

THE CENTER OF CONSCIOUSNESS

By Nell Truesdell

The threshold dividing the twelfth from the thirteenth year of publication of SPIRITICITY is crossed with this March 1953 issue. Wonder mingled with expectancy settles upon us as we take the first few steps that set us bodily in an entirely new twelve-room house in the Father's Kingdom. An unknown period in our experience lies behind the door at which we push. This door is not an obstacle in our way; it is a movable partition that swings upon its hinges, and its one office is to respond to our touch. A door is made to be opened. No matter how high or wide or thick, no matter what its color or whether its design invites or repels, a door stands ready to be operated aright. Whoever opens it is free to make the transition from one side to the other. A door has no control over the view it conceals; it neither forces one to come in nor go out through it.

Progression will not be denied. Using the past as a measure, we can be certain of continued spiritual unfoldment in ourselves, our periodical, and our readers; for we know there is no retrograde motion in God. Since we, as a group, have joined ourselves to God through Christ Jesus our Lord, we rely on the fact that the unknown holds new blessings, both close at hand and afar, which will be distributed to us as we are able to bear them.

The things of the Spirit do not grow in man; they are already complete, finished, established. Through his attention to them, man uncovers the fact that they exist in him. As his awareness of them expands, he experiences a continuous improvement in his consciousness (and he observes a constant relation between each successive step in his own development). If he is earnest, he will pursue the Truth as It reveals Itself to him, and he will accommodate his consciousness to Its abiding Presence.

The Master wisely said that men do not put new wine into old wine skins, for then the skins would break and both the wine and the containers would be lost. So it is with consciousness. A man must be willing to cultivate a new awareness of God so that the things of the Spirit may have an abiding place in him. Man's consciousness can be likened to a vessel; it will hold to the limit of its capacity whatever is put into it. If its treasure consists of the things of the Spirit, it will be filled with riches that will not rust, be stolen, or corrupted.

We have found that obedience to the instruction of Jesus Christ is the easiest way to come directly into the Presence of God. He said, "Watch." Before we can look toward God, we must find the direction toward Him. "The Kingdom of God," Jesus declared, "is within you."

It will be well to consider the fact that God is not a Superman dwelling in the skies. If God were a superman He would be restricted to a given locality at a given time. Since we believe that God is everywhere we must accept the fact that He cannot be kept within limits of space, time, or activity. The Master gave a concise description of God when he said, "God is Spirit." When we understand that Spirit is the substance of God we know Him in a new way. Spirit is Omnipresent - everywhere present, all at once, in all Its power. It is like electricity; It is like radio waves; It can be contacted anywhere by simple

desire to look toward It. But where can we make contact? The answer to this question has already been given - "within you." Where is "the within?" "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty," Zephaniah announced.

The midst of consciousness is the center, the secret place, the closet within, where, by disengaging his attention from the tangle of thoughts lodged in his intellect (the region of his forehead) and dropping that attention to a point just back of his heart, man can be alone with God in a very personal and intimate sense. Man does not confine God to the limits of his personal awareness of Him. As radio waves interpenetrate the atmosphere, so God as Spirit interpenetrates man; but, when man tunes in on God, he does not restrict God any more than a radio restricts the waves upon which it concentrates in the midst of its mechanism. Another point to consider is that everybody can tune in on the same wave lengths at the same instant and receive the full benefits of the contact without depriving anybody else of his own selected program.

The center of Consciousness is not a physical point in the flesh body any more than the center of a wheel is its hub. The center of anything is always an unseen point. In the human consciousness, the center is sometimes felt to be an infinitesimal light; at other times it may seem to be an area of darkness - the darkness of secrecy rather than of hue. In any instance, it is known to be a point of utter quiet, a sanctuary of peace and security. No negation can ever abide in this Holy Place. When the attention of the mind retires there, no hurt, no harm, no lack, no disturbance can reach the person thus sheltered.

Frequently, the Psalmist voices the intense desire of man to abide in this place:

"Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee. . . . I flee to thee to hide me. Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: . . . quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's sake."

"Oh how great is thy goodness, . . . which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men! Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man; thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues."

A simple exercise by which a person can locate the center of his own consciousness is set forth below:

Stand erect; from the he soles of the feet, to the tips of the fingers (arms outstretched shoulder-high), to the point above the top of the head where the palms meet, draw an imaginary circle. Change the circle into an imaginary sphere and extend its limits outward to the furtherest bound of your own experience (or knowledge). You live within the sphere of your own consciousness and the center of that sphere is an undefinable spot just back of your heart.

Thus we see that man exists within the confines of his own experience: material, physical, mental, psychic, and spiritual. He is never aware of anything beyond the perimeter of his consciousness. He is forced to go within to discover the truth about anything, including God.

For ages, the average person has considered his intellect to be the center of his being; hence he has made himself the innocent victim of an eccentric (off-center) rulership that functions primarily through his personal will. As we turn to Scripture for instruction, we discover that the issues of life come from the heart, and, that, as a man believes in his heart, so is he.

