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MY SEARCH FOR TRUTH

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12 IMAGINATION

Perhaps my readers may wonder what I used to teach in the early days, and why it was helpful to some.

Here then is one aspect of my work which it may not be out of place to mention.

I discovered that, to a large extent, man creates the conditions of his life through his imagination.

In one of my early books, I wrote: you are the architect of your own life. It is yours to make or to mar.

By the power of thought you are building. Are you building aright?

This statement was true as far as it went, for we as well as our environment are the products of our thoughts; but thoughts are powerful because of what they do - not because of what they are in themselves. It is because they awaken and direct the imagination that they are so powerful in their effect upon our life and circumstances.

That great mystic Jacob Boehme whose teaching is so difficult that few can understand anything of it, confirms this. Although his writings are so deep and even obscure, he makes one thing very clear, which is that it is our wayward imagination which is the cause of our present hellish conditions, and that things can be put right only to the extent that our imagination is brought into correspondence with the All-Wise Imagination.

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither
are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so
are my ways higher than your ways, and my
thoughts than your thoughts.
--Isaiah 55:7-9.

What all this means is that our imagination has
fallen away from the All-Wise Imagination and
has created disorderly and even hellish
conditions, for Mind is creative; Thought rules
all.

Thought rules all because it affects our
creative imagination; consequently as we think
so we are and so do we become, and so does our
environment become.

The invitation is that we should return to the
One Creative Source of all perfection, thus
forsaking our wrong thoughts and imagination,
and so think God's thoughts instead,
consequently bringing our wayward imagination
into unison with the All-Wise Imagination, which
can create only perfection. Prayer is an attempt
to bring our mind and imagination into
correspondence with Infinite Mind and the All-
Wise Imagination. We do not pray in order to
alter God or change His purpose. The sole object
of prayer is to bring ourselves back to the
likeness and image of Elohim in which we were
created. 'What is man, that thou art mindful of
him? ...For thou hast made him a little lower
than Elohim'. Elohim, according to Genesis I,
was the creator or creators of the world.
Scholars tell us that Elohim is a plural word,
consequently we read: 'And Elohim said, let us
make man in our image, after our likeness'.
Such being the case, it is difficult to
understand why the old hymn-writers described

themselves as worms. It would have been better I think if they had described themselves as caterpillars, for they, after passing through the chrysalid stage, turn into butterflies - whereas worms always remain worms. But what a lovely hymn the old writers could have written about the caterpillar! First, a poor creeping thing; next, a chrysalid (corresponding to the hymnist's long sleep in the grave); then after that the resurrection - that, I feel would have been a much better theme. But the Bible does not teach that we are worms in spite of what Bildad the Shuhite, and also David, may have said. It tells us that we are created in the image and likeness of our Creator.

In the teaching of Jesus we see that we have departed from the All-Wise Imagination and have created hell for ourselves through the misuse of our imagination, and that the only remedy is to get back to that which is for ever true, viz. God's idea concerning each one of us.

This outer man is not the real Man; also this outer world is not the true World: both are falsities. What we need to do then is to get back to God's idea concerning both the true Man and the true World. Prayer is an attempt to bring our wayward thought and imagination into correspondence with God's thought and imagination. We pray in order that we may see things as they really are; not as they falsely appear; in other words, what we seek is to know the Truth, after which the Truth will make us free, even as was promised by Jesus.

Paradoxically, however, we have to seek Truth for its own sake, and not in order to win the reward of freedom.

If we persevere with our attempts by means of prayer to think God's thoughts after Him, a time

comes when we experience a sense of great peace; we feel completely at home in God and in a state of great harmony. This is due to the fact that our mind has begun to function in correspondence with the mind of God. When we see the thing which may be troubling us, as it is in the mind of God, then our mind is thinking in the same way that God's mind thinks.

If ye abide in my word. ..ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free. -Jesus

Jesus taught the gospel of the Kingdom—He told those about Him that the Kingdom of Heaven was nigh; He spoke of the Kingdom and of heavenly things. He said that if His hearers would abide in His teachings (that is, to think of God and His perfect order), they would be made free. The moment we really know, when we actually realize the Truth, we become free. I wish I could describe this experience, but it is not possible to do so. Truth is always present with us, although we may not be able to realize it. That we cannot realize it does not alter the fact that it is always with us, awaiting the time when our mind and imagination cease their errancy and become attuned to the mind and imagination of God.

It may be asked how I could have taught this, seeing that, generally speaking, practically no one can realize the Truth, whilst those who could do so would not be taking any instruction from me? How could I exhort my students to realize Truth, seeing that they had no idea what Truth is? I used to tell them that until they could realize Truth themselves, they should accept the testimony of those who have realized it. I told them that man, in very truth, is a

Celestial being, belonging to Celestial Realms. My great desire was, and still is, that they might realize their true identity and might know that in their true inwardness they are sons of God, true children of Eternity, and one with That which changeth not.

The beloved John expressed the same truth when he said: 'Beloved now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear (it is not yet apparent) what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him' - that is, identical with Him. I told them that in their true inwardness no real harm could ever come to them, for the real Self in them was a spark from the Sacred Flame, deathless, diseaseless and eternal. Worlds might be born, and worlds might flourish and pass away, and even the whole universe be rolled up like a scroll, but they in their true inwardness would always remain beyond time and unaffected by change, because they were one with, identical to, the Eternal.

I used to suggest that they should say:

Man is a spiritual being living in a spiritual universe, governed by spiritual laws, and upheld by spiritual powers.

And by spiritual I really meant celestial, which is the highest realm of all to which man in his true inwardness, as a son of God, eternally belongs. By 'Man', I meant of course not the outward man, who is 'of the earth, earthy' and full of frailties - but the real inward Man, the image and likeness of Elohim, who in most people is so effectively covered up that it is difficult to believe that He is present at all. By realizing the Truth about Man, we learn to

realize the Truth about ourselves. We discover that we are not this body, nor this mind, nor this soul, nor even this spirit, for we can speak to them all and command them. No, we are something far greater than any or all of these. What we truly are can no more be defined than God can be defined.

When we reach this point we are not far from what Jesus called the Kingdom. Of course the beginner wants to ask how he can know God, without knowing something about Him. If God is undefinable, he asks, how can he ever know Him, how can man ever know the Undefinable? This is a deep question, and I do not think that I ever dealt with it adequately in those early days. It is true that it is impossible to define God who is the Undefinable, for the God whom we define, or try to express in words, is not the Transcendent One. We limit God directly we try to define Him, for by so doing we bring Him within the limitations of the human mind. Our God whom we define is really only man's idea of God. Another deep thought is that our highest ideas about God are really only a sort of preview of what we shall ultimately attain to. But of course we can know the Unknowable, but not by the human and finite mind. God, who transcends man's intellect, can only be known by that Divine Something in man which also transcends his intellect, and also cannot be defined. In other words, only God can know God. However, this was too deep a matter to broach to beginners, so I did not mention it; in fact I did just the reverse, for I taught them to meditate upon what are called the attributes of God: wholeness, perfection, justice, and so on. They did not know that they were meditating upon the attributes of their real interior Self, and

that as they meditated their false ego or self (the enemy of their souls) was being liquidated. He, the true or Christ-in-you Self, must increase; but I, the false self, must decrease. It was also suggested that students should make use of their imagination by trying to see good everywhere, and also beauty.

Instead of seeing other people as they appear to be, they were to try to see the Real Man who is hidden within.

To do so is not a new idea by any means, for it was Calvin who said that we should not look at the imperfect outward man, but rather that we should try to see the Divine image hidden within the man. (I did not know anything about Calvin then, except the unfortunate doctrine named after him, and it was many years before I came across this statement from him.) It was good to have what I was teaching confirmed by so great a theologian; the fact that I possessed no learning and consequently had to rely upon intuition made it the more interesting to find that what I had been teaching was the same as one of the great and learned men of the past had taught. Trying to see into people and into things in order to find their hidden perfection trains the imagination along Heavenly lines, for by so doing we are trying to see things as they really are in the Real World of perfect everything and perfect order and absolute rightness.

I suggested to our students that they should spend a certain amount of time every day in using and training their creative imagination in a special way. I suggested that they should close their eyes and think of a perfect heavenly state, in which were order, wholeness and completeness. Instead of disease, sickness,

pain, suffering, they should imagine a state of health, wholeness, and fullness of life; instead of poverty and anxiety, they should form a mental concept (but not visualize), a condition of instant and ever-present abundance, every need being supplied fully and completely just as it arises. And so with all the many negative concepts of the mind: discord, failure, sickness - their opposites should be imagined.

The Intellect can do little in this field. But the imagination combined with feeling is capable of bringing about changes in our body and affairs such as are beyond the wit and wisdom of man to explain.

I must confess that in the very early days of my work I suggested that people should visualize what they wanted.

This of course was all wrong, and as soon as possible I gave it up. It is wrong to do so, because it is using the human mind to attempt to force Life to produce conditions according to our pattern; whereas of course our greatest good can come to us only through our life being lived according to the Divine pattern. Therefore when we use our creative imagination we should not try to enforce our pattern on life, but should be willing to accept whatever form God's answer may take. Thus if we are poor, we should not envisage ourselves as being rich in worldly goods, but should try to realize that we have entered into the glorious liberty of the children of God, and set free from every limitation. It is not sufficient for us to use affirmations, but in addition we must enter into a realization of the truth that we have affirmed.

Many of us I am afraid are inclined to become slack when times are prosperous and easy with us; then when difficulties arise and troubles sweep down on us, we are not able to realize the Truth which makes us free. This is a great error but alas, we are prone to fall into it. What we should do is to make the most of our opportunity when the sky of our life is clear. When beset by troubles it is not easy to realize Truth: we have to work through the darkness before we can do so. But when our sky is clear, and the barometer of our life is at 'set fair', then is the time to realize Truth for to do so is easy, and each time that we do so we make it easier for us to meet our next difficulty or test. There are times when we feel unusually peaceful and at one with the whole universe: a lovely view, or even smoke belching out from a factory chimney-stack, may appear unusually beautiful. At such times Heaven is very near to us, and we should make the most of it. Then it is easy to realize our oneness with the Whole; we feel perfectly at home in God, in our right place, in right relationship with everything and everyone else, all included in one complete and perfect whole.

13 ON TRYING TO ENTER THE SILENCE

For many years I tried to enter the Silence - but in vain. I often read about it, but could not find it - for one thing, no two writers seemed to agree as to what the Silence was. Some seemed to think that it was a kind of trance; others taught that it was simply inhibiting all thought, thus making the mind a blank; yet others again said that it was a state of negative passivity, or a sinking down into a state of dreamy self-hypnotism. None of these methods would bear examination. First of all, falling into trances is at any rate, undesirable for us Westerners. I cannot see how it can fit us for the battle of life. Trances, visions and the like are psychic and although they are mentioned in the Bible, and were indulged in by some of the saints, I am quite sure that - speaking personally - I am better without them. The wisest of the Christian mystics confirm this view by stating that in most cases these phenomena are hindrances rather than helps. Most of us will remember that Christian and his companion in Pilgrim's Progress when travelling the Heavenly road were attracted by what appeared to be a much pleasanter path - that of Bypath Meadow. Instead of pursuing their hard and toilsome journey along the King's Highway, how much pleasanter and easier it would appear to be to get over the stile and walk in the cool and delightful Bypath Meadow! So off the two of them went along this new and interesting way; but alas, because it led them away from the true path, they soon met with trouble and finally into doubt and despair. In the same way the wise saints and mystics warn us against being attracted by visions and trance experiences.

They are not necessarily a sign of divine favour, but may be a hindrance in that they may distract our attention away from God. This is the object of the Adversary - to get our attention away from our Divine Centre and to direct it to something which flatters but keeps us away from God, instead of bringing us nearer. If therefore we find that we have a gift for visions, trances and so on, we should not fall into the error of thinking that we are especially favoured by God; but rather we should look upon them as something to be transcended as soon as possible, even if we cannot avoid them altogether.

There are exceptions of course and we must not criticize, still less condemn, those who have derived comfort from a psychic experience, but rather give thanks to God that they have been blessed in the way they have.

My father for all his orthodoxy declared that when he was converted he saw the Lord Jesus as plainly as ever he had seen anybody in his life. He said that it was not a spirit that he saw, but that Jesus was as real and solid as any man could be and that He turned and looked at him - a look which captured my father's heart for all time. Then again after our mother died, Father saw her in a similar way.

Experiences of this kind are helpful to those who need such consolation, and who are so constituted that they can be helped and comforted by them.

Then again inhibiting an thought, which means making the mind a blank, is a dangerous practice for it invites possession. Instead of emptying the mind, we should fill it with thoughts of God. Then no evil can come into it; whereas, if we try to keep it empty, the most evil thoughts

may enter and become a fixed obsession. The other idea of making oneself passively negative is equally dangerous and to do so would be to invite mediumship. We should at all times keep our mind positive, and directed towards God. Being positive makes for integration: being negative produces disintegration.

