

HOW TO BE HAPPY THOUGH RICH

By Alden Truesdell

"Twenty-five thousand dollars! I have twenty-five thousand dollars! Do you have twenty-five thousand dollars?"

"No," the man addressed replied, "I have no such amount of money."

"Then, why are you so happy and I so unhappy?" the questioner persisted.

The man who was being interrogated wisely refrained from moralizing. He said simply, "I have found a different sense of value." He could have added, "... and a firmer foundation upon which to build my fortune." He understood that, when anybody is willing to subscribe to a set of values other than the purely material, he can be happy with or without the sum named, or any number of dollars, for that matter.

The questioner was a man who had attained a cherished standard. Early in life he had set his financial goal at twenty-five thousand dollars. In these days of fifty billion dollar budgets, being set apart from a staggering national income, twenty-five thousand dollars seem modest indeed. The difference in dollar value at the time the man determined his goal from that at the time of achievement could well have caused him to be disgruntled; but that is beside the point at present.

No one had told the questioner that he would be happy with twenty-five thousand dollars. He had assumed that he would be. He had set his own goal. As long as the goal had been in process of being achieved, he had been buoyed up by anticipation and labor. Since the goal has been reached, anticipation has ceased and with it most of his interest in life. If our man runs true to form, he will now raise his goal to fifty or a hundred thousand dollars; and, when it is attained, he will be twice or four times as disillusioned; for money as a goal, or an object of worship, has that effect on anybody.

Money itself is not evil, but the obsession to obtain money sets up a metallic idol, which rules by a biased standard. Money itself is not to blame for the dissatisfaction of those who place their trust in it. Money has never promised happiness. The most honest of money-worshippers make no claim that money will produce happiness. A current statement runs something like this: "Money will not buy happiness, but it will permit a person to purchase his favorite kind of misery." Money is not the root of all evil; the love of money is. If money is the main objective, the all-important treasure in a man's life, there will his heart (or affections) be; and the affections are the life of man.

Money is a medium of exchange. A turnover is implied in the name and nature of money. Money in circulation is called "currency," and the word "currency" suggests a free-flowing action. When money is healthy, it is up and about. As a medium of exchange, money contributes to man's convenience, and it is good to that extent.

The race associates happiness with prosperity, and rightly so. Those people who are economically solvent should be better able to enjoy the fuller, more complete life; but this does not mean that happiness follows fortune

received or achieved. If a man uses his fortune for a definite purpose, it will yield a measure of pleasure. Everything is for use, money included. When life is being used correctly, it flows more abundantly; when money is being used wisely, it tends to increase.

Wisdom is the architect of the universal structure. Happiness comes from man's right use of every quality to which he has access. A wise man lives within his income; while, at the same time, he endeavors to increase his outcome; for, in actuality, that which comes out of a man is his income. Man's world yields to him whatever he gives out -- a balanced budget, as it were.

The wealthy have a tendency to shuffle and sift the sayings of Jesus Christ, especially with regard to money; and they view with alarm such a statement as, "how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God." Unable to accept such a statement as a good axiom for better living, the well-to-do who live in comparative comfort in the kingdom of currency, ignore such heresy with the hope that it will go away if no attention is given to it.

Even Jesus' disciples were astonished at His words, and the disciples were certainly not wealthy in worldly goods. Jesus therefore emphasized His original statement by inserting the word "trust": "Children, how hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the Kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God."

As we consider the high hopes we have all had for our few meager dollars invested in banks or bonds, or buried in the back yard, we can understand the consternation of the disciples; and we might also desire to let the entire matter drop. But, as in all Jesus' teachings, there are lessons within lessons, truths within truths. We shall be wise to glean the true import of this definite principle of life -- definite because there is no possibility of using the usual excuse that the passage is obscure, a mis-translation, or an interpolation.

Jesus deliberately declared His revolutionary statement three times consecutively, no doubt to emphasize its import. He knew exactly the effect that such a declaration would have upon His hearers, and He desired to produce that effect; for He was healing a racial mistake, a mortal mishandling of a divine heritage. "They were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?" Then only did Jesus qualify His statement with further instruction. "And Jesus, looking upon them, saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible."

In addition to the setting forth of a fundamental principle, there is exhibited here also a masterly skill in bringing out the component parts of the problem to be solved. In order to obtain a constructive consideration of the relative values of the temporal and the spiritual ways of life, the disciples, influenced by the popular concept regarding riches, had to be goaded to the point of exasperation. This indignant reaction is many times the indication of true instruction and efficacious ministry.

Jesus Christ set forth a way of life so clear that a man, though a fool, cannot err therein. We shall now consider the passages immediately following the ones just referred to: "Then Peter began to say to Him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my sake, and the Gospel's, but he

shall receive an hundred fold, now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last first."

Note that the reward is not relegated to the future, but it is delegated to the present -- a hundred-fold increase of whatever is relinquished in favor of the all-providing Principle. How could this have been better said? or what explanation is needed to clarify such a transparent exposition?

