospel (Good News) of Christ; our need for it; and our responsibility to seek it, cherish it, and follow it. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

We may recall Jesus' words: "O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky: but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" Jesus and Paul lived in a time very like the present - the similarity is startling. These men were not fools or dreamers; they knew what the world is. But they also know what God IS.

Here, in what has been called the Bible Belt, many think they know what the Gospel of Christ is. Their conception is so childish that it is no wonder that thinking people do not take it seriously. Using Paul's words about being "justified by faith," they suppose that all they have to do is say, "I believe in Christ," and then wait for their reward and the punishment of those who do not "believe" as they do.

"Salvation" is not deliverance from hell after death; salvation is deliverance from a consciousness of materiality (which is hell) here and now. It is deliverance from the consciousness of separation from God (the Good). It is not a once-for-all "I believe"; it is a continuing process. Jesus Christ said: "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." Paul, after twenty years of ministry, said: "I count myself not to have attained."

"Justification (being declared innocent, being freed from self-reproach) by faith" is not the sum of Paul's message; it is only the start of it. The reason he emphasizes it so much is that so many of his people trusted in religious observances ("works of the law") to justify themselves. The heart of Paul's message is the new life "in Christ" (i.e. in the consciousness, or awareness, of Christ) that one may enter after he has been freed from his self-condemnation and erroneous beliefs. The new life in Christ is a growing awareness of the Allness of God. It is, or should be, the goal of every Christian. This is salvation: a knowing of Christ. As Paul wrote to Timothy, God wants "all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the Truth." Justification by faith is the beginning of a pilgrimage; it is not its end, which is a consciousness of perfect at-one-ment with God - a losing of oneself in Infinite Love. This is what Jesus Christ prayed for:

"Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory; . . . that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

So Paul writes, in what is today the famous Eighth Chapter of his letter (which I am neither competent nor worthy to translate or discuss):

There is now no condemnation of those who are in Christ Jesus. For the Teaching of the Breath of Life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the teaching of sin and death. Religion could not do this because of the weakness of our human nature. But God sent His own Son in the likeness of erring man, because of man's error. He condemned (made void) error in human personality, so that the goodness of the Teacher might reach perfection in us, who conduct

ourselves not according to human nature, but according to the Breath (of God).

Those who conduct themselves according to human nature give their attention to the things of human nature; those who conduct themselves according to the Breath give their attention to things of the Breath. To give attention to human nature is death; to give attention to the Breath is life and peace.

To give attention to human nature is enmity against God. They who do this do not accept the teaching of God; they cannot. But you are not living according to human nature but according to the Breath, if the Breath of God is in you. If anyone does not have the Breath of Christ, he does not belong to Him. But if the Breath of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, then He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give Life to your mortal nature through the Breath that remains in you.

(To be continued)

SPIRITICITY, February 1962

FOR BEGINNERS:

Q. What should I do about my sister-in-law, who is forever tormenting, interfering with, and irritating me?

A. Meteorologists tell us that at the eye of a hurricane calm conditions prevail, often with clear skies. Use this figure to point up two extremes in your consciousness: the center where the Peace of God prevails, and the perimeter where chaos rages.

Your sister-in-law is a personality, who to your mind, stirs up a storm of severe intensity whenever you think of her, receive a letter from her, or meet her in person. The disturbing power that you credit her with is only your misuse of your own spiritual forces. All the distresses we suffer (and that embarrass and exhaust and impoverish us) are nothing but inventions of our undisciplined faculty of imagination.

In Scripture we read: "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth"; "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart"; "The Lord doth hate . . . an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations."

Before we attempt to deal with any outside influence, we should first turn the attention of our mind to God. One of the richest promises in Scripture tells us exactly what to do when we are disturbed: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose imagination is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee."

This is "strong medicine," but it is the potion that will cure your ailment.

To gain the peace, poise, and security we crave we must practice the Truth that has been given to us by the wise of all ages. Our practice will reward us with "signs" following. However, I know from experience that when we earnestly practice any principle, we never look for "signs." Our heart and mind become so fascinated with the principle that we are unconcerned with its effect.

If we make a habit of immediately transferring our attention from any untoward influence and directing that faculty toward God in our midst - our heart - we shall receive, in His Sanctuary within, the peace, enlightenment, and defense we desire. Then, we shall emerge fortified and able to bless our relatives, friends, and all humankind.

Q. Of what value is a teacher?

A. I shall let the seers of old answer your question.

"To many it is not given to hear of the Self. Many, though they hear of it, do not understand it. Wonderful is he who speaks of it. Intelligent is he who learns of it. Blessed is he who, taught by a good teacher, is able to understand it." -

Upanishads

"Approach a teacher with humility and with a desire to serve."

- Rig-Veda

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Alphabet Of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day of the Month

FEBRUARY 1962

1. Thou hast kept me ALIVE.
2. I have sat the Lord always BEFORE me.
3. Thou shalt COMPASS me about with songs of deliverance.
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5. I will DECLARE Thy Name unto my brethren.
6. His EYE seeth every precious thing.
7. Bring FORTH FRUIT unto God.
8. I will GUIDE thee with mine eye.
9. Thou art my HIDING place.
10. I will INSTRUCT thee and teach thee.
 *
12. Let us JOIN ourselves to the Lord.
13. He hath showed me His marvelous KINDNESS.
14. LIFT up your heads, . . . and the King of glory shall come in.
15. The voice of the Lord is full of MAJESTY.
16. Call upon the Lord while He is NEAR.
17. The Lord shall be a refuge for the OPPRESSED.
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19. Ye ought to be QUIET
20. Thou shalt PRESERVE me from trouble.
21. REMEMBER and turn to the Lord.
22. The Lord is my STRENGTH and SHIELD.
23. Mercy and TRUTH are met TOGETHER.
24. UNTO Thee Will I cry, O Lord, my Rock.
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26. The VOICE of the Lord is powerful.
27. All . . . shall WORSHIP before Thee.
28. Keep this ordinance from YEAR to Year.

"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.