When we sink down into a state of negative passivity, we vibrate in correspondence with hades; but when we rise up into a positive state of realization, we vibrate in correspondence with celestial realms. We need to go up and up until the vibrations are so rapid that we reach a state of stillness. When we turn a wheel slowly we can see all the spokes moving, but when we turn it rapidly the spokes disappear from our sight. So is it with the Silence: we get beyond all conflict and all thought, until we reach That which is beyond thought, in the great Stillness. It is a state of rest, in the same way that the heavenly bodies pursue a course of great activity and are themselves masses of activity, yet they are in a state of poise, balance, and ease, resting easily, each in its appointed place, without effort or strain.

I tried many and various ideas and suggested methods, mostly without success. My search was a difficult, even dangerous, one for I was quite alone and had no one to advise me. Also, the right kind of books never seemed to come my way - I know now that there was a reason for this: it was necessary for me to travel the hard and solitary way, in order that I should know what I know through experience and thus be able to speak with conviction. Yet no matter how much I tried, I could not find the Silence - until all at once I realized that it was my trying so hard

that was hindering me, and that if I would cease my efforts, then I should find that already I was in the Silence. It was then realized that the Silence is always with us, and only needs recognition; it is not something that has to be created.

What we have to do is to stop our fruitless strivings, and instead rest in the Love of God, which supports us in much the same way that the earth appears to be supported in its atmosphere. Whilst I am strongly against regulating respiration and retaining the breath, yet I believe that possessing the ability to breathe deeply and fully has been a help to me.

When I was young, I breathed through my mouth shallowly and I can recall my mother telling me on every possible occasion to close my mouth and to breathe through my nose.

Through this bad habit my nostrils had become narrow and almost closed, so that I could not breathe through the nose properly. This went on for years, until I became interested in physical culture. Then I started in earnest to try to breathe deeply through my nose. The first thing that I had to do was to enlarge my nostrils, so I practiced distending them. I had to do this mentally, of course, in much the same way that it is possible to send blood to any part of the body by the power and use of thought.

This I did to such good effect that I developed muscles like those of a professional singer, and also my breath control was almost as perfect as theirs. I could never see quite what use this was going to be to me, but now I believe that this development has been a help to me as regards entering the Silence. Of course nowadays I do not do any deep breathing consciously, but when I think of God and divine things then deep

breathing in tune with the Inner Life of the Spirit comes to me of its own volition. I also think that this development, this capacity for very deep physical breathing, may have had something to do with the interior respiration which has come to me of recent years. But of this, more anon.

Nervous tautness had always been one of my difficulties.

I did not know how to relax and when I was interested in anything I held my breath, hardly breathing at all - consequently I found it difficult to do deep waistline breathing and yet remain relaxed at the same time. But practice makes perfect and in course of time I found that my breathing, when I allowed it to be free, took on a rhythm and a quality all its own, and that I did not control it, but that it was working in harmony with the rhythm of the Hidden Life.

However, that did not happen all at once, indeed it came only after many years ...

As I have said, the first sign I had of any success in trying to enter the Silence was when I woke up to the fact that I was already in the Silence, and that I only hindered my progress by my constant trying. I was like a person learning to swim who, after many struggles to keep afloat, suddenly discovers that the water will support him if he will but lean on it and cease his frantic and jerky efforts. As soon as he trusts the water and rests on it, his hitherto taut body relaxes and becomes supple. I found that it was much the same with my attempts to enter the Silence. I had hitherto strained and struggled in a state of tautness - which was the very thing which kept me from entering; yet, paradoxically enough, I should never have found the Silence if I had not made such efforts.

Another hindrance was that at first I left out devotion, and also did not realize the value and necessity of humbleness. I found that I got on better when I followed the path the saints have trod. They knelt in adoration, and no doubt turned their eyes upwards. I did not always kneel in a literal sense, but mentally and metaphorically I cast myself at the feet of the LORD, but turned my physical eyes upwards (with lids closed) as though looking up to His face. Jacob Boehme says 'Steadfastly fix thine inner eye upon one point and by Faith press into this inmost cell within thee'. I am sure this is good practice; indeed I follow this method very often to start with, then after a time I look upward and am all the better prepared to do so, because of the preliminary looking within to the region of the heart.

In the Hindu philosophy we are told that there are three paths of attainment: Karma marga, or the path of good works; Bhakti marga, or the path of devotion and Jnana marga, or the path of knowledge. The second path seems, predominantly, to be the one which I am following, although we have to follow all three paths simultaneously. Yet it is generally admitted, so I believe, that Bhakti marga is not only the easiest but the simplest and most direct path of all. All that we have to do is to love and adore. Because God is Love, it is only natural that it should be so. Love is the key to every situation in life! Although He did not so classify them, Jesus taught the three paths of attainment: first, the path of good works (as given in the Sermon on the Mount, and elsewhere); second, the path of love and devotion ('If ye love me, keep my commandments.' 'This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you'); third,

the path of understanding. ('If ye continue in my words ...ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free.') In the teaching of Jesus we have all that we need; but it is interesting and helpful to make a slight study of comparative religions - not in order to try to prove that any one religion is superior to all others - but rather to see how wonderfully all religions in their deepest implications agree and how they all meet finally at the same one goal of Divine union.

Let me however return to my subject. It is useless trying to enter the Silence if we have any unconfessed sin on our conscience; neither can we even begin to approach the entrance to the Silence if we bear any resentment towards anyone whatsoever, or have done him a wrong.

'Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.' It is useless to try to enter the Great Stillness which is the Presence of God realized, if we are possessed by the angry devils of resentment. We must first get rid of these disturbing influences if we would enter into the Central Harmony. Also, if we have wronged our brother we must put the matter right, because we must not try to enter the Holy Presence with the guilt of our action resting upon us. And if wrong has been done to us, we must forgive freely and become filled with thoughts and feelings of good-will.

What is termed 'entering the Silence' is really becoming attuned to the Divine Presence, which means that our vibrations have to be raised to a higher pitch until they vibrate in harmony with

the Divine pitch or note. In the Hindu philosophy we are told that the Divine note sounding through the Universe is Aum, or Om. If this is intoned with the lips closed, the whole of the head vibrates accordingly.

I do not use it myself, but I can quite understand that our brothers in India find it helpful in meditation, or in preparing for meditation. One of the results achieved by religious exercises and practices is to change the vibrations of the whole body so that a process of transmutation takes place: every cell is affected, so that the body becomes less dead-looking and more translucent, to the extent that it becomes filled with the Divine Light.

When first I heard one from the East intoning Aum, I was at once struck by its similarity to our Western intoning -particularly the word 'Amen'. I found upon trying it that it came quite natural to me to intone both Aum and our liturgical prayers; it was the same note and produced the same vibration. I have never pursued the matter, but I think now that I ought to have done so for I think that it would help and perhaps expedite the process of transmutation. St. Paul (quoting Ferrar Fenton's translation) says:

But our policy consists in possessing an object in heaven: from where also we expect a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform the body of our humility, making it like the body of his majesty, by the internal working of his power; and he will subject all to himself. - Philippians 3:20-1.

From this we see that St. Paul taught that through contemplation - the same Power of the

Eternal Logos which raised up Jesus from the dead and transmuted his earthly body into an immortal body of eternal light substance, the vibrations of which could be changed at will - would also transmute our material body and make it the same as the body in which the Lord Jesus ascended.

Some teachers demand that on sitting down to enter the Silence we should adopt a right posture, hold our hands in a special manner and breathe in a certain way. But in my experience this has not been found to be the case; instead I discovered that, as usual, Love is the key. If we approach God with love in our heart towards Him, and with love in our heart to all mankind then, as Jesus said, we are not far from the Kingdom.

Love is indeed the key. We may possess all the technique that was ever conceived by the mind of man, but if we have not Love, all our efforts to enter the Silence will be in vain.

The Silence is the Presence of God realized; therefore if we would enter it we must be attuned to the Presence of God who is Love. Love is ever the key.

We might intone to further orders, but if our heart were not right, it would be all in vain.

14 THE LAW OF PLENTY

I firmly believe that there is a law of plenty. As we gaze at the prodigality of Nature we cannot fail to be impressed by this fact. Nature is indeed most bountiful.

Wherever we go we see how great that fullness is - except of course where man has exploited the earth and turned it into a waste and a desert. But that is not the earth's fault, or Nature's, but it is the result of man's selfish exploitation.

'Deserts are on the march.' Why? Simply because of selfish, ignorant, and wicked exploitation on the part of man. The very forces which are causing the deserts to invade the cultivatable land are the same forces which, if they had not been thrown out of balance, would have maintained the earth in fullness and abundance. The law of life is balance. If we put back into the soil as much as we take out Nature will nourish us abundantly; but if we try to cheat her, by taking out more than we put in, then we upset the balance of life. As a result, the forces and powers of Nature become inverted and work against us instead of for us, as they were designed to do. From this we see that the laws of life are designed to give us unlimited plenty, far beyond our needs, and that if they were obeyed, there would be more than enough for all. Where wise and just methods obtain, there is no lack, for the earth then becomes a transformer of solar energy so that the solar energy is changed by the earth into growth. This we take and use and then if, afterwards, we put the whole of the residue back into the soil, the cycle is completed. The earth is neither robbed nor exploited, but continues to be as fruitful

as ever. We thus see that the Divine idea is one of plenty through the amazing prodigality of Nature. 'The earth is the LORD'S and the fullness thereof.'

When I was young I was enterprising, but always ground down by poverty and lack. By great struggle I managed to start my own business, but my customers all appeared to be poverty-minded. Their main idea seemed to be to beat me down as low as possible, so that they could benefit at my expense. I did not know then that I attracted this 'thrifty' type of client because of my own poverty-complex. I had been born into a remarkably thrifty home where we never knew the comparative plenty such as was enjoyed in 'artizans' homes and whose standard of life was almost extravagant compared with ours. This ultra-frugality and system of the most rigid economy in which I was brought up made such an impression upon my young mind, that I do not think I have ever completely recovered from it. Its good effect has been that I have never wasted anything; its bad effect has been that I have had great difficulty in spending money for myself on even the necessary things of life. As I say, I attracted the acquisitive-thrifty type of client, whilst I on my part was prepared to give the best service possible - and I did give it without stint. But still there was always a miserable response. Of course, the cause of my difficulty was that I possessed a penny mind; I was concerned with the cutting down of expenses, with saving a penny here, and twopence there, and so on. I did not know at the time that such thinking was conditioning my circumstances.

However, although I had a penny mind, I was,

strangely enough, daring and enterprising. Consequently I looked out for suitable premises in the best and most expensive part of the town. It was while inspecting certain business premises which later I was able to rent on a favourable lease, that I had a curious experience. I, the poor struggling young man with a poverty complex, suddenly had a strange feeling that the air all round me was filled with golden sovereigns! The air seemed to be crammed with them, just like snowflakes in a snowstorm. I suddenly realized that there was unlimited substance or wealth which could be mined by anyone who had sufficient energy, faith and enterprise. I realized also that life was not the poverty-stricken thing that I had imagined it to be.

This was far from being a full understanding of the truth about the law of plenty, but it was an important step in the right direction. After that experience I found that most people were not as cheese-paring and 'close-fisted' as I had thought them to be and I also had more clients than ever before. My previous attitude of mind had not only invested my clients with my own meanness and ultra-frugality, but also had kept many more generous people away.

But it was many years before I began to realize that there is an inner realm of sufficiency which desires to supply all our needs. Jesus said that we were not to be anxious about our food and drink, our clothing and other necessaries of life, but that we should seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. Then, if we did so, all the necessary things of life would be added, without anxiety.

Such an injunction seems to be pure foolishness to most people - but then, so do all the other

injunctions given to us by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. The wisdom of God appears to be foolishness to the carnal or material mind. The sayings of Jesus, alas, receive scant attention today, but we ignore His teachings at our peril.

Experience has taught me that there is an inward source of supply, and that this is the Presence of God. In the ordinary way we ignore this inward source, therefore it cannot operate in our life and affairs; consequently we have to live in the same way as people of the world - fighting, struggling, grasping - or else be like dumb, driven cattle.

Then when we reach a certain age, we are discarded.

'The trouble with most people', once said an American humorist, 'is that they have no invisible means of support'.

When outward means fail, such people are helpless, for they do not know how to tap their inner resources. In the day of adversity their fortunes crumble away because they have no roots in God, the inexhaustible Substance, in which everything has its origin and source.

The worst of it is that the more fiercely adversity hits us, and the more we are pushed about by life, the more difficult it becomes to find time for meditation and private, personal prayer. Those who have been through such an experience will know what I mean. At such times one seems to be caught up in a huge net, and the more one struggles, the more enmeshed one becomes. Also one seems to be in a vicious circle, so that all that one does only makes things worse. Everything is wrongly timed and comes to pass at the exact moment when we are caught on the wrong foot.

The only remedy, so I have found when passing through a difficult time, is to find God's inward peace and enter into a state of inner harmony, oneness and unity, at the same time being as patient as we can in our trying circumstances, doing our work as well as we know how, looking to God to bring about a Divine adjustment in His own way and at His own time. That, in a nutshell, is the method which I have been led to employ, and which God has graciously blessed on many occasions. I have known some people, however, who tried to restore their shattered fortunes by 'get-rich-quick' methods, which promised a rapid and large return for little work and small capital outlay. Because such schemes were not based on service but were launched to benefit themselves and not the public, such activities failed. I cannot remember a single one which turned out a success.