To transfer the seat of the attention from the forehead (intellect) to a spot back of the heart is the most worthwhile practice of daily life. As a man becomes familiar with the practice, he finds it easy to approach God in the sanctuary within himself; he rests there, and the forces of his being are integrated. As his confidence in God grows, he feels his inner vision opening and moving upward. He learns to look up from within, and he discovers that the God within and the God above is One God and that he is at one with THAT ONE. He knows, then, that God is at once personal and universal, and that he makes his contact with God within himself.

Watching Godward demands a vigilant waiting. In this matter a man is not a mere spectator; he is an alert participant in an activity that involves his undivided attention to the most precious possession of his existence - his own spiritual Sonship. As he persists in the practice of the High Watch, he perceives in the stillness that engulfs him, that it is not he that possesses a concept of God, but that God possesses him. The act of crossing over from an accepted notion of God as a Superman to an entirely new grasp of the meaning of God demands an extended view of Him from a different focal point in consciousness. That point is the center, the secret place of the Most High God. It is in every man. The Door to this center is Jesus Christ. "I am the Door," He said, "by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."

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GOD IS ONE

By Alden Truesdell

If one studies the Scripture diligently, he will detect a similarity of spiritual experience throughout the entire account. Thousands of students have poured over these sacred volumes, and each has received light and understanding to the degree that he has let his own spirit reveal to him the hidden knowledge.

As we read the first few books of the Scripture, we are impressed by the fact that the Yahweh of the Israelites was a strict disciplinarian and, according to their own beliefs, a hard task-master. Yahweh was not a God with whom one could take liberties. He was something on the order of a big executive. The relationship between the people and their God was similar to that between employees and their employer in the days when an employer was undisputed master. Yahweh was the Big Boss, and the Israelites' welfare depended upon their ability to please their Boss. Much of the worship was compulsory, and the pursuit of the right way of life was due more to a fear of punishment than to a desire to do the right for its own sake. Yahweh also was almost inaccessible. The priests had to make elaborate preparations to enter His presence. Except they were properly sanctified, they could not enter the Holy of holies, and even the slightest physical blemish barred them. Yahweh was a hard God. One did not just run in on Yahweh, as he would no his next-door neighbor. One made an appointment, if he could, and then was obliged to approach with fear and trembling.

As one continues his reading of the Scripture, however, the record shows a changing God. As one moves forward through the account he seems to see God

relenting of His harshness and changing in character, until in place of the original vindictive, jealous God, He becomes a more amenable and agreeable Deity. God seems to have seen the error of His ways, as it were, and to have repented. If a man pauses to consider this phenomenon, he realizes that God has not changed, but that men's ideas about God have changed. He discovers, further, that these ideas represent his own. He discovers that the Bible is a story about himself, about his own evolution, about his own material, physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual progress. He discovers that the characters set forth represent the various ruling ideas and departments of being as they emerge from material, physical, mental, and emotional bondage; as they spring into action in response to the Principle of Good that caused them to be, to accomplish the purpose for which they were designed. He sees that while the Scripture is a fascinating study book for those who have the leisure and the inclination to study, it is also a handbook for those who are busily engaged in the business of living and working, so designed that even those who run may read.

The Scripture is a record of the processes involved in the building of a universe and the making of man. Studied diligently, it brings the student to a contemplation of a corresponding activity within himself. If Scriptural study does not do this, then the student has missed the benefit. All the changes and developments recorded are not the records of a changing God, but of a changing consciousness of man and race; and every person experiences such changes within himself. God, however, remains "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever, . . . with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

In every earnest person, the early concept of the jealous, vindictive God gradually gives place to the God of wisdom and justice, who rewards or punishes men according to their deserts; to the God of power, who sets men in high places and gives them power over their enemies; to the God of mercy, who promises a better dispensation to come. All of these concepts give place in turn to the realization of the God of love, whose salvation is present, whose promises are fulfilled in the present time. The inaccessible God afar off becomes the God who is "closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet," that intimate One, who is in reality the only One. It is the same God, a lovable God, but seen from a different perspective.

Everything changes except God, and all things are changed into God. God, the Principle of Good, makes everything like unto Himself and causes every willing person to exult, "Thou in me, and I in Thee!"

"The whole earth is full of his glory."

"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."

"One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts."

But God goes on forever, "the first and the last, . . . the beginning and the ending." And God is Love.

Complete surrender and childlike acceptance are requisite to an understanding of God as Love. And although God may be known as Life, Intelligence, and Power, nevertheless until the Oneness and the Loveableness of God are comprehended, life will be a commodity marred by the spectre of death, intelligence will be an occasion to abhor ignorance, power will be tainted with

the ambition for new worlds to conquer. However, when God as Love, and as the One True Love, is fully known, then the within and the without are reconciled, the least and the greatest merge, and all the sons of God shout together for joy.