We endeavor to say the same thing when we declare that there is something within a man that is more desirable and more valuable than any goal he can set, any achievement he can make, any amount of wealth he can accumulate. Name that something what you will, conscience, character, or Christ. The consensus of the treasure hunters who have found it is that this something within is what mankind is actually looking for. Some are eloquent in their enunciations: "The Desire of Nations," "What all the World is Seeking," "The Treasure Hid in the Field," "The Pearl of Great Price," "The Kingdom of Heaven," and so forth.

The point seems to be that if a man is fortunate enough to find this something, he will experience values and satisfactions hitherto neither known nor believed. Another point is that whoever seeks this something within will find it within; and, when found, it will be like a new beginning. Another point is that whatever is relegated to a subsidiary position in favor of this inner and higher treasure will, under process of the good Principle and its laws of life, be increased. This applies to family, friends, or fortune.

Someone has rightly said that the one mistake the prodigal made was in trying to have his portion of his father's estate separated unto himself. This is not the usual and popular argument, "you can't take it with you." This is a brand new and yet age-old way of wealth. This is the way of being rich toward God -- of having the bountiful life that blesses and the "Blessing" that "maketh rich."

We have considered the subject of riches; and the instruction is clear that it is possible to be rich and be in God at one and the same time. As a matter of fact, it is impossible to be really rich and not be in God, or to be in God and not be rich.

If you have one dollar or twenty-five thousand dollars or a million dollars, ask yourself, "Am I happy? Why? Am I unhappy? Why?"

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Any person might choose to devote his whole life to research in the field of metaphysics and esoteric philosophy in the hope of uncovering something new. Through such labors he would no doubt gain for himself a new perspective and he might insist that everybody subscribe to his view. But we know he would discover nothing new. If any man thinks he stands, let him beware.

----- A. J. T.

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CANST THOU BY THINKING - ?

By Nell Truesdell

Man's idea of God is an idea of a false god; for the true God cannot be grasped by processes of mental action called thinking. It is impossible for man to think about God; for when he thinks, he does nothing more than turn over in his mind impressions he has accepted by learning and stored in memory. Man learns about God in much the same manner as he learns about a tree. But does man ever know what a tree is? Is not rather his highest concept of a tree an agglomeration of general notions collected in more or less haphazard manner from observation, comparison, and association, blended together with what he is told by others? His final conclusion may seem valid, but it is so faulty that it falls far short of the Truth.

Who then can know God? Anybody. Everybody. God gives Himself, a Free Gift, to all alike, and withholds nothing of Himself from anybody at any time or in any place. He is as present with the sinner as He is with the saint. He is the Comfort of all; He is the Deliverer of all; He loves all in the same way with the same degree of Love and leaves none out of that Love. He values all, from the least to the greatest. In His sight, all are good, and very good; for His eye is too pure to behold iniquity in any of His offspring. Man can and must know this.

"Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?" reproved the Prophet Malachi. Likewise, Paul, in his address to the Athenians, declared, "God that made the world, ... hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth; and hath determined ... that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the God-head is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device." Paul could have added, "Graven by the thoughts of men's mind"; for the thoughts in man's mind are as material as any object that his eyes can see or his hands can make. Thoughts are things.

Be not discouraged at such instruction and abandon not yourself to the useless pursuit of figments of your or anybody's imagination. Rather, turn! Turn about! Deliberately make the effort to turn away from your habitual manner of trying to understand God by old ways of approach.

Dare to change your course of action, your train of thoughts, your inquiries, your studies, though you have spent a lifetime in striving to gain insight into the Truth about God. Whatever you have learned, or ever will learn, is bound to be limited by your own capacity to perceive through your senses. And God cannot be received into consciousness through the senses; nor can He be learned about or apprehended with the mind. He must be spiritually discerned. Hopeless? No! To be able to reach such a conclusion foreordains true understanding. When you come to the end of an old dispensation and are willing to face the new, you begin to make yourself ready; but you do not enter

the new realm until you can let drop all your knowledge, though it seems that you are being stripped of everything worthwhile.

How can a man know God if he keeps thinking about God? How can a man know anything at all if he keeps thinking about it? Not until the instant that he stops thinking does light break and new knowing from the Unknown flood his consciousness. Then does he go on to think about the Unknown suddenly revealed. However, as he turns the new revelation over in his mind he reduces it to his limited view, unless he is willing to abandon even that high illumination so that he can continue to receive further Light.

To put away his ideas about God is man's greatest trial. Mary cried from the depths of her soul, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him." Similarly, when man comes to the point in spiritual unfoldment where he no longer can see with his outer eyes, he cries out in desperation. He then has reached the point where he can do nothing but obey the command, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else."