The only remedy is through work, patience and acceptance in the outer life, and a unity and oneness with our Divine Source in the inner life. Work on the outer plane by itself is not enough; it leads to exhaustion, and perhaps a breakdown. Work, too, on the inner plane alone is not sufficient. Both are necessary, so also is patience.

When the inner rhythm of our life is broken, or has been upset, it takes time for it to be restored. Consequently we have to be patient.

'In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.'

'Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him.'

'Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in Him; and He shall bring (it) to pass.'

In every life there come times of drought and adversity. There is a process of going forward

and returning; there is an ebb and a flow of the tide of life. We have to be patient while the tide is running out, and must be content to wait until the tide turns in our favour. Then when we move forward we are carried along on the crest of the wave to victory and achievement.

I have on occasion made losses, and have wasted a lot of work and energy, strength and health in a vain effort to force things, when times have been unpropitious. Being of an impetuous nature, I have rushed on when I ought to have waited. Not being content to await God's time, I have tried to make everything conform to my time. The results have always been disastrous.

We have to keep to God's time and keep in step with God, if we are to express in our outward life even a shadow or outline of the inner perfection which is God's idea or pattern of what our life should be.

What puzzles beginners and those who are not accustomed to philosophic thought, is that everything is and yet is not, at one and the same time. For instance, the mystic and the metaphysician may say, 'There is no evil', yet at the same time they readily admit that evil is all around them. The explanation is that they are affirming what is true of the inner reality and the mind of God. There is no evil in the mind of God, nor in His archetypal ideas. These are permanent and eternal, and form part of Reality. They are absolute perfection.

But these perfect ideas, when expressed in the outer life, lose their perfection. That which is a perfect whole in essence, becomes thrown out of balance, so that what is good when it forms part of a perfect whole, with everything in its right place, at the right time, becomes disorderly and what we call evil. Consequently

the mystic, having contemplated the Reality in all its beauty, wholeness and completeness, and also the metaphysician, who has argued and reasoned himself into a realization of absolute truth, can both declare that there is no evil, and yet be surrounded by very obvious evil.

There are two sides to everything. It has been said that there are two sides to the shield of Truth: the outer is what man in his ignorance sees; the inner is what God sees.

God Who is perfection absolute can create and see only perfection. We see this truth even in our human relationships. 'To the pure all things are pure.' God, who is infinite and absolute Goodness, Perfection, Life, Health, Wholeness, Completeness, can see only these and other virtues in His creations, for He can see only Himself reflected in what He creates. Therefore, on the inside, there is only perfection. It is only on the outside where an inversion has taken place, that imperfection is to be seen.

Because God, as the Absolute, can see no evil but only the perfection which is His own reflection, some anxious souls think that they and also their troubles and sufferings are unknown to God, and so have been discouraged. But God has other aspects. Where God in His absoluteness cannot enter, God as LOVE can come even into our most secret griefs, losses and sorrows. LOVE manifests as Jesus, 'a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief'. There is no trouble or failure of ours into which LOVE cannot come. God, in His absolute aspect, cannot see poverty. It does not exist in His mind.

'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my

thoughts than your thoughts.' But the invitation is for man the unrighteous to forsake his thoughts and his unGodlike ways, and to return to the LORD. The law of being is plenty, not poverty. God, who is infinite and inexhaustible substance, creates in profusion, regardless of cost, so to speak.

There is a spiritual basis from which plenty flows. In the inner World of Perfection thought becomes clothed with substance, instantly; in the outer life on this material plane it takes longer, but the process is much the same. Matter is simply electricity, and thought also is electric force. This may explain why a man with a poverty type of mind, finds himself in poverty-stricken surroundings, or at any rate, never attains to a state of freedom; while another one whose mind is quite different, may start with nothing and yet in a comparatively short time becomes surrounded with everything that he needs.

Ordinary thinking will not achieve such a metamorphosis.

'For my thoughts are not your thoughts ...saith the LORD.' Human thought of lack and limitation must give place to Truth, or God thought, of infinite and inexhaustible abundance.

It makes a tremendous difference to our lives if we can make such a change, even though it be only partial in extent.

The great secret is in recognizing that all good things come from God, and not from man, or as a result of our own effort and toil and strain.

'The earth is the LORD'S and the fullness thereof.' We who are the sons of God may draw freely from the invisible and inexhaustible resources of God. We possess invisible means of support. We do not need great possessions, for

all our needs are supplied, 'out of His riches in glory'. Because God's resources are infinite, our resources also are infinite. We must not judge by appearances.

If Jesus had judged by appearances when the people were hungry, they would never have been fed. Jesus refused to be restricted by the apparent limitations of five barley loaves and two small fishes, but drew upon the inexhaustible resources of Infinite Substance. In the same way, if we allow ourselves to be overawed by appearances of lack, forgetting that we are sons of God and 'joint heirs with Christ' of all the resources of God, then we make it very difficult for ourselves to manifest the same abundance which Jesus did. I admit that it is far from easy to trust in God's invisible resources when we are confronted by arrears of rent, large bills to be paid, an overdrawn account at the bank, and a mortgaged life-policy - to say nothing of a completely empty purse. Many readers would say that to ask anyone in such circumstances to trust in God would be demanding too much of any man. Well, I would never ask anyone to do what I would not do myself, or what I have not done myself. I have had to face such experiences myself, and of course I did not find them easy, but each time I was brought through. Each time that I considered my financial position I felt a thrill of fear go through me.

But, somehow or other, I managed to maintain my faith. Of course, it would have been far less difficult for me if I could have lived in the consciousness of Divine supply, but I had not then reached that stage.

Jesus said, 'But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things

shall be added unto you'.

What did He mean by this? I suppose that I have heard thousands of sermons but I have never listened to one which explained what Jesus actually meant by this statement.

What did Jesus mean by the Kingdom of God? He meant conscious union with God. What did Jesus mean by 'His "righteousness.? He meant God s Divine order. Therefore logically paraphrase the words of Jesus into: 'But seek first a state of union with God 's consciousness of abundant perfection and completeness, for if you do this inwardly, then outwardly you will have all your material needs supplied.'

Having been brought up and trained in a consciousness of lack and limitation, I naturally found it very difficult to change over to a consciousness of abundance and plenty.

I had been brought up in the idea. that we live in an unfriendly universe, and that everything is against us. Also that we have to chase after things, and hold tight on to them otherwise they would slip from our grasp. And all the time that I remained in that consciousness things eluded me.

When I thought that I had them within my grasp they slipped away from me.

I had also been nurtured in the idea that we are separate from God. Consequently my life suffered in much the same way as that of the prodigal son. He left his father's home (state of union) and went into a far country (state of apparent separateness), the consequence being that he hungered, and fed on pigs' swill. 'And no man gave to him.' Then, when he returned home (to a state of unity with his Divine Source), he experienced plenty and abundance.

'Life, of course, is not for feasting and

gluttony; life also is not meant to be austere and severely ascetic. The middle path, so I have found, is always the path of wisdom. Moderation and simplicity should be practiced, instead of going to extremes. It was never meant, however, that man should live a life of indigence. Jesus promised that all the things necessary for a full and care-free life would be added. He did not say that only part of them would come to the one who sought first the consciousness of oneness with the Creative Spirit, but that all necessary things should be added.

I have always found that the simplest methods were the most effective in my case. I discovered that words have power to cleanse the consciousness of wrong ideas, and to instill right ideas in their place. Appearances and my feelings told me that I was not paying my way, and that I was not well. 'Troubles never come singly', so that when I was not feeling well, bad news would arrive and worries would pile up! When I was in one of these black moods, I thought that it was due to my circumstances, instead of which my worrying and depressing circumstances were the result of my depressed moods.

I discovered a very simple way of dispersing dark moods. I would take a deep breath and say: 'Health, success, happiness and joy.' I needed health very much, I also needed success in my affairs, and also I longed to be happy and filled with joy. When I uttered the words I became lifted up - if only slightly; yet it was a move in the direction of liberation. I found that long arguments did me no good, but repeating these words did lift me up. Needless to say I soon slipped back again into the black, hopeless mood; but again and again I would

repeat the performance.

I did not say, 'I am health', or 'I am success', but simply, 'health', success'. If I had said that I was health when I was unwell, I should have been stating what was not true; if I had claimed to be successful, when obviously I was a failure at the time, I should have been going against the facts - therefore the statements would have been rejected by the inner mind, and the very opposite of what I claimed would have been manifested. But stating the words in the way I did could produce only good results. It kept the ego out of the picture: that is, the false ego of illusion and separateness.

It may be thought by some that the words which I used were mere abstractions, and therefore could not be helpful. On the contrary, I found their use very helpful. I found that such words have power. They represent, or stand for, real potencies and powers in the Invisible.

Consequently if we can but anchor our mind to these substantial realities, powers and principles, then states corresponding to their nature and quality will manifest in our visible life.

Some who have attained to God-consciousness have done so through repeating the word 'God'. In the East they intone the sacred word Om, or Aum.

From this it can be seen that if we make use of certain constructive words - words which stand for eternal principles and archetypal ideas - then our mind becomes anchored in 'That which changes not', and which never decays or becomes old, and which is the eternal pattern or archetype. On looking back, over my life I can see how wisely I have been led by the Spirit. Quite ignorant, and having no one to teach me and no good books to guide me, I was yet led to

make the right use of words, and to avoid the evils of affirmation of the 'I am' type. What has all this to do with the law of abundance? Everything. As already pointed out, my dark moods were probably not the result of distressing circumstances, but rather the other way about. Assuming this to be true (which I believe to be the case), the use of words in the way I was led to practice was both sound and scientific. If my moods were the cause of the dark experiences, then the practical and scientific thing to do was to cure the mood, after which the circumstances would heal themselves.

It may be thought strange that I said nothing about supply or plenty. I was no doubt led to omit all such references, but it seems to me now that it was not necessary to include any reference to supply, for if we can attain to a mental state of health and happiness, and a joyful sense of being on top of things, then all necessary supply and all manner of Divine good will naturally follow.

It is our moods which have to be overcome, and not our circumstances. If we get our moods right, then circumstances will right themselves. This is why Jesus said that we should seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, after which all necessary things would be added.

The effect of acting in the way I did was that in course of time I found myself lifted up on to a higher plane, in a state of oneness with the Perfect, and this enabled me to overcome my difficulties. 'When that which is Perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.' That is to say, when we find ourselves one with, and forming part of, the Real and Perfect, then all our troubles and difficulties

become overcome and conquered. They disappear, because they are not anything in themselves, but are simply the result of our lack of, and separation from, the Real and Perfect.

Another baneful emotion which I had to overcome was envy. I had been taught when young that envy was a sin, and that we should not indulge in it; but I never knew that it was a cause of poverty and lack. I had to learn this by experience.

When I went to the bank to pay in all I could scrape together, the somewhat meagre results of a tremendous amount of work and industry, and also to draw out as little as possible, it made me rather envious to see other people paying in much more than I, and drawing out far more than ever I would dream of doing. It not only made me envious, but also mildly resentful. Here was I, working almost till my eyes dropped out, paying in so little and drawing out only a pittance, while other people seemed to be having a much better time, and able to draw out of the bank in one day more than I could pay in a whole month ! So I thought how much better it would be if I could do the same or something very similar. But entertaining envious thoughts is one of the worst possible things for us to do, for it puts us in a negative position. By doing so we acknowledge that our position in life is inferior, thus putting ourselves in a position similar to that of one who asks for alms. So long as we retain this attitude of mind, the things we need and want will tend to flow from us instead of to us. The remedy for this state of affairs is to bless those whose apparently more fortunate state might otherwise incite us to envy.

The cause of our straitened circumstances is our own state of mind. Instead of knowing that all

things are ours, and that all the resources of the Infinite are behind us, seeking to find expression through us, the dominant thought in our mind is that nothing is ours and that if we do not chase after things we shall lose them. But if we bless those whose prosperity annoys us or excites our envy, and pray that they may become even more prosperous and blessed in every possible way, then through so doing we heal our own state of mind. When we pray in this way and pour out our blessing upon those who apparently are so much better off than ourselves, we enter the consciousness of one who, possessing all things, pours out of his abundance plenteous gifts upon others. In other words, by blessing others, we ourselves are blessed and all sense of inferiority and lack is overcome.

Many a tussle have I had with myself over this. My early training, although so good in most ways, was against me in this respect. My father was for ever condemning those who got on in life: he said that such people were hard, ruthless and selfish. But child as I was, I could see that he was envious of the very people he condemned, and also that he was covetous of their prosperity. Now there is nothing more destructive and more calculated to drive supply away from us, than this - to condemn and judge harshly those who are better off at the time than we are, at the same time being envious of their prosperity and covetous of their wealth. It is quite clear to me now that if the temptation to envy had been given way to at that time, I should never have overcome my poverty complex and consequently would never have entered into a state of liberty as regards supply.

I have had many talks with men who have come

down in life: men who started life with everything in their favour, yet who have let everything slip through their fingers until at last they have had to live on the charity of their children. In every case I have found that they condemned those who had passed them in the race of life, and yet envied them their success and coveted their wealth. They complained that they never had a chance, and that no one ever helped them.

Having been brought up in an atmosphere of condemnation and envy, it is not surprising that I experienced difficulty in breaking away from it. But I do not think that I did any condemning although I must confess that I thought that those who appeared to be more fortunate than I were to be envied, and that I would like to be as fortunate as they. This of course was sheer wishful thinking and most weakening.

