

FATHER

By Alden Truesdell

At the age of twelve Jesus had made the decision to serve His spiritual Father, and He knew exactly what He was doing. Every year Joseph and Mary went to Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover, and the year when Jesus was twelve they went up as usual; but when they started home, they discovered that Jesus was not with them. Being but a day's journey out of the city, they returned to look for Him; and after three days they found Him in the temple, "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions." And those who heard Him were amazed. When His mother rebuked Him, He said, "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" But the account goes on to say simply that He went home with them and was "subject unto them"; and He "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

The Father in Heaven must have been a definite Entity to have influenced Jesus at this early age; and Jesus must have been extremely sensitive to have seen and known this Presence as His actual Parent - more actual than His earthly parents, to whom He did not even report His insatiable urge to ask and tell of His Heavenly Father's qualities. He honored His earthly parents, but He gave priority to His Heavenly Father. This is an example that could be considered with benefit by many closely knit families.

The time comes when each one must be about the Father's business, and whether he heeds this urge or not determines his opportunity to grow "in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." If at this time one makes excuses, he may delay his progress for many incarnations. If he heeds fully and sincerely the divine call, he may make the transition from bondage to liberty in one bold upsurge.

The choices in favor of the Father in heaven are so much of a rarity that there is great rejoicing in the Kingdom of Heaven over the repentance of one person, as Jesus stated. This is understandable when we realize that a Father in Heaven, or a spiritual Presence of any sort is foolishness to many men. A big man up in some sort of fixture in space is acceptable to many, because they do not have to bother with him. They can just leave him there, to receive consideration at a later date. And, as far as fathers are concerned, many prefer one who has a bank account and can be reached by telegram at least. But to consider an actual spiritual Presence, described as "closer than breathing, nearer than hands or feet"; a Father "that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" - this is too much to consider for the majority; and it remains for the illumined minority to enjoy the benefits of spiritual parentage, protection, and provision.

Those who accept the Father in Heaven, or God in the midst of them, as the actual Giver of all perfect gifts find no comparable satisfaction in any outer dependence. The inner life becomes more potent and valuable than all else. In this re-arranging of values, the inner peace, comfort, and gratification take precedence over the more obvious and robust activities of the violently active: but even the pleasures of these expressions are enhanced.

One of the more successful plays of our stage and screen is titled "Life with Father." One of the amusing incidents of this play is enticing Father into a belated baptism, in which he is a reluctant participant. Father is perfectly satisfied with his spiritual status and needs no

sprinkling to confirm. On occasion he prays and tells God exactly what he will and will not stand for. He sits God down and gives Him a good talking-to. He shouts at God to emphasize the seriousness of the matter. Altogether Father is a gos, when weaklings confound the strong. Here one stands upon the girders of the Almighty and rests in the everlasting arms.

Protection: the assurance of an overbrooding Presence and Power, actually assigned to the guardianship of man's cherished achievement. He who believes and invokes this, proves it.

Provision: there is so much produce all about, so much supply on every hand that provision seems common. "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him."

Life with the spiritual Father steps up and lengthens life on earth.

Strength with the spiritual Father makes the weak say, "I am strong."

Protection with the spiritual Father makes havens for the innocent.

Provision with the spiritual Father increases assets on all planes.

Having listed a few of the assets of inheritance for those who establish spiritual identity and heirship, we must say, with Paul:

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. . . . And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! . . . For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

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FIND GOD

By Nell Truesdell

The question, "How can I get closer to God?" arises in every heart. The answer is simple: "Go to the place where God is." That place, for each individual, is exactly where Jesus said it is: "Within you."

Man is prone to look into the outer phases of his existence for the God who is Spirit. He seeks for his God in some form, feeling that he must have concrete evidence of His Presence. Many of the Christian churches furnish forms for their religious devotees to worship, such as set forms of prayer; marble and plaster statues of the Christ and of the saints, the Holy Mother and Babe; religious pictures of all kinds; talismens, medals, beads, good luck charms, and other trinkets to be pinned to the clothing or carried in pockets and purses. Even the metaphysical groups indulge this form of worship by furnishing cards and booklets that can easily be carried about on the person.