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NEHEMIAH

By Robert Applegate

In 536 B.C. the first group of Jewish exiles returned from Babylonian captivity; twenty years later the Temple was rebuilt and dedicated. It seemed like the dawn of a new era for the Jews, and Haggai prophesied a glorious future for them; but all did not go well with the restored community. Persian rule was lenient, but the period following the Return was one of economic hardship, religious laxity, and demoralization. Malachi testifies of the people's complaining that it was of no avail to worship God: "You say, 'It is useless to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his charge, and have walked in mourning before the LORD of hosts?'" To such a pitch had cynicism developed. The services in the Temple were performed negligently, Jerusalem itself was largely unpopulated, and its wall (the symbol of independence, strength, and integrity) remained in ruins. Foreign marriages (and doubtless their concomitant, religious syncretism or apostasy) were common; while Judah was a laughing stock to its neighbors. To Nehemiah at the court of Artaxerxes it was reported by Hanani, "The survivors who are left from the captivity there in the province are in great misery and reproach, and the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates have been destroyed by fire." This was the situation to which Nehemiah responded with vigor, resourcefulness, courage, and faith; and which he in large measure remedied.

The sources of our knowledge of Nehemiah are his own memoirs contained in the book bearing his name, Chapters 1-7, 11-13. In its present form the book was compiled about the middle of the third century B.C. by the Chronicler, who characteristically treated his material with freedom in order to express and illustrate his own views. There is thus considerable question as to how much the original account has been embellished and enlarged; but the main features of Nehemiah's activity are clear, and we have them expressed for the most part in his own words.

In 444 B.C. Nehemiah was a cupbearer to Artaxerxes I at his palace in Susa. (Nehemiah 1:11-2:1. It is now almost universally accepted that it was Artaxerxes I Longimanus who permitted Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem, and Artaxerxes II who performed the same service for Ezra.) The position was one of honor and prestige; but, when the word came to Nehemiah of conditions in Jerusalem, he did not hesitate to turn his back upon the comfortable life of the court and take upon himself the thankless task of returning to Jerusalem to restore its walls and its prestige. Aware, however, of the difficulties of the undertaking, he did not set out immediately; but, before making a move, he spent several days in prayer and fasting. Then, after obtaining from Artaxerxes the appointment as governor of Juda and letters to the neighboring governors and the keeper of the king's park, he set out upon his mission.

The main object of Nehemiah's return to Jerusalem was to rebuild the city walls, which had lain in ruins since they were destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. It is possible that a previous attempt had been made to restore them, but the attempt had been frustrated and the walls razed again by the Samaritans. It was perhaps this attack that Nehemiah heard of in Susa and that prompted him to take action. In any event the new governor met immediate hostility both from the Samaritans and also from their partisans within Jerusalem.

When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem, he did not divulge his plans to anybody, but stayed in the city quietly for three days to size up the situation, then made a secret inspection of the walls at night. On the next day he called an assembly to tell of his objective and the king's commission, whereupon the work was commenced immediately. The Samaritan opposition, however, soon manifested itself. It was led by "Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite slave, and Geshem the Arabian." Sanballat was a Moabite of Horonaim in Moab. He was, as is shown by one of the Elephantine papyri, the Persian governor of Samaria, and he was also related to the High-Priest Eliashib by marriage. The leader of the opposition to Nehemiah, he was infuriated as soon as he heard "that a man had come to seek the welfare of the Israelites." He resented the presence of a strong leader in Jerusalem and probably had hope of annexing it to his own province of Samaria. Tobiah and Geshem seem to have been hangers-on of the governor, who had settled in Samaria. The opposition of these three men, however, would not have been a serious threat if they had not had friends and supporters within Jerusalem itself. The wealthy and priestly class were well disposed to them, and some of the prophets were their tools. It was these elements that Nehemiah had chiefly to fear, and his secrecy reveals that he was well aware of their inclinations.

(Continued in Spiriticity, November 1950)

Alphabet Of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day Of The Month

OCTOBER 1950

2. I AWAKENED: for the Lord sustained me.
3. We shall also BEAR the image of the heavenly.
4. O Lord my God, thou ... COVEREST Thyself with light.
5. DURABLE riches and righteousness (are with me).
6. Mine ELECT shall long ENJOY the work of their hands.
7. O Lord, Thou art our FATHER.
9. GO thy way.
10. I HONOR my Father.
11. INCLINE your heart to the Lord.
12. Be JOYFUL in the Lord.
13. The KINGDOM is the Lord's.
14. Gird up thy LOINS.
16. Let MY MOUTH be filled with Thy praise.
17. I Will praise the NAME of God with a song.
18. Bring your OFFERING to the Lord.
19. PRAISE ye the Lord.
20. Thy word hath QUICKENED me.
21. All the ends of the world shall REMEMBER and turn unto the Lord.
23. Praise God in His SANCTUARY.
24. O TASTE and see that the Lord is good.
25. God will ... raise UP US by His own power.
26. If there be any VIRTUE think on these things.
27. WALK in all the WAYS of the Lord.
28. The Kingdom of God is within YOU.
30. ZION (the within) heard and was glad.
31. Strengthen me, I pray Thee.

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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.