As I have already stated, I found that the remedy was to pray for those who were better off than myself so that instead of envying them I desired most strongly that they should be blessed and prospered more than ever. Although I prayed in order that they might be blessed, and not myself, the result was that I was wonderfully blessed in that I found myself delivered entirely from an envious spirit, and instead of being an indulger in wishful thinking, I was a dispenser of blessing.

Prayer of this character brings us right into our God Centre, so that it is as though God were speaking benedictions and pouring out blessings upon those for whom we pray.

The great secret: of liberty therefore is the practice of the Presence of God. We can practice the Presence as a help in our work and in our spiritual unfoldment; we can also do so as an

aid to healing, realizing that we live and move and have our being in the Infinite Life, and that we draw our strength from the One Life which never grows old. We can also practice the Presence of God as the Source of all supply: we can realize that here, with us, is all that we need in its invisible form, in the Invisible which surrounds us. As we bless others and pray that their lives may be filled with Divine abundance, it becomes possible for blessing to come into our own lives. We do not beg and pray for it - we express it: it flows through us. Of course, I have nothing to say to encourage those who expect things to fall into their lap. I believe in work and plenty of it, and in trying to serve so well that life owes us something. But work alone is not sufficient: the imagination must be reorientated. Neither would I hold out any hopes for those who have made a definite mental demand, expecting it to be demonstrated in a certain form. My experience has been that it is the unexpected which usually happens, and that what we invoke from the Invisible very often comes to us in quite a different form from that which we may have outlined. But always God does exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think.

15 CEASELESS, INTERIOR PRAYER

I have already related, my first idea of prayer was to beg and pray that life should be altered. In my youth, that seemed to be the generally accepted idea of prayer - simply begging and pleading with God to be merciful. If one spoke about prayer it was assumed that one meant supplication and begging. I have known people to say that they left off praying years ago; yet they were praying people. What they meant was that they left off beseeching God for things and favours. After many years of supplicating which was not successful in my case, I discovered that making demands upon God in a very positive way, did bring results. But I found through experience that although I might get what I wanted, yet only too often when I got it it proved more of a curse than a blessing. Then again, even if the thing I got was not exactly wrong, there could not be any blessing in it because I was trying to get all I possibly could from life, instead of trying to give as much as possible. It was later on that I learnt that it is more blessed to give than to receive', and that we should keep on giving until at last there comes an overflow, after which nothing can keep blessings from coming to us. It was a great day for me when, after praying for blessings for many years, I suddenly realized that God is always blessing us and that blessings flow from our Central Source continuously. 'If that is the case', I reasoned, 'then instead of asking for blessings, what I ought to do is to thank God for the blessings He is continuously showering upon me.'

Instead of saying "I pray Thee" I ought to say, 'I

thank Thee'. This at first sight might seem to be contrary to the teaching of Jesus who said: 'What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive (them), and ye shall have (them).' But that belonged to an earlier stage of prayer. On another occasion we get a glimpse of a higher stage, the kind of prayer Jesus himself used, when at the tomb of Lazarus he said: 'I thank Thee Father because Thou hast heard me'; also when Jesus fed the multitudes, he blessed and gave thanks: he did not supplicate or demand.

Of course, we can thank God for something which we desire, in order to get it, but while this may bring us a certain amount of satisfaction, especially if we are successful in getting what we desire, yet it does not bring joy to the soul. If however we thank God out of sheer gratitude for all His goodness, for all His love and for all that He has done for us, and the blessings which He is continually pouring upon us, then our soul becomes satisfied and our heart filled with joy. We receive so much from God, and yet how little we thank Him for all His goodness! The more we advance in experience and understanding, the more we realize that God is all Goodness and that His one great desire is to bring to us the utmost possible joy and blessedness.

As the years passed by, I found myself getting into the habit more and more of thanking God so that it became a habit with me. When I thank God, I look inwards to the region of the solar plexus and this gives me a feeling of power.

I developed this sense or feeling of power through making use of the Psalm 103 I used to use, and still frequently do. The first verse, 'Bless the LORD O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name'. It was more particularly the words, 'and all that is within me' which I used

most - and as I said them I called upon all that was within me, to bless and praise the holy name. I tried to pour out my soul and all that I really am, in adoration, praise and thanksgiving. My breathing had something to do with it, for I found that quite unconsciously and without intent that I always breathed out while I repeated the words with all the strength I could command. Gradually the solar plexus region became quickened and made alive. At first there were a few faint flutterings, but in course of time these increased until there was a feeling of life and power. Consequently, when later on I came to the conclusion that I wanted to thank God continually, I found it easy to do so with fervour, and with the feeling that I was putting all my soul into the words which I uttered.

The two disciples who walked to Emmaus, and who conversed with Jesus and listened to his exposition of the Scriptures said afterwards, 'Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us by the way? I think that by the term 'heart' that they really referred to the solar plexus which was aroused into life and activity, through their close contact with Jesus after His resurrection. It would be easy for them to mistake the heart for the solar plexus which is a network of nerves situated behind the stomach and in front of the aorta, whereas the heart is merely the great pump which circulates the blood. Anyway, it is this area which becomes alive, and which gives us a feeling of power, yet what the connection is between the solar plexus and our spiritual unfoldment, I do not know. There are those who teach what they term 'solar plexus breathing' which, so they aver, arouses inward powers. Whether such claims can be justified I do not know, for I have never practiced breathing in

order to arouse spiritual powers. It seems to me to be putting the cart before the horse to try to arouse spiritual power by means of breathing exercises. I think the right way is to keep turning to God and pouring out our soul in love and thanksgiving, not in order to receive power, but simply because we are so grateful that we feel that we want to do so, and never to cease doing so.

I think that it is unwise and even dangerous to awaken spiritual centres by methods of breathing. They might be opened before we are ready, and this would indeed be a catastrophe. We are told that the possession of power corrupts. It does indeed do so if we are not ready for it, and not sufficiently humble and surrendered. But to continue my story, I found myself thanking God at all times-not for anything in particular, but for everything I simply wanted to thank Him, because of the love in my heart. Jesus said that we should love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength. I found this to be true. I found that I loved God with all my heart, soul and strength-with all the power that I possessed; and the more I tried to express this, the more power I received with which to love God.

Gradually I developed a technique similar to that of the Russian pilgrim which is described in that well-known book *The Way of a Pilgrim*. Those who have read it will remember that the pilgrim was told by his starets to repeat a certain prayer verbally six and even twelve thousand times daily for a specific number of days. But this was only a beginning.

Gradually the pilgrim learned to pray mentally and also to coordinate his prayer with his breathing and also with the beating of his heart. The prayer

was: 'Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me'. As he breathed in the pilgrim would say: 'Lord Jesus Christ', allowing one beat of the heart for each word, then as he exhaled, he would say: 'have mercy on me', also allowing one heart-beat for each word.

My prayer was different from that of the Russian pilgrim. I did not feel it necessary to keep asking for mercy, because I knew that mercy flows from God like a river. What I wanted to do was to thank God for His boundless mercy and love, So my prayer was simply, 'I thank Thee'. Neither did I find it necessary to repeat my prayer verbally, hundreds of thousands of times. I began with mental prayer straight away. Also regarding breath control, I was able to manage this quite easily. So as I breathed in I said, 'I thank Thee, I thank Thee, I thank Thee' in time with the beating of my heart. I could feel the throbbing of my pulse by holding either my neck or one of my wrists. There is another great difference between the two methods. The Russian pilgrim could only say his prayer once during a complete breath, whereas I was able to say mine six times:

RUSSIAN PILGRIM'S METHOD

In-breath		Out-breath	
Lord	1 heart beat	Have	1 heart beat
Jesus	1 heart beat	mercy	1 heart beat
Christ	1 heart beat	on	1 heart beat
		Me	1 heart beat

THE OTHER METHOD

Inbreath	Outbreath
I thank Thee 1 heart beat	I thank Thee 1 heart beat
I thank Thee 1 heart beat	I thank Thee 1 heart beat
I thank Thee 1 heart beat	I thank Thee 1 heart beat

The idea behind both systems is that we should pray without ceasing. We should make such a habit of saying our prayer that subconsciously it continues ceaselessly both day and night. While we are engaged in our ordinary surface activities, and even while we are asleep, this subconscious prayer continues. That is, of course, if we have mastered the art by constant, persevering practice.

Thomas R. Kelly, in his now well-known book, *A Testament of Devotion* (Friends House), speaks of a somewhat similar method of prayer. He describes it as 'walking in the vast fellowship of unceasing prayer'. He suggests such simple whispered words as 'Thine only, Thine only', or a fragment of one of the Psalms, such as, 'so panteth my soul after Thee, O God'. He says that such phrases should be repeated over and over again, for the conscious co-operation of the surface level is needed at first, before prayer sinks into the second level as habitual divine orientation.

He does not advocate keeping to one prayer, but recommends a change from time to time, during the day. He also points out that 'this inner level has a life of its own, invigorated not by us, but by a divine Source'. This is very true. As I write at this very moment I am conscious of a greater life within which thrills and fills me with its power, and also its love and compassion. This inner life is part of the One Life which is in all men. We

are all one; we are one in Him, and He is in us. I have found however that most people cannot manage either of the above methods. They would be quite willing to buy and read a lot of books on the subject, if such could be procured, but they do not seem able to practice either the Russian method or the other one. What many questing people need, so it seems to me, is not to read more books but rather to put into practice the little bit of Truth which they already possess. If they were to do so, then greater understanding would come to them.

There is however a simpler method which, so I think, most people who are really in earnest might follow to their advantage. It can be used whenever the seeker thinks of it, or can find a moment to spare in his busy and strenuous life for its practice. As often as possible during the day he can use it, and also if he awakens during the night, he can apply himself to it. This in course of time will bring about quickening and a sense of inner life and power. It consists of relaxing, taking a deep breath, and then praying mentally, 'I thank Thee, I thank Thee, I thank Thee' and so on, according to the capacity for deep breathing which one possesses. As one exhales, the words should be repeated inwardly with great earnestness; indeed, one should put all one's strength into them. While breathing in, it is not possible to do this to the fullest extent, but when breathing out great power and intensity can be infused into the words.

We should not only follow this practice as an exercise: we should also use it when we want to thank God for everyday mercies and blessings. Blessings are constantly being showered upon us, but how little we take heed! If we acknowledge God in all our ways then we find our life filled with

blessings, for the more we thank God the more blessings we discover for which we want to thank Him. Also if we thank God for the things we do not like, such as distasteful tasks, we find in due course that there is something in them which we can like and be interested in, and this makes the work much less fatiguing and our life much happier.

Also, it makes a great difference to our health. If we allow exasperation to creep into our work, our nervous system suffers as also does our happiness. Blessing and thanking God for the duty which is distasteful to us changes us so that we meet those experiences which ordinarily would exasperate us with sympathy and co-operation. Although so simple, this practice is very advanced - not intellectually, thank God, for it is something which we all can follow - but advanced as regards our spiritual unfoldment. When we engage continuously, or almost continuously, in thanking God for everything with all our heart and strength, we have entered the last lap of the race which is set before us.

Rufus Moseley in his book *Manifest Victory*, describes this as the fourth empire. In this realm, conflicts are overcome, not through compromise, but through fulfillment and transfiguration of conflicting factors. It is as if the conflicting factors were taken up into a realm where they manifest themselves as complements rather than opposites. But this is beyond ordinary logic. Moseley continues: 'Even in the glimpsing of such a realm, I was superlatively satisfied, so satisfied that I asked for nothing. I rejoiced in the whole purpose of God and in all His works, as I was permitted to see them through such different and healing eyes. The consummation and all the experiences leading to it were seen

together in eternity as a single glorious consummation ...In this realm prayer becomes thanksgiving, the giving of thanks for everything.' I thank our beloved brother for these words. They are another way of describing what we call the Mid-Point, where all opposing forces are reconciled and become one. Both of us are trying to get the same truth across to our readers, yet with this difference, perhaps: friend Moseley says that when we reach what he terms the fourth empire, we find that we have to ask for nothing, and merely give thanks for everything; whereas I suggest that if we continually thank God for everything, then we find ourselves in the fourth empire, or state of God-consciousness, in which we feel within us the power of the Hidden Life. This is far beyond the Russian Pilgrim's prayer which contained no thanks, but was a continuous imploring on his part for mercy. But his prayer had one merit which our prayer of continuous thanksgiving lacks - and this is that it repeats the name of JESUS. Neither does Kelly use the actual name of JESUS. The phrases he suggests are very devotional and lovely, but he does not use the actual name of JESUS. It may be said that the name is implied also in my prayer of 'I thank Thee'. But that is not quite the same thing, for there is power in the Name. Now to get back to our main theme -- ceaseless, interior prayer. At first the prayer can be maintained only by conscious effort. We have to keep remembering and then uttering the prayer, inwardly and mentally. This may continue for a long time, and we may seem to make but little progress. The first intimation we may have of any progress being achieved is when we experience a feeling of there being something wrong: we are dissatisfied and restless and cannot think what the matter can be. But all at once we

remember that we are not praying! Then directly we start the prayer going again we experience a feeling of great relief - it is like the prodigal son getting back to his father's home again. Also if we find our work becoming trying and exhausting it will be found that it is because our inward prayer has stopped. Then, as soon as we restart the prayer, a sense of well-being returns and our work ceases to be an effort and a strain. The fact that we feel uneasy and unhappy whenever we leave off our inward prayer proves that the continuous inward prayer habit is being established. If we continue to persevere it will not be so very long before it is established wholly and completely. We may be unconscious of the prayer while it is at work, but we quickly become aware of the fact should it be suspended. Again, we may wake up in the night and feel a sense of hopelessness, or the mind may want to think and worry about mundane things. But directly we re-start the prayer, everything becomes all right again and we enter into God's peace, and find ourselves in perfect relationship with the one Complete Whole of which we form a part. I have found that it is possible to combine the name JESUS with our prayer of thanksgiving. We can repeat the sacred and all-powerful Name three times as we inhale, and 'I thank Thee' three times as we exhale. Thus:

In-breath	Out-breath
JESUS 1 heart beat	I thank Thee 1 heart beat
JESUS 1 heart beat	I thank Thee 1 heart beat
JESUS 1 heart beat	I thank Thee 1 heart beat

It may seem more rhythmic to take four heart beats when breathing in, and three when breathing out (or vice versa), making seven in all, but each one should do what seems best and most harmonious. As I have already said, the majority of people will not want to try to master the technique of co-ordinating the words, the breath and the heart beat, but will be satisfied to keep on repeating the words. This of course is the most important thing - to repeat the words, at the same time putting all possible feeling of love and gratitude into them. We should try to put the utmost love and intensity into our prayer - in other words, our prayer should be a giving of ourselves to God. We should pour out our soul to God, giving all that we have and are, to Him without holding anything back. We have long left behind us the elementary idea of praying to God in order to receive something. Now, all that we want to do is to give ourselves and our all to God. Give, give, give - that is all that we desire to do ! Therefore our constant prayer is one of thanksgiving: 'I thank Thee, I thank Thee, I thank Thee', uttered with all the intensity of our being, and all the strength of which we are capable. This, coupled with the use of the Name which is above every name, will make the prayer all-powerful so that we become changed from day to day. And as we become changed, so also shall we find others change correspondingly. It is important that I should emphasize the following point: no one should attempt at first to do more than repeat the prayer. If the beginner will be content to do this, then in course of time he will find it increasingly easy to keep the prayer going below the level of consciousness. Probably later on, without planning it, he will find his breathing falling into line quite

naturally, so that he does not have to trouble about it. Anyway, the first important thing is to establish the repetition of the words of the prayer at a level below consciousness, and to be satisfied with this. Nothing that is attempted should be a strain - if it is, then it should be abandoned. Everything we do in the way of prayer should be happy and joyful, leading to God's peace.

HOW I FOUND GOD'S INWARD PEACE

As I have never kept a diary I cannot say when precisely it was that I found God's inward peace, or when it began to flow through me like a river. Perhaps there was no precise date, for I think I began to experience the peace of God after passing through a trying experience or a severe trial of faith. When deliverance came, and the strain and stress, struggle and strife were over, then what I experienced seemed to me to be similar to that which came to Jesus after His temptation in the wilderness. We are told that angels came and ministered to Him. Now what was true of Jesus must also be true of us, for we all have to make the journey of Jesus. He came, it is true, to destroy the works of the devil, but He also called us to follow Him. He came in order to show us how to tread the Path of Regeneration, so that we too might become one of the Immortals, a Son of God, joint heirs with Himself. Therefore whatever Jesus passed through, we also have to pass through. Just as He met and overcame times of great testing, trial and temptation, so also do we have to meet, in a much smaller way of course, similar tests and trials. Consequently, when we have been brought through a severe testing time, it may be that we, too, are ministered to by angels in the same way that Jesus was.

Of course, I cannot prove this. It is only a surmise on my part. But it seems to me to be a reasonable surmise. All that I actually know is that on such occasions I have become filled with God's inward peace. It is an indescribable experience, to glide out on to the ocean of God's peace, and yet at the same time to be conscious of God's peace flowing through us like a river. It is

bliss unalloyed. The highest human bliss is but a miserable counterfeit of the real bliss which comes to the soul on such occasions. As I write this I am filled with blissful emotions. At such times, it may well be that we are ministered by angels. All that we can be sure of is that we find God's inward peace; that we are immersed in it, and that it flows through us like a river.

The effect of a great trial or test is to throw us back upon God, and to make us seek God, and to stay our mind upon God, more than ever we have done before. Also it causes us to surrender ourselves to God, so utterly and completely that we find Him in a new and more intimate way than ever before. The effect of all this is that we become attuned to the mind of God, and thus we enter into His peace - the same peace which God Himself enjoys.

Before we can enter into God's peace we have to be prepared for it. It was many years before I found it. Of course, my whole previous life had been a preparation for this great experience, but I had to spend many years of actual conscious seeking before I was rewarded. I do not think that I really ,sought for peace so much as I sought for God, in order to find release from great trials and difficulties. I knew that my poor tormented soul could never find rest apart from God, and also that I could never be released from my sins and weaknesses except through finding God; neither could I be delivered out of my great trials and sufferings except through really knowing God. At the time, the torments I went through seemed very hard to bear. It did not seem that flesh and blood could bear the stream, the suffering seemed past all human endurance. It did not seem possible to endure it and live. One was not tempted to do what Job was tempted to do by his wife, to 'curse God,

and die', but instead to cast oneself into the arms of Divine Love and die of grief. But that would never do, for we are exhorted to 'endure hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ', which means that we must never give in, but must endure to the end, or be willing to do so. To those who are faithful, God has promised to give a crown of life. 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' We are not called upon to pass through fiery torments merely for nothing, or for a joke. There is a purpose in everything, and nothing comes to us which is not for our highest good. We are not the sport of an unkind fate, but are being led and guided by Infinite Love and Wisdom. The cause of our fiery trial is that we are so determined to find God and really to know Him, that we are willing to suffer anything and to sacrifice everything in order to be successful in our quest. There is a great difference between one who has one consuming desire to find God at any cost, and one who merely uses God-powers, so that he can have a comfortable life here on earth. Jesus said: 'For many are called, but few chosen': many are called, but it is only a comparative few who are willing to 'go the other mile. There are many who are willing to add religion to their lives - to go to church on Sunday, to subscribe to church funds, and to listen to a good sermon; but there are only a few who are prepared to go all out in their search for God. There are many who are willing to take all that they can get from religion, but there are not many who are willing to leave all and follow Jesus.

Why then should those who give up their all, in order to put the quest before everything else, have to pass through such tormenting experiences? Why should they have to pass through times of

anguish, while those who only make use of God-powers for their self-interest have a comparatively good time? The reason is this - that in our eagerness we press on so fast that we enter a reality for which we are not yet quite prepared. Swedenborg speaks of spirits belonging to a lower plane wanting to go to a heavenly one, and that when their wish was granted they were so tormented by the love, joy, peace and loveliness of Heaven that they begged to be taken back to an environment more suited to their inward state. Heaven did not torment them, for it was all Love and Goodness; it was the visitors' lack of correspondence with heavenly vibrations which caused their sufferings.

It is the same with us. Our soul is tormented because it is for ever pushing on to higher vibrations, and these at first are painful. These painful experiences are due entirely to the vibrations of Divine Love being too high and powerful for us, but the very experiences themselves change us so that we become adapted to the new conditions. As soon as this is achieved we enter into a measure of God's peace. This may last for a time. It is like a rest at the Delectable Mountains in Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. But soon we are found pressing on again, and again being tormented and, tried, simply because we are not yet conformed to His Image.

We have again to pass through the furnace - but the flames of this fiery ordeal can consume only that which is of no use to us, and which indeed is a hindrance to us.

These peaceful rests always come after a big and trying experience. We go forward for a time, and things go more or less smoothly; then we come to a standstill, and clouds gather. Then after another season of testing and trial we enter into a state

of rest and peace. Our progress seems to be like that of a plant which grows for a time, and then comes to a standstill, so that it can recuperate and become filled again with life and energy. Then when it is ready, it again goes forward.

The same law applies to us and our spiritual growth.

Things do not go smoothly all the time: we have to be willing to wait when we are brought to a standstill, and we must be willing to go forward when called upon to do so. Also we must accept the tests and trials of life, for by so doing we make it possible for God to lead us in the right path; that is, the only path which can lead us to God's peace, and His eternal joy. What I want to emphasize is that everything is right at the time. We can only unfold in a Divinely ordered way, like the unfolding of a flower. We may fret and fume over apparent hindrances, but they form part of our training; we can only advance through meeting with resistance, and through being subjected to trials and tests. The object of these experiences is to bring us into God's peace. That is the glorious thing about God's dealings with us - everything is designed for our good, and in order to bring us into His perfect peace.

When God first began to deal with me in this more advanced way I was filled with anguish and grief; I thought the experience was evil, and could see no good in it. Then when things seemed at their worst, it was suddenly given me to know that the black cloud which overshadowed me was big with mercy and that it would 'break in blessing on my head'. Directly I realized this, I entered into a measure of peace such as I had never experienced before.

I cannot remember ever having experienced such a

measure of God's peace before, neither had I previously ever had to pass through such a time of remedial tribulation.

Consequently I came to the conclusion that one could only find God's peace through tribulation. At this point I parted company with all those who teach attainment without tears, for I felt convinced that such a thing was impossible.

We can attain only if we are prepared to go all the way with Jesus, instead of only part of the way. There are many who are willing to go with Him as far as Gethsemane but there, like the disciples, they fall asleep and that is as far as they get. If we are willing to go all the way, then this makes it possible for us to meet with the tribulations and trials which are necessary if we are to find God's inward peace, and to experience His eternal joy.

There are millions of people today whose religion is really an attempt to avoid what I have termed redemptive tribulation. They are willing to go with Jesus part of the way; they are willing to go with Him so long as He provides the loaves and the fishes, and heals their sicknesses. But when they discover that His Kingdom is a Spiritual one, and not a material one, they walk no more with Him. or should they find themselves at Gethsemane, they forsake Him and flee from Him. 'No cross, no crown' is an old saying which is almost forgotten in these times, but it is eternally true, for we can never get something for nothing. Minions are trying their best to avoid the cross, but in so doing they will certainly lose the crown. 'If any man will come after me', said Jesus, 'let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.' I think that before my redemptive tribulation started, I must have belonged to the great army of those who cherish the vain hope of attainment

without tears. But my first great searching experience convinced me that God deals with us in love, and that we have been called to a high estate - so high that the mind staggers at the thought of it - and that we are being trained for the high duties and responsibilities of our new calling. My difficulty was that I had been brought up (as I have already described) in the erroneous teaching that everything was done by somebody else: that we could sin and not suffer for it and also attain - although the word attainment was never used - without working for it. It is time that this weakening doctrine was discarded, and that we returned to the robust teaching of Jesus. But when I realized that God deals with us individually, and that we have to make the journey of Jesus and literally follow Him and pass through similar experiences; and also when I realized that the blessing is in the cloud, and that without the cloud there could be no blessing, it was then that I entered into a measure of God's peace. Then it was, I think, that I began to understand the inner meaning of the injunction of Jesus that we should agree with our adversary.

Our adversary in this case means the hard experience, the redemptive experience which is so difficult to bear when it comes to us. Directly we co-operate with the unwanted experience it loses its power to hurt us.

Now what do I mean by peace? To many people the word peace conjures up visions of funerals, marble monuments and wax flowers; it speaks to them of death, sadness, sorrow, bereavement, and sometimes even hopeless despair. This is because of the age-old error of thinking that it is through death that we find peace of soul which would be only a negative peace, a mere cessation of strife and struggle. But God's inward Peace is a very

different thing. Instead of being a mere negative absence of struggle and turmoil, it is a positive thing in itself. It means coming into harmonious correspondence with the very peace which God Himself enjoys. In order to make such a thing possible we have to be tuned up like a musical instrument, so that we become attuned to the Divine Note which sounds eternally through the universe.

No one can explain what God's peace is. We can experience it but cannot explain it or describe it. It transcends all words, but it fills us with bliss and joy. When God's peace comes, it is like a mighty river which bears us blissfully, along on its broad bosom; yet at the same time we become conscious of it flowing through us like a river. It is the most lovely experience which can come to us; it makes all earth's joys seem cheap and tawdry in comparison. But of course there can be no comparison. Now if we possess the peace of God we possess everything; if we have not the peace of God we possess nothing. So long as we possess the peace of God we are happy and filled with the joys of Heaven, but if we lose it then we are miserable and filled with anguish.

Although we cannot define God's Inward Peace, yet we can carry it with us so that other people who are ready for it can become conscious of it. Just as people who are devil-ridden carry trouble with them wherever they go, which upsets those whom they meet, so also he who is filled with God's peace brings a sense of calm and peace to those with whom he comes into contact. Also it can be transmitted through the medium of letters. Nearly all the letters which I dictate finish with a prayer that the recipients may know God's inward peace, and that it may flow through them like a river. When I dictate this I really pray, and as I

do so feel God's peace flowing through me like a river, and I feel lifted up into the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory. Sometimes a reader becomes conscious of this and feels lifted up for days in consequence. This shews that God's peace can be transmitted, and also that if recipients are ready to receive it they can become conscious of the same blissful peace which I experienced at the time I prayed for them.