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THE LORD'S PRAYER

By Robert Applegate

Jesus Christ taught us only one prayer. It is short, consisting of seven petitions, or commands; and yet it contains all that we need ever ask for, all, in fact, that we can possibly want. Jesus undoubtedly spoke this Prayer in Aramaic, but the earliest copy of it is in the Greek New Testament. The Prayer as it is found in our Bibles and as it is used in our worship is a translation of this Greek and is therefore a translation of a translation. In this chain of translation it is almost inevitable that there should be a departure from the meaning of the Prayer as it was first spoken by Jesus on the mountain in Galilee. What precisely Jesus meant us to say in prayer scholars and translators have tried to determine, but they have never completely agreed with one another. For the sake of comparison therefore several versions are given below.

KING JAMES

Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.

(The doxology "For thine is the kingdom . . ." was not a part of the original prayer, but was added by the early Christians in worship.)

MOFFATT

Our Father in heaven
thy name be revered,
thy Reign begin,
thy will be done on earth as in heaven!
give us today our bread for the morrow,
and forgive us our debts
as we have forgiven our debtors,
and lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

GOODSPEED

Our Father in heaven
Your name be revered!
Your kingdom come!
Your will be done
On earth as well as in heaven!
Give us today bread for the day,
And forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven our debtors.
And do not subject us to temptation,

But save from the evil one.

FERRAR FENTON

Our Father in the Heavens:
Your Name must be being hallowed:
Your Kingdom must be being restored.
Your will must be being done both in Heaven and upon the Earth.
Give us today our tomorrow's bread:
And forgive us our faults, as we forgive those offending us,
for You would not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from its evil.

As can be seen, the translators differ most markedly in their rendering of the fourth petition. In the Greek version of the Prayer (which is the earliest we have) the word that is translated daily or for the morrow is *epiousios*. As this word does not occur anywhere else in Greek literature, no one can be entirely sure as to what it means. It is quite clear, however, that it cannot mean daily; and it is equally improbable that Jesus, who told us to "take no thought for the morrow," should have taught us to pray for "bread for the morrow."

Jerome, who in the fourth century translated the New Testament from Greek into Latin, rendered *epiousios* by the unusual Latin word *supersubstantialis*. This we could render in English by such words as, supernatural, supramundane, or better still, spiritual. Jerome was a careful scholar, and it is probable that he was right in his rendering. One of the best modern scholars agrees with him, stating, "I believe that *epiousios* means pertaining to what is over and above material things." In other words, Jesus taught us to pray, "Give us this day our spiritual bread." This is of course the bread that he referred to when he said, "I am the bread of life." If we have this consciously - and we need to renew our consciousness of it every day - then we have all things.

Another point in the Prayer at which difficulty is felt is in the petition, "Lead us not into temptation." Here an examination of the Greek text is of little help. The word rendered temptation could equally well be translated trial or testing, but "lead us not into testing" is hardly a satisfactory reading. It is possible that the Greek itself is wrong, that the Greek writer, or translator, misunderstood the Aramaic that Jesus spoke? It is not only possible but probable.

C. C. Torrey, who is an outstanding scholar of Aramaic, adduces Jesus' words to His Disciples in the garden of Gethsemane as a parallel: "Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation (or, testing)." Here the testing was the coming arrest and crucifixion of Jesus, and clearly what He meant was, "Pray that you may not fail in the test." As it happened, the Disciples' courage and faith did fail (with one exception), but they made up for it later. The point that we are interested in, however, is that there seems to be an Aramaic idiom in which enter into testing means fail in it, or as we might say, go down under it. Similarly, lead us not into testing would mean let us not fail in the test.

Our courage and our faith are tested every day, sometimes severely. It is by standing through these times of testing that we grow strong in spirit. Since none of us is sufficient of himself, it is right and necessary that we should pray, "Let us not fail in the test."

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Alphabet of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day Of The Month

March 1953

2. The Lord shall ARISE upon thee.
3. He shall BRING forth thy righteousness.
4. He shall COVER thee with his feathers.
5. He shall DELIVER thee.
6. His commandment is life EVERLASTING.
7. The Lord preserveth the FAITHFUL.
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9. With GOD all things are possible.
10. Be Thou exalted, O God, above the HEAVENS.
11. The Lord is the portion of mine INHERITANCE.
12. The lips of knowledge are a precious JEWEL.
13. The Lord is thy KEEPER.
14. Christ shall give thee LIGHT.
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16. He hath showed ME His MARVELOUS kindness.
17. Wonders may be done by the NAME of Jesus.
18. The Father shall reward thee OPENLY.
19. We are made PARTAKERS of Christ.
20. Surely I come QUICKLY.
21. My REWARD is with me.
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23. The Lord SHALL SATISFY thy SOUL.
24. The Lord shall open unto THEE His good TREASURE.
25. UNDERNEATH are the everlasting arms.
26. The dayspring from on high hath VISITED us.
27. Blessed is he that WATCHETH.
28. Multitude of YEARS should teach wisdom.
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30. He hath a great ZEAL for you.
31. Be ye ready.

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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.