The so-called pagan religions furnish idols of various kinds, which represent phases of the God-concept. These are set up in temples and in the homes for the convenience of worshipers. All such outer replicas furnish exact points toward which the attention of the worshiper is easily directed in adoring reverence. While the outer object itself is not sacred, the person's ceremonious rendering of honor and homage to it makes it appear sacred in his sight. He learns early in life to look toward, and depend upon, the object for the answers to his prayers. Eventually, the practice settles into a fixed duty that robs the worshiper of his natural personal impulse to revere Something greater and more spiritual than himself or anything around him. His internal forces become constrained and his obedience to certain forms of worship makes him stiff and unreceptive in his attitude toward God.

All this artificiality is loosened when the attention is withdrawn from outer forms and centered in the midst of consciousness. This midst is not an exact physical point; it is simply "the within." In "the within" man makes personal contact with the universal, formless Presence that is God Almighty. Jesus put it plainly when He said to His disciples, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." He did not mean that He would be in one of them exclusively; but that He would be among them, equally perceived and felt as a living Presence by all.

"God is Spirit." God as Spirit, is always available to all men. Contacted by the individual at the center of his own consciousness, God moves through him from center to circumference, and, in this activity, pours out Spiritual Gifts.

We may illustrate this fact by the acorn and the oak tree. The tree abides within the acorn, and, under suitable conditions, arouses from the center and works outward until a fully developed tree bears witness to the inner activity that had to take place in the acorn before a tree could appear. So does God work in man from his center of consciousness to the circumference, to fill man with Himself and all the spiritual qualities that show forth as manifestations of His Presence: life, love, intelligence, power, substance.

God does not give things as such to man; He has already given Himself. Faith in God and love for Him, bring about an activity within man that outpictures as an outpouring of all good when a man identifies himself with the Spirit - or God - in the midst of himself.

To turn the attention to God at the center of consciousness is to fling wide closed doors in such a way that spiritual understanding quickens the thinking apparatus. Thoughts, then, become concrete forms that outpicture further as spoken words which, in their turn, take form in ways that enrich and bless one wise and patient enough to master the practice. The secret of successful achievement is to keep the attention of the mind centered on God within; the outer results always follow in natural sequence.

Man does not trust God sufficiently in this matter. He transfers his attention from God to his own thoughts and to the manifest things about him; thus he shuts himself off from unlimited supply and denies himself his own inheritance of all good from his loving Father. God is always on the giving hand, but man must comply with the rules that prepare him to be a ready receptacle for the boundless gifts of God.

The simplest way to obey these rules is to get still and know oneness with Divine Mind. "Be still, and know that I am God." Racing thoughts, fluttering emotions, and violent actions are sure barriers to the open storehouse of the Lord. We take God's Good by faith in Him; and by love for Him we receive more than we are able to handle.

"Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. . . . and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

The Master said, "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation (in the outer): neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, Lo there! for, behold the Kingdom of God is within you." "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

A man should examine himself seriously so that he may be aware of the direction in which he is looking for his good and ascertain the point from which he expects that good to come to him. If he finds that he is looking outward toward some manifest form, he would do well to reverse the direction of his attention and look inward toward the invisible God, who proves ultimately, to be the only true Source of all good.

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THE LORD'S PRAYER

By Robert Applegate

(Continued from last month)

The last two petitions of the Lord's Prayer have given some people difficulty. The petitions, as we have them in the Authorized Version, are:

"Lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil."

The quibblers ask, "If God is good, how could He possibly lead us into temptation? and why is it necessary for us to ask Him not to do so?" We are, however, instructed, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them." In other words we are told to pray, believing that God does not, and will not, lead us into temptation, but that He will deliver us from evil.

It has been said that the Prayer of Jesus was given originally in the affirmative form: "Thy Kingdom is coming, Thy Will is being done," etc. This is not true; the Prayer is imperative in form; but in the light of Jesus' command to believe that we do receive what we ask for, it is as though the Prayer were affirmative. When we pray, "Thy Kingdom come," and believe that it is being done, it is as though we were affirming it. Further, all the petitions in reality are already granted. God's Kingdom is here. "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth." In reality His Will is done, for He is omnipotent; in reality He has already given us everything; in reality there is no evil to be delivered from. Therefore the Prayer refers to our own consciousness - to the consciousness of each individual who repeats the Prayer in the recesses of his own heart. It is there that he finds deliverance from all that troubles him.