Well, to continue my story. After each trying experience and trial of faith I entered into God's peace. As I came to the end of the experience and was delivered out of my distress, I would experience a sense of great relief, and be filled with great joy and gratitude and praise and thanksgiving. This all blended into a lovely peace and bliss such as no one can describe. This might last for a time, but soon I would find myself in trouble again and filled with fears and forebodings.

Then the whole process would begin again: working through the darkness and trying once again to find the peace I had lost. Of course in the case of one who has advanced as far as I had done at that time, any lapse or departure from the true Path would bring very serious and painful consequences. A beginner can lapse seriously and suffer little as a result; but the farther we advance, the more serious becomes the result of any lapse on our part. Consequently such a lapse may deprive us of God's inward peace and also of any ordinary peace of mind which we might usually enjoy.

Then begins the long journey back, beginning with confession of our sin to God. For if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Then we have to keep working through the darkness and aspiring Godwards, until

at last we come out into the Light again and into God's peace. But I found that I had trying experiences to meet, even if there had not been any lapse on my part. This was due to the fact that the time had come for me to learn yet another lesson of life.

Through all these experiences I was brought more deeply into God's peace.

The mistake I made at first, and for a long time after, was in dealing with the outward disorder instead of the inward cause of it. All my experiences were of a twofold nature: there was trouble in the outward life, and darkness and almost despair in the inward life. When this happened, I fell into the error of thinking that the inward anguish was the result of the outward trouble, and so I tried to deal with it instead of seeking an inward adjustment. This was putting the cart before the horse.

Although such cases were not brought on by any outward lapse, yet there was always an inward cause. This was not a lapse even in thought, but was really a lack of development.

The experience might be described as a growing pain: I had still a lot to learn, and being a practical mystic (in the making) instead of a purely contemplative one, I could learn only through experience.

Certainly I did not lack experiences, for no sooner was one trouble surmounted than another one was ready to appear - that is, after I had enjoyed a brief rest and enjoyment of God's peace. But each experience brought me nearer to the heart of God, and more deeply into His peace. It was a long time before I learned the right way of dealing with the experiences which came to me. At first I did what many people mistakenly do: try to wipe out the outward experience by what are called by

some 'treatments'. Because I did not succeed, so that things had to take their natural course, I thought that my methods were at fault. But there was nothing wrong with my metaphysics; the fault was that I was trying to obliterate effects instead of dealing with causes. I had not yet learnt that it is always 'first within and then without: first in the unseen, then in the seen'. Or if I did know it, it was only in an intellectual way; I did not really know it by true understanding and certainly I did not put it into practice.

In course of time, however, I began to realize that what was needed at such times was not an outward cure, but an inward adjustment. In other words, if I could only find God's inward peace, then the outward disorder could take care of itself. When once there was an inward adjustment, then an outward healing of circumstances and affairs would naturally follow, for the simple reason that the inward cause of the outward trouble had been removed. So instead of attacking the symptom I sought a removal of the underlying cause.

In other words, I sought God's inward peace (or rather, I sought for an inward adjustment through a surrender of my will and all my desires to God, the result of which would be that I should enter into God's peace). It might take a long time, but I was prepared to await God's time. Instead of concentrating upon an outward adjustment in my own strength and wisdom, I looked within and waited upon God for Him to bring about an inward adjustment, through which I might find His peace. As soon as I entered into God's peace and floated along on an ocean of bliss, feeling God's peace flowing through me like a river, the outward trouble - no matter how complicated it might be -

began to dissipate, like a morning mist before the rising sun.

How often have I longed to impart this knowledge to others! Especially to those dear souls who go from one teacher to another in a vain search for some magical formula or 'treatment' which would set them free from all their outward troubles. If instead they would seek God's inward peace, they would find a remedy for all their ills.

The reward over the years of all these tests and trials is that we reach that state when God's peace is always with us. If a disturbing experience should rob us of our peace, it is quickly restored. This is because to be in God's peace has become the normal condition for us, consequently it is natural for peace to be restored. If we throw a stone into a pond the surface is rippled, but soon it becomes smooth again because it is normal for it to be smooth. God's inward peace is Heaven's most precious gift, for if we possess it we possess all things.

Therefore we must on no account jeopardize it through any lapse or fault on our part.

One of the most frequent causes of such a loss is the neglect of prayer and getting into touch with our Divine Centre and Source. So many start off well. They set aside an hour a day for meditation and devotional exercises, and all goes well for a time; but after some years, they begin to neglect the quiet hour, the result of which is that they become attuned to things of time and decay, instead of the things which fade not away. It is so easy to backslide; but it is not easy to get back to the peace and joy which we once enjoyed. To keep in touch with God and thus to enjoy His peace does not require either cleverness or great will-power.

All that we need are persistence and perseverance.

Finding God's inward peace, and being carried along on it as though upon a mighty river, and then finding that it also flows through us like a river, seems to explain what Jesus said in His wonderful prayer given us in John 14:20, 'I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.' This cannot be understood by the human mind, but when we find ourselves laved in God's peace, and at the same time find God's peace flowing through us like a river, we realize or know the truth, and the Truth makes us free. We experience inwardly that which we cannot grasp with the outward understanding.

17 ON PRAYER, MEDITATION AND CONTEMPLATION

As already related, my father was a man of much prayer which consisted mostly of agonized entreaties on behalf of us children that we should not be eternally lost and damned. Years afterwards I did much the same thing; I even banged my head on the ground in my agony and fervour - both were supplicatory, beseeching in content. Such prayer is the best that we are capable of at the time. It is easy for us to look back later and be faintly amused at it all, seeing that God is Love to all Eternity and is the Essence of Goodness, and always doing the best for us. Supplicatory prayer is, as I say, all right at the time. It is a turning to God, and that is the all-important thing. If we persevere with it, so that we turn to God frequently, then although our prayers may not be answered in the way we hoped, yet they will be answered in another way: we will be given insight and understanding. Then we realize with gratitude that God is at work always, bringing us to the highest good that we are capable of bearing at the time.

Now I must confess that I was very frequently both disappointed and discouraged when, after praying vehemently for a long time, the very thing which I dreaded still came to pass, or the thing which I wanted still eluded me. It seemed that my unkind fate was inexorable, and that when I prayed, 'the Heavens were as brass'. Yet when another great trouble or difficulty arose, I would start praying again, but still without achieving the results hoped for. Surely this shows that man is by nature a praying creature. The reason why none of my prayers ever seemed to be answered was probably due to the fact that they were purely supplicatory. I did not pray in the way taught by

Jesus, but simply implored and beseeched God: I did not exercise faith; I did not believe that what I asked for was already mine.

I paid no attention to the text 'Before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear'.

Evidently I did not take the trouble to enquire into the subject for if I had done so, I should have discovered that those who were great in prayer used to supplicate to some purpose. They did not merely supplicate and remain in a state of conscious lack as I did, but they prayed until they knew that God had heard their prayer. Then they asked no more but instead praised and thanked God because He had answered their prayer. And they did this, in spite of the fact that there might still be no visible change in their affairs.

Apparently everything that was wrong in their life remained unaltered; but in spite of this they kept on praising and thanking God because He had already answered their prayer.

It is extraordinary what can be achieved by some people through believing prayer. George Müller is known principally because through prayer he attracted a million and a quarter pounds sterling to his work for orphans; he also had power over the forces of Nature. Once the ship on which he was sailing was stopped by a thick fog. Müller realized that if this continued he would be late for a preaching appointment and also that his whole program would be thrown out of gear. So he took the captain below and got him to join him in prayer. The captain agreed to do so, just to humour an old man who must be touched in the head to imagine that prayer could disperse a thick fog! They both knelt down and Muller prayed for the fog to be dispersed.

Then he said to the astonished captain: 'Come up

on deck and see the fog disperse.' They went up on deck, and already the fog had half disappeared. In a few minutes it had gone completely and the ship was able to steam full speed ahead to its destination. And so George Müller kept his appointment.

The point to note in this case is that George Müller (who was by this time greatly experienced in prayer, having had about fifty years practice) did not pray alone - he took the captain with him. I think there was a reason for this, and also for the words of Jesus: 'If any two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven': But on the other hand there have been some great praying people who have been able to work alone. For instance, Holy Ann of Toronto achieved some amazing things simply through asking her Father. One was to pray about a well, which had gone dry. Those who had been down it said that the bottom was as dry as the kitchen floor. Ann was asked to pray about it, so she did. The next morning there was plenty of water and, so the record goes, the well has never since failed. Of course such praying can be carried too far. There is the healing of a woman through the prayer of Holy Ann which does not make good reading. In this case Ann really demanded that the woman should be healed and healed she was - to become a curse to herself and her husband. Holy Ann admitted that she had gone too far in demanding this particular healing from God.

We learn through experience that it is possible to pray for the wrong things; and so if we are powerful enough to get our own way, life is made worse instead of better. We do not know at the time that our real object in making supplications is not actually to get God to give us something:

or to do something, but is really to find and know God. The prodigal son was disgusted with his diet of pig's food and decided to return home where there was 'bread enough and to spare'. But what he really wanted was to return to his father; in the same way, our real desire is to get back to God, our Centre. We may think that we want this, that or the other, but really at the back of it all is a deep longing for God.

There is also something else which we discover - that the thing which we pray for only too often is the very opposite of that which would be for our and others good.

We might pray for difficulties to be removed and that we should not be tested and tried; but if our prayers were answered, the result might be that we became weakened and increasingly unfitted for the battle of life.

However, we continue to pray and learn through experience. At first we pray that our will should be done, and that God should do what we want Him to do. We may go on thus for years (even many years), but a time comes when our affairs become so tangled that at last we begin to discover that we need Divine guidance. We may be faced by such a hopeless complexity in all our affairs that we have to acknowledge that we can do nothing about it. We realize that if the tangled skein of our life is to be unraveled, then it is only Infinite Wisdom, Love and Intelligence who can accomplish such an (to us) impossible task. And so the character of our prayer changes; gradually in this process of prayer evolution we learn to trust God more, and our own wisdom less. Now we are convinced that we are quite incapable of deciding what is best, or of finding our way through the maze of life.

If we are really in the Path of Life, and are not

like those spoken of by Jesus as recorded in Matthew 7:21,22, we are brought in course of time - just at the right time, of course, when we are ripe for it - to our Gethsemane. Then we learn to pray, with Jesus, 'nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt'. Henceforward we pray only that God's will may be done, and that we may know the will of God so that we may follow it. This may include some sharp discipline, and we may be given difficult tasks to cope with, but these are all turned into stepping-stones and are really our greatest aids in our spiritual unfoldment, in spite of the fact that they appear to be hindrances. We begin to realize that God's will means everything being done according to the Divine order; that when God's will is done, then the Divine order begins to appear. Our life may be in a hopeless tangle but if we pray for a Divine adjustment, which means that the Divine order should be made manifest (which, in turn, means that the Divine will is done), then the tangle of our life begins to unravel in a most wonderful way.

This of course is what one might term a 'long-term policy' of prayer yet it is not suggested that 'short-term policy' prayer should not be practiced. For we should turn to God for guidance and strength in every situation. We should seek Divine co-operation in everything and, like Brother Lawrence, ask God's help before commencing every task, and thank Him when it has been accomplished.

If we should find ourselves faced by a state of lack and limitation, we can certainly speak to God about it. We know that such a state of affairs is not according to the will of God, consequently we can ask for deliverance and a state of harmonious adjustment. But **we should also pray that whatever**

there may be in us which is the cause or partly the cause of our lack, that this may be removed or changed.

Of course what most of us are concerned about is the welfare of those whom we love. When they are in dire trouble, how can we help them by means of prayer? It was this concern for our welfare which made my father pray for us children, in spite of his Calvinistic belief that our end was predestinated before the foundation of the world. And we of to-day also desire just as strongly to help those whom we love, through the medium of prayer. Indeed, if they are in trouble, it gives us an inward ache and gnawing at the heart which we feel can only be assuaged by turning to God on their behalf. And so we turn to God, using the words of the Psalmist as an introduction: 'O, Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come'. (Psalm 65:2.)

At first our object may be to get God to change or coerce our loved ones so that they change according to what we think they ought to be, or what they ought to do. But while this type of prayer is not answered, in the ordinary meaning of the term, yet it is answered in another sense, for it leads to a deeper understanding of what prayer is. The very practice of prayer, and the many experiences connected with it, gradually open our understanding so that we become aware of the fact that prayer as usually practiced is wrong, and that it is not God who has to change but we who have to become conformed to His pattern of perfection.

