

Two very necessary results accomplished by prayer are, first, the establishment of man in his spiritual center, from which he exercises his Christ dominion and authority and brings every thought into subjection to the Christ mind; and secondly, the feeding of the mind and the body with the substance of the Word. Every one longs to be delivered from the pressure of adverse thought. The only deliverance is through prayer, because in no other way can man find and hold his spiritual center and feel the mastery and dominion of Spirit. Centered and poised in conscious union with God, the soul knows its power, and in this way mastery over all things is demonstrated.

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### Lessons in Truth

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## REDEEMING PRAYER

PERHAPS the simplest definition of prayer that could be given is that it is communion between God and man.

Communion signifies union. To solve the problem of prayer one must study it from a standpoint that reveals the union of God and man as a possibility. Jesus said: "God is Spirit." How can man, apparently so material and sinful, hope to find any place of union with God? But there are those who have communed with God, so there must be in man a place or a state where he can come in touch with God. There is such a place. The Psalmist called it "the secret place of the Most High." Jesus called it the "inner chamber."

God is the one Mind, perfect, unchangeable, indivisible, all-knowing, everywhere present, and all-powerful. By this great Mind everything that exists was made. All the intelligence that we express comes from it. If we want to express more wisdom we must establish closer contact with the all-knowing Mind through prayer.

There are not many minds; each individual expresses the wisdom and knowledge of the one Mind in varying degree and under many kinds of limitation, and this creates the appearance of many minds. We came forth

from God; that is, out of this one Mind, and we exist in it. We could not live an instant apart from it. When we are still and cease our limited, selfish, mortal thinking, we become receptive to ideas from Divine Mind, and we think Godlike thoughts. They are creative, constructive, and restorative.

The great mind of Being as expressed in man is called the superconscious mind or Christ mind. Mind is one, but it has three phases of manifestation in man: First, the superconscious realm, the realm of divine ideas—life, love, substance, wisdom, power, and strength; secondly, that which is called the conscious mind; thirdly, the subconscious mind. As a rule we are better acquainted with the conscious mind because through it we have knowledge of ourselves as individuals, and by it we know the world about us.

The subconscious mind is the recording angel of the soul. Although it may contain some unworthy or outgrown beliefs that need clearing up and redeeming, it bears witness to the divine identity of the spirit in man and conserves the priceless records of life, love, and faith, the lessons that the soul has learned from the beginning through its association with God.

The subconscious mind verifies the continuity of life in the individual soul. "Before Abraham was born, I am." These words of Jesus Christ bear witness to the mystery of divine knowledge stored up in the soul of man. Subconscious awareness is more than

memory. The thoughts that are stored in it are alive, active, powerful, intelligent. It carries on the involuntary functions of the body, such as breathing, digestion, and assimilation. It builds and rebuilds the body after the pattern that is furnished to it by the conscious mind.

Volitional and habitual thoughts enter into and become operative in the subconscious mind. When evil or destructive these thoughts tend to disintegrate the organism. When true and constructive they build and sustain the good in every phase of life and environment.

Prayer is constructive. However, its redemptive work in us is offset when we allow the opinions, appearances, teachings, or customs that are untrue to God to possess our thoughts or influence our mode of living. Then our subconscious mind absorbs the errors that we choose to accept, and according to the law of mind action that we know as sowing and reaping, they work out into disorder in our mind, body, and affairs.

Right thinking and prayer set in motion a new law, even the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." Where shall we get the ideas that will eliminate wrong thoughts and produce right ones? The answer is, from the superconsciousness; that is, from the Christ mind. It will direct us in our search after Truth, and make us quick to discern and utilize all the worth-while and beneficial ideas that come to us. How shall we contact

this mind? Through prayer.