The word translated "temptation" means trial or testing; and the real meaning of the petition is not "lead us not into temptation," but, "let us not go under in the testing," or, "let us not fail in the testing." Today we test everything, and the whole structure of modern science is founded on the empiric method of testing every idea and every hypothesis. A scientist or an inventor tests his ideas to see whether they are true or not. Manufactured articles are tested to see whether they will do the job for which they were designed and whether they will measure up to the demands that will be made upon them. We also, in our ordinary human life, are tested repeatedly. In school we take tests at the end of each semester; and if we pass them, we are permitted to move up to a higher grade. In business we are under the constant surveillance of our supervisors; and if we succeed in winning their approval, we receive promotions and raises. Likewise in our ongoing in Truth we find that our sincerity and our integrity are tested; and as we pass each test, we move up to a higher plane of understanding. The test in this instance is that of our steadfastness in seeking first the Kingdom of God. The answer is simple. It is, under all circumstances, to choose "the fruit of the Spirit" in preference to "the works of the flesh." It is easy to state this; it is not always easy to make the right choice. However we know, "with God all things are possible"; and thus we pray to Him, "Let us not fail in the test." We remember also that we are told to believe that we receive. Therefore this petition becomes a promise of continual progress into greater joy, greater love, greater peace, greater power.

"Deliver us from evil." There are three Greek words in the New Testament that are translated by the English word evil, and each one has a different connotation. The usual

Greek word that means what we mean by the words evil or bad occurs only three times in the words of Jesus Christ, and it would seem that He had but slight use for the term. Another word means worthless, and this occurs only twice in Jesus' recorded sayings. The word, however, that He used most frequently to indicate what is undesirable (though He used it rarely), the word that is translated evil in the Lord's Prayer, has the basic meaning of pain, painfulness, and, specifically, weariness. The word derives from the verb meaning to work, and it therefore has reference to the sense of toil, to the sense of being overburdened and worn down by labor. This is what we want to be delivered from; this is what takes the joy out of life and seems to make men old before their time. It is not work that is evil; work is a privilege and it should be a joyous, energizing activity; but it is the sense of toil and the sense of responsibility that are devitalizing. It is feeling that we have so much to do and that we have to do it all ourselves. It is from this sense of toil and anxiety, from all that is painful, that God would deliver us.

It is actually possible to work without ever growing weary, but the attention must be more on God than on what is being done. The attitude that must be maintained has been described as that of "listening for the Father's voice and expecting a manifestation of the Father to your consciousness." As long as anyone maintains this attitude, he will do well whatever he is engaged in and he will be refreshed by the activity. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

The doxology that concludes the Lord's Prayer, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." is not found in the earliest manuscripts of the New Testament. It was probably not a part of the Prayer as Jesus originally gave it, but was added by the early Christians when they used the Prayer in worship. It is a fitting way to end this Prayer of our Lord, which He gave us to use as we "watch, . . . and pray always."

Alphabet Of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day Of The Month

JUNE 1953

1. God is ABLE to make ALL grace ABOUND towards you.
2. Strength and BEAUTY are in His sanctuary.
3. By Him were all things CREATED.
4. He shall give thee the DESIRES of thy heart.
5. EVERY good gift and EVERY perfect gift is from above.
6. Our FELLOWSHIP is with the FATHER.

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8. GREAT is our Lord and of GREAT power.
9. God will HEAR me.
10. His understanding IS INFINITE.
11. He that is JOINED to the Lord is one Spirit.
12. God is KIND.
13. The LORD LIFTETH up the meek.

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15. In Thine hand is power and MIGHT.
16. The Lord's mercies are NEW every morning.
17. I and my Father are ONE.
18. With God all things are POSSIBLE.
19. It is the Spirit that QUICKENETH.
20. The inward man is RENEWED day by day.

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22. His word runneth very SWIFTLY.
23. Sing unto the Lord with THANKSGIVING.
24. Thy word giveth UNDERSTANDING.
25. I Am the VINE, ye are the branches.
26. I Am the WAY.
27. YOURS is the Kingdom of God.

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29. Be ZEALOUS therefore and repent.
30. Truly God is good.

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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.