Also we learn through experience that we must not coerce those for whom we pray. We must not pray that they should conform to our pattern of what we think they ought to be, or that they should be compelled to do what we think that they ought to

do. We learn that when praying for them we should give them complete liberty; and also we learn that we must give God complete liberty as well. God is at work in the life of each one of us, consequently He is at work in the life of the one for whom we pray, just as much as in our own life. So gradually we are led to see that the best prayer we can pray is to hand our loved ones over to God, and give them up entirely to Him so that He can deal with them in His own way. Our loved ones will get on much better when we cease uttering our interfering and coercive prayers. For a long time however we fear to do so; we are afraid to trust God, afraid to commit our loved ones completely into His care. We still want to interfere - we cannot let them go entirely. But the time comes - it may be through much painful experience - when we are at last willing to release our loved ones from the bondage in which our well-meaning fears have held them. This is not by any means easy for most of us. But at last we are able to surrender our loved ones entirely to God, so that He can deal with them in His own way. Learning how to pray, so I have found in my own experience, is a long drawn-out process, extending over many years. Prayers, then, fall into two categories: first, our prayers are supplicatory, pure and simple; next, we may discover that it is more effective if we affirm that what we need is already an accomplished fact, and to thank God accordingly. We discover also that what is really needed is not that God should alter, or even do anything, but that what is really needed is that we should realize the fact that Divine perfection already IS, and is the reality concerning ourselves and our affairs. In other words, the causes of our troubles and disorders are in ourselves. And the principal cause is ignorance or

lack of understanding of Truth. Therefore what is needed on our part is greater knowledge of Divine truth.

This brings us to the next stage of prayer, which is Meditation.

It is through meditation that our mind becomes attuned to the mind of God. Yet it does not suit everybody. My system of meditation is very simple, although not everyone can practice it for the simple reason that it deals with abstract thought. But for those who can think abstract thoughts, it is very easy indeed. (I would suggest, however, that those who find meditation difficult, tiring and a strain, should not proceed with it.

Meditation should be a restful and happy exercise.) My system - which is quite original, so far as I know - is simplicity itself. All that I do is to hold a thought at the top of the mind, and keep it there. I do not think any other thoughts, but simply hold the one thought at the summit of my mind. Then without any help on my part, other thoughts of a like nature become attracted and settle - like a flock of pigeons settling on the roof of a house.

By holding a thought, or idea, at the top of the mind, I really mean at the top of the head. We close our eyes, turning them upwards towards the top of the fore part of the head. We also direct our attention to the same spot, and in imagination hold the thought of Wholeness, or whatever it may be, just at that point.

Each subject of meditation is an abstract thought, and each represents one of God 's attributes. Of course I am aware that God is far beyond all attributes, but we cannot very well meditate upon God without them. Also I know that what we call the 'attributes of God' are merely qualities which

we ascribe to God, and are therefore merely human ideas. They represent what we think God should be like. But God is infinitely beyond all such ideas, therefore what they really represent are the qualities which belong to our real selves, or the real spiritual man - God's idea concerning each one of us. But meditating on what we term the attributes of God is a help towards knowing God: it is a bridge to understanding. For instance, if we meditate upon Wholeness, in course of time an understanding will come to us of the Divine idea behind wholeness which can never be put into words. Thus through meditation we enter into an understanding of real knowledge which the greatest intellect could never encompass and which, of course, could never be found in any book. When we have meditated on one attribute daily for a month, and the real meaning of it has been incorporated into our being, we can then take another one (Wholeness, Love, Justice, Mercy) and so on, for the next month. If we want to know the true inwardness of any word descriptive of God's nature, all that we have to do is to meditate upon it. We shall not be able to describe this true inwardness to others, but we can know it in our soul.

But those who practice meditation should not overdo it.

I have known one or two people who spent nearly their whole time in meditation and who neglected the practical duties of life in order to do so. As can well be imagined, the result was the reverse of satisfactory. A few minutes each day is all the time that most busy people can spare. There is a wise and happy middle course which we should follow in everything. I have always been inclined to fly to extremes, and have suffered accordingly; but experience has taught me that the middle path

is the path of wisdom. Therefore, as in everything else, we should be moderate in our meditation. With most people, however, the danger is in their neglecting meditation; indeed, I expect many will say that they have no time at all for meditation. They are in a whirl of activities from early morning till late at night, so that there is no time for anything apart from work and duty. When this is the case, I would suggest that no meditation be attempted. Such active people can however practice the presence of God, bringing God into every duty and activity. They can learn to see God everywhere, in every happening, in every thing, and in every individual. And later their circumstances will alter so that they will have time for meditation and many other things which are denied them now. Our circumstances alter as our spiritual unfoldment proceeds. We have all of us noticed that just when we have been ready for it, the right book or the right person has come to us. In the same way, when we are ready for meditation opportunity to engage in it comes to us.

After Meditation comes Contemplation.

From our earliest years most of us I expect have been familiar with the hymn, one verse of which is as follows:

Eternal Light, Eternal Light,
How pure the soul must be,
When placed within Thy searching sight,
It shrinks not, but with calm delight,
May live and look on Thee.

No doubt the hymn-writer had a theological idea in his mind when he wrote these lines, and was referring to what may happen to the soul after the

physical body has been sloughed off. But it is capable of becoming true in the experience of every aspiring soul here in this life. How then can we contemplate the Divine? Shall we form some sort of mental image of Divine Perfection and contemplate that?

I believe some people do this and I have nothing to say against it, and it may be a help to some for a time. In its favour is the fact that we tend to grow into the likeness of that which we contemplate. The form which we contemplate however is not God, but simply the image of what we shall become. We cannot form an image of God for He is form-less; we can only form an image of our true selves, or what we are capable of becoming.

I have frequently spoken and written about forming a mental concept of Divine perfection and contemplating it. This is good, of course, as far as it goes; but it is far from being the highest form of contemplation. True contemplation is formless. But we must not condemn lesser methods, for everything is all right at the time, at the stage at which we then are.

Just because as we advance we have to discard methods which hitherto have served us well, it does not follow that they are bad methods. When we discard them as being not only useless now, but actually a hindrance, we should not look upon them with contempt but rather with gratitude, for without their aid we could never have reached our present stage. When we are ready to move forward, we experience a desire to do so. We should always wait for the appropriate moment (we should never, for instance, attempt anything that is beyond us, just because we have read about it in a book), otherwise it would be like trying to hasten the opening of a flower bud by pulling it apart

with our fingers. It may seem strange that we should now have to cast away all that they have learned and become as a little child. Yet that is what Jesus said, but very few have ever understood what He said. He said that we cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, except we become as little children.

At this point, when we are ready to go forward, we simply move forward, but we cannot take our knowledge with us, we have to exfoliate all our intellectual ideas and what we think God is. Our loftiest thoughts about God are only hindrances now; they have served us well hitherto, but now they have to be cast aside because any thought about God is limiting, not only to us but also to God. In one sense, of course, it is impossible to limit God in any way for He is limitless, but we can limit Him, as far as we are concerned, by our thought. God is infinitely beyond thought, therefore our thoughts about God limit Him to our thought.

It is the same with a name. **God is the One without a name - the nameless One, consequently if we attach a name to God, He eludes us for He is above all names. The God who can be named is not the Ineffable One, but as it were a God of our own limitations.**

As we move forward towards the Ineffable, we lay aside all names and forms; we also emerge beyond all thoughts and ideas about God. Consequently, because we cease trying to limit the Limitless, it begins to become possible for us to go forward. All forms, thoughts, names and ideas have to be laid aside by us. So as they arise, we gently brush them aside and continue steadily forward to That which transcends all forms, thoughts, names and ideas. And so we move forward to the Nameless, Ineffable One. We discard everything until at last

we come to Nothing ... And when we have come to Nothing - we find that we have found Everything.

18 CAUGHT UP IN THE SPIRIT

Before allowing me to say anything about this subject, philosophers would doubtless insist that I should first define my terms. What do I mean by being 'caught up' and by 'Spirit' ? As a matter of fact I can define neither, so I shall not attempt to do so; but as I proceed the terms used will, I hope, explain themselves. But in any case, it is impossible to define Spirit, for 'God is Spirit: and they, that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth', and one cannot describe That which cannot be defined.

It all began in quite a small way when I was in my mid-twenties. I think that at that time I thought that I had in me the making of a preacher; indeed I may have cherished hopes and ambitions of becoming a great preacher, capable of attracting and swaying enormous crowds of people.

Consequently when there was a call for local preachers, I was one of those who volunteered for the honour and without examination or test, was accepted. As viewed from the pew, the office of preacher seemed simple and I often wondered why so many preachers did not do better than they did. But when I came to try to preach I found it quite a different story. As a rule I found it extremely difficult to say anything, and if I did manage to do so it was mediocre in the extreme - depressing both to my hearers and myself.

As a rule the people endured me. They were obviously bored and wearied by my performance; I got nothing from them, while of course they got nothing from me. I was no more in touch with them

than I should have been if they had been a hundred miles away.

No matter how carefully I might prepare my sermon, the result would be that when I got up to preach I seemed to be completely alone, in a kind of mental and spiritual wilderness, bereft of ideas and unable to say anything that I had hoped to say except a few hesitating, halting words that were helpful to nobody. These attempts at preaching were very hard work and a great mental strain. The end of my sermon would find me exhausted and miserable, oppressed with a sense of failure and frustration.

That was the general rule; but there were exceptions, rare ones it is true, but all the more precious because of their extreme rarity. On such exceptional occasions, I enjoyed what preachers in those days used to term liberty - an excellent description, for at such times I was set free from all restrictions. Instead of being shut up in myself, cut off from God and man, bereft of ideas, and in a state of misery and loneliness, I found myself lifted out into a state of liberty.

My hearers were in sympathy and responded to everything I said and ideas flowed into my mind, like water from a perpetual fountain. And these ideas found immediate expression in words of simplicity and clarity, without any strain or effort on my part.

The congregation gave me their attention, and there were less fidgeting and coughing than usual. For myself, I was filled with joy and in a state of uplift. All fear was lost and I felt that I was in my right place, with everybody else in his right place also. After it was over, instead of being exhausted, I was stronger and fresher than when I commenced. There was something else which I noticed: whereas in the ordinary way my throat was

rather troublesome and I had to relieve it with occasional sips of water, yet when the Spirit took hold of me my throat gave no trouble at all in spite of the fact that I had been speaking without a break for quite a considerable time.

But alas, this happened but rarely. Some who heard me on one of these very infrequent occasions said that I ought to pursue preaching as a calling; but I had changed my mind about this for I had come to the conclusion that I was not intended to be a preacher. If the Spirit had come to me oftener, it would have been a sign that preaching was to be my vocation. But the fact that It came so very seldom, and that for the most part I was left uninspired and flat and lifeless made me decide that preaching was not to be my forte.

I was sure that the only preaching that was really worthwhile was that which was the work of the Holy Spirit alone, so that He spoke through the preacher: then and then only could God's message get through. I have already related the story of an experience which befell me when I was living in East Anglia. On that occasion, for some wise purpose quite unknown to me, God meant to use me in a special way. Time seemed non-existent; I was in the Eternal Now. There was no attempt at preaching, or exhorting, but all - both congregation and preacher - were caught up together in God, and in very truth the Holy Spirit moved in our midst.

Now when the Holy Spirit catches up the speaker at a meeting, He also catches up the audience or congregation. Suddenly a change will come over the meeting, and there is a great stillness and a most impressive silence - the silence of Eternity. Such an experience of the Silence would be painful to one who was neither accustomed nor attuned to it. I remember some years ago being invited by Richard

Whitwell to speak at a meeting at Worthing. By the time I got there the meeting was in full swing, and the presence of the Holy Spirit was apparent to me directly I entered the hall. I had purposely refrained from preparing any address or even selecting a text or a subject. If we are to be a channel of the Spirit, then we must put aside all our own thoughts, ideas and opinions. Consequently when I was called upon to speak, I had nothing to say myself, so all I could do was to open my mouth, and trust to the Spirit to fill it. I was led to say a few very simple words about the true objects of such a meeting - that it was not to give an address or even expound the Scriptures, but simply to find the presence of God, and become filled with the Holy Spirit. I went on to say something to the effect that if or when we enter the true Silence then we enter into Eternity and became one with That which changes not. As soon as I uttered the word 'Silence' we were immediately all caught up in the Spirit and given Cosmic insight. All the street noises faded away, and it seemed as though we were suspended 'twixt earth and Heaven, released from the fever and fret of life. We had entered into the Silence about which I had been speaking.

I have often read about what happened on the day of pentecost, how that when 'they were all of one accord in one place, there came suddenly a sound from Heaven as of s rushing, mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. I have read all available translations of Acts 2: 2, and all make it appear that it was the sound which filled the house, and not the wind. However, I have reason to believe that what happened was that the wind also filled the house and not the sound only, for when the presence of the Holy Spirit is felt very strongly in the midst of a gathering of

people, a wind may blow through the meeting, although all the windows and doors may be closed at the time. It is also true that not all the people may be conscious of it, but only those who are ready for such an experience.

In the case of the early Church, on the day of Pentecost they were all of one mind in one place. Therefore they were all ready for the experience which came to them and it was possible for the experience to come to all of them. If people of to-day were all of one mind in one place, at one time, and all prepared to realize the presence of God and to receive the Holy Spirit, then the Pentecostal downpouring would be experienced in all its fullness. We read that after the ascension of Jesus, His followers returned, 'and continued with one accord (all of one mind) in prayer and supplication' (for the Spirit). Do we do so to-day? No, for one thing very few believe that such things are possible; they talk about the day of Pentecost as an event which took place nearly two thousand years ago, but never dream that it might be repeated in these latter days.