Jesus Christ understands man. He knows just how all mental processes are carried on. His teachings are practical. They enrich and perfect the subconscious mind and establish the whole man in that righteousness which is life eternal. The redemptive, cleansing power of His words is brought into the mind and the body by prayer and spiritual meditation. We have long since outgrown the belief that prayer is supplication to some far Being who may be willing to help us if we beg hard enough. Our idea of prayer changes as our idea of God changes. To pray aright it is necessary to understand the real character of God. Jesus knew God, and when He said that God is Spirit. He summed up the truth. Spirit is everywhere present. God is the one Being in whom we live and move and have our being. Prayer is a recognition of God as everywhere present and of our unity with Him in the Christ mind.

God is omnipresent, but we come into touch with Him in that secret recess of our being which Jesus called the "inner chamber." To pray, we therefore get still and turn our attention within. We close the door by withdrawing the senses from their contact with the outer world. Then as we get still in the "secret place of the Most High" within us, we become conscious of our union with the one Being, and the ideas of life and love and power from His perfect mind flow into us consciously and subconsciously.

This gives the subconscious mind something enduring and eternal with which to build for us the immortal body.

We do our part in this holy communion, first, by obeying the instructions of Jesus about going within and getting still and closing the door, and secondly by taking with us words. "Take with you words, and return unto Jehovah." We are to pray believing that we have received; so if we want a larger consciousness of life, we should take words and turn to the Lord within us in prayer something like this: "Thou art my life. In Thee I have fullness of life. I am one with Thy abundant, free-flowing, everlasting spiritual life."

These words must be spoken in the secret place within us to get results. Merely saying them over in the head is not enough. Mind is not confined to the head. If the body is to be redeemed the living words of Truth must reach every cell in the body, and this they cannot do if they are held in that personal consciousness which is so active in the brain. Words cannot be sent out to the whole organism with quickening, life-giving power unless they are spoken from the inner consciousness. The outer personal consciousness has no power to speak life-giving words, so Jesus said that we must pray in His name, that is, in the Christ consciousness.

There is a sense in which we may and should pray one for another, but in the matter of communion with God no one can



commune with Him for other individuals, any more than he can eat or breathe for them. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." "Thy words were found, and I did eat them." We may teach another the truth of his being and help him to find the living, indwelling Christ, but to have real life he himself must commune with God and take on the character of Christ.

When Paul was preaching to the Athenians on Mars' Hill, he tried to explain to them the omnipresence of God and their place in Him. It was on this occasion that he made the statement so often quoted and so mighty in its power to quicken us to the realization of our oneness with God: "In him we live, and move, and have our being." In this same connection he said: "That they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him." The feelings must be redeemed. When they are given up to the sense man, they sweep through the consciousness and the subconsciousness in waves of passion that destroy the man. But in the stillness of the secret place within us, the feelings are redeemed. Salvation could not be complete unless we learned to feel God and to be satisfied with His peace and joy and the thrill of His life and love. So prayer is not a religious duty that we find hard to perform daily. No external work or play can interfere with the daily communion of one who has found God in the secret place of his

being and felt the joy of His presence.

Fruitless effort is sometimes given to the overcoming of some error, because of neglect to pray. We try to overcome of ourselves, exercising merely the personal will. We always fail when we do this, and after a while discouragement sets in. As an illustration of this, there is the experience, which nearly every one has had, of trying and trying to forgive another and always failing. The only way really to forgive is to open the heart to the forgiving Spirit of Jesus Christ and to claim that the substance and the power of His love fill the heart and cast out all feeling of resentment. This is fulfilling the command: "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." But a realization like this cannot be made except in the silence and stillness of the soul in the "inner chamber," when the mind of man is open to the love of God. When we go into the closet we close the door against all thoughts of injustice and everything else that tends to keep the mind in strife and turmoil, and then we take up and dwell on the love of God until the peace and the harmony of divine love fill the whole being with gladness. If this is repeated often enough, the subconscious mind will let go of all thoughts of contention and take up thoughts of love. The functions of the body will then be harmonized, and life can find easy and unbroken expression.