Apropos a wind blowing when the Spirit is at work in a meeting, I should like to mention an experience which one of our readers met with at a Salvation Army meeting. At the time this man was very unhappy, being the slave of the tobacco habit and unable to break it. He tried to do so but had become so ill that he had to call in his medical man, who advised him that he was suffering from tobacco poisoning and that he had better break off the habit by degrees. But he found this impossible and so was soon smoking as much as ever. He was unhappy about it, because the money he was spending on tobacco was badly needed at home. Attracted by the band, he entered a Salvation Army Citadel in order to listen to the music. He did

not pay much attention to what was said for 'he had no use for such things' - until a fisherman took charge. This man was a visitor and, having had a real experience of God, was travelling about as a missionary. He possessed Spiritual power, and was evidently being used as a channel by the Spirit. Our friend had the shock of his life when the speaker pointed straight at him and said in a loud voice: 'That man there, do you want to get rid of your craving for tobacco? If so, come to the penitent form and ask God to take away the craving, and He will do so, and it will never trouble you again.

Immediately our friend seemed to be engulfed in a sort of miniature whirlwind which appeared to raise him from his seat. The next thing that he remembered was to find himself at the penitent form where he knelt and reviewed his past life - becoming a changed man. Since that time he has not only had no desire to smoke, but has a great revulsion against it.

My reason for relating this is that our friend experienced a strong wind and that he was raised by the Spirit out of his seat.

Here too is an experience which befell a friend of mine whose son was seriously, even dangerously, ill. We were all deeply concerned and were praying for the boy, but instead of improving, his condition grew worse. A specialist was sent for and an immediate and dangerous operation was advised; but when challenged the surgeon had to admit that he could not say that it would be successful or achieve an good whatever, so the operation was not proceeded with. At last the Spirit came, and the father said that he could feel its power sweeping through the house. His son was completely healed. Healing does not of course always come like that - indeed it is the exception

- but I mention this occurrence because it is one more illustration of the way in which the Spirit works in unusual and special circumstances. It is always when all seems lost and failure has attended all our efforts and strivings that the Spirit comes with mighty power, making all things new.

In 1928 a London Centre asked me to address them. As I am no speaker, I decided, as usual, to refuse the invitation, but I found it difficult to do so, for each time I made up my mind to send a refusal I was troubled by the Spirit. The upshot of it all was that I accepted the invitation; but when I recalled my shortcomings as a speaker, I was filled with misgivings. However, I argued that as it was evidently God's wish that I was to speak (and therefore some object was to be achieved), I could safely turn the matter over to Him.

The lady who was in charge of the Centre meetings wrote asking me to write up my forthcoming visit to London in The Science of Thought Review. I replied to the effect that I would not be a party to any such thing, and that al! that I could allow would be a short announcement. The lady wrote back that if I would allow her a few lines she would like to make the announcement herself, which she did in a few lines. I realized afterwards that this was a mistake; I ought never to have given in to her importunity. In the first place, we had enough subscribers in the London area alone to have filled the hall ten times over, but the announcement would be read all over the country. The unfortunate result was that people came from all parts and at considerable trouble and expense, only to find that it was impossible to get into the small hall. The result was chaotic. At the door there was a surging mass of human beings that when I arrived it was impossible for me to obtain

entrance. It seemed that the only thing for me to do was to go home.

Suddenly I caught sight of a man there who knew me - George Corbett of Nottingham - and he would not allow me to return home. By dint of much pushing and struggling he at last managed to get into the hall, with me at his heels.

We found to our dismay that the body of the hall was not only packed, but that some of the audience were sitting on the platform.

All was strain, effort, excitement and confusion, whilst the lady in charge of the meeting implored the people to squeeze more tightly together so as to make it possible for a few more to be accommodated ...I could not help thinking of the words of Jesus: 'But what went ye out for to see, a reed shaken by the wind?' That this text was to have special significance before the meeting was over, I little imagined at the time.

Pandemonium reigned, and to crown all there were some enthusiastic musicians playing fiddles with great gusto!

The meeting opened with a hymn, followed by a credo which everyone repeated in unison (such things to me dry, inadequate, unsatisfying and unnecessary). Then to my horror the leader announced that a collection would be taken - and would the people please give as liberally as possible as the expenses were heavy? This seemed to infer to me that the audience would naturally think that the visiting speaker was an expensive item, or at any rate that I was going to receive part of the collection. I felt inclined to get up and explain that I do not believe in collections at all and that I am distinctly opposed to asking for money. But I remembered that it was not my meeting but the Centre's, and that they were entitled to conduct it in their own way.

Incidentally, when I agreed to speak for them I made it a condition that I should pay my own expenses, and this of course was what I did. The collection taken, the leader then asked me to speak. No, I replied, let somebody else speak first in order to give me time to become attuned to the Spirit. So George Corbey of Nottingham kindly came to the rescue. He told of a man who 'looked on the wine when it was red', whose clothes needed brushing, and who displayed all the usual signs of the drunkard. One day George Corbett met this man in the train: he was neat, shaved and his clothes well brushed - obviously a man very much changed for the better. What was the reason? For answer, the man pulled one of my Science of Thought lessons from his pocket and said: 'This is what is changing my life'. George related this incident with his usual forthrightness and he was given a good hearing. After such a story I could hardly refuse to speak, but I was in no fit state to do so. I had not prepared anything, because I had expected the Spirit to speak through me -- and now the Spirit had apparently forsaken me... What was I to do? I was out of touch with my audience, and they with me; I was in an agony for I thought of how this vast crowd before me had come from near and far in order to hear me speak, and here I was letting them down badly! For a few minutes they heard me in patient surprise, then began to fidget. However, I persevered doggedly but I felt neither Joy nor freedom. Speaking about God should be an uplifting and joyous experience, but I was in a state of separation and bordering on despair. Then I was led to say: 'The day of intellectualism is ending; the day of intuition and inspiration is at hand.' At that moment something wonderful happened, and I entered into a state of perfect

liberty! In a flash I was on top of things, completely at rest, and my audience in perfect sympathy. I felt lifted up and given a measure of Cosmic insight and was able to explain in the simplest language how it is possible to know the deepest things by a direct intuitive knowing. The Silence which suddenly descended upon the hall was intense, and one could have heard the proverbial pin drop. We were all caught up in the Spirit; we were all moved by the Spirit; we were in a state of heavenly peace and enjoyment.

Years afterwards, John Moreton told me his version of what happened. He was at the back of the hall where there was a large card with the word 'Personality' painted in large black letters. He described the failure of my address and the restlessness and disappointment of the people.

'But,' John Moreton continued, 'when you said: "the day of intellectualism is ending, the day of intuition and inspiration is at hand" a wind swept through the place, so strong indeed that it blew the large card with the word "Personality" painted on it, on to the floor. At that very moment the meeting became entirely changed'.

These incidents are not related as being in any way exceptional, for I realize that many may have had far more remarkable experiences. But I mention them because they proved to me that the Spirit works to-day as He did in New Testament times, for God does not change and has not changed; He is ever the same. It is through such experiences as this that have formed part of my spiritual training.

Through them God has taught me that it is only when we get to the end of 'self' that He can really use us; I have also learned that it is only through experience that we can reach that state of utter surrender. I have learned to depend more and

still more upon the Spirit and less and still less upon my own understanding. But my attempts at public speaking were not the only experiences through which I was trained and disciplined. If we refuse to be disciplined, we do so at grave peril. On the other hand, it is possible to go to the other extreme and invite more discipline than we have strength to bear. I knew a seeker once who was so anxious to attain that she prayed that she might pass through any suffering if only she might know God and enter into union with Him. The result was catastrophic, for she was hardly prepared what followed. She was, however, brought through finally - but I would not recommend anyone to follow her example. Rather would I counsel people to adopt a middle course (the middle path is ever the path of wisdom), by putting their unfoldment into Divine hands. If we allow God Who is Infinite Love and Infinite Wisdom to set the pace and bring everything to pass at the right time, we find plenty of experiences to test our strength, but they are not beyond our powers.

19 I FIND THAT GOD IS AT WORK IN MY LIFE

GOD is at work in the life of each one of us. Intellectually this raises many problems, such as 'was God at work in the life of Judas Iscariot?' But I do not intend to embark upon an intellectual discussion, for the question just posed is bound up with the problem of evil, and we all know that the only real explanation of that is not to be found intellectually at all, but only through realization or direct knowing by the soul. When we have had such an experience we realize that what is true in our case must be true also in that of all men, in spite of the evil in so many lives. It

is the same with the question of God being at work in the life of each one of us. We could never arrive intellectually at such a state of knowing, but God reveals it to us through deep experience extending over many years.

In my own case, I must have been unusually obtuse for it was not before I was over sixty years of age that I began to realize that God was at work in my life, and that I was not directing it at all. After this discovery, I thought for a time that I had no free will whatsoever, but later it came to me that I had free will after all, but within certain limits.

For many years it had become apparent to me that God was over-ruling everything for good. In spite of my mistakes, sins and follies, good finally emerged from the tangled skein so that what at the time may have appeared as evil frustration, was found to be a blessing in disguise. Consequently I could see that there must always be present a Central Harmony to which all things are related, and to which ultimately all things must conform. It was also borne in on me that this life is a reflection - and an imperfect one at that -- of our true and real life which is always being lived in God (the Central Harmony), and the disorders of life are due to our departure from the Divine Order or Central Harmony: first in our thoughts and, as a natural consequence, our actions. Free-will consists in our being able to think and act according to our personal self-will, which of course is at variance with the will of the Whole. But the real life goes on according to the will of God (the Whole, or Central Harmony). Our departure from what I like to term 'Divine family harmony and order' is that we make life difficult for ourselves. 'Let the wicked (he who misses mark or departs from the true order of life) forsake his

ways, and the unrighteous man (the man whose thoughts are right, but are a departure from Truth) his thoughts, and him return unto the LORD', who is Creative Order and Harmony far beyond our highest conceptions of order and harmony.

The Perfect Order continues: that is, it is always in a state of 'presentness'; it is always in the Eternal Now and it does not wax or wane. What is needed is that we should conform to it.

After many years of trying to think rightly and act rightly (experiencing many failures, of course), I gradually became conscious of the interior Divine Order at work in my life and affairs. Up till that time I had so to speak thought that it was I who had to do everything. It seemed that perfection had to be created by me as a result of much effort; but gradually I began to realize that Divine Perfection already existed, and always had existed, and that it was trying to manifest in my life and would do so if only I would allow it.

We belong to the Eternal, and interiorly we are one with 'That which changeth not'. The interior Order flows ceaselessly, in perfect harmony. The outward life is a counter of the interior Order, and all its disorders are due to departure from the Real and True. We have free will enough to make an awful mess of things in the outward life, but this can make no difference to the Inward life.

The prodigal son was reduced to poverty and misery, but his Father's house still carried on as usual; there was plenty of food and all the members of the household formed their various duties and acts of service, doing their appointed tasks at the right time and in the right way. The harmony of the home was not disturbed. It

continued as before. It was only the prodigal son who suffered from hunger and discord, and this was because he had put himself outside the order of his father's home. He could find no order apart from his proper place in his father's home, doing the work which, as a son, he was privileged to do. Everything, he undertook, after leaving his father's home, ended in failure and created disorder, shame and suffering.

This was because he was not in his right place and was not doing his right work. His self-will, or the exercise of his free-will, took him from a home of peace, plenty and order into a wilderness of unrest, starvation and disorder.

Although he could do nothing right while he was away from his true environment, directly he returned to his proper place in the scheme of things, everything immediately became very right indeed. Instead of starving and trying to eat the rough husks with which the swine were fed, he found himself the guest of honour at a sumptuous feast. Everything he did now was harmonious, because he fitted into the organization of the home and he found himself doing his right duties in a right way and at the appointed time.

As I look back upon my own life I am struck by the fact that the parable of the prodigal son describes it perfectly.

Whenever I went the way of the prodigal I was like a fish out of water, and my companions looked upon me as a fool.

Nothing would go right with me; in fact, I suffered much through my follies and reduced myself to the lowest ebb.

Yet as soon as I began to live quite another kind of life, I was welcomed by everyone and success smiled upon me.

I can see now that life was all the time trying to

push me back into my right path. I can see now that we can be truly successful only when we are travelling the path, and doing the work for which we are born. God always raises up the right man at the right time to do a certain work at a certain period in the world's history - for instance, John Wesley, George Fox and William Booth, to mention but three. No one else could have done their work. Each one was born at the right time; each one was born into just the right environment; each one possessed the right capabilities; each one could be truly successful only when he was travelling the path and doing the work for which he had been born. And each one passed on when his work was accomplished. What was true of these great men is also true of us lesser folk. Each one of us is born at the right time, in the right environment, and we can be truly successful only we do our right work and follow our true path. The farther we wander away from our true path and our right work, the less successful we become, as well as the more unhappy.

In my small way, I have found this to be very true. Whenever I was in my right path, doing my right work, life was harmonious and free from strain, whereas when I departed from my true path and work, my life was filled with disharmony and strain. Also (so I have found) we cannot be really happy if we are not in our true path, doing our right work. Worldly success cannot bring happiness if we have been destined to a life of consecrated humble service - indeed, great unhappiness and mental suffering will be experienced until wealth and worldly fame are cast aside and our true life's work entered upon instead.

This is where my former nefarious ideas - which that we can have every worldly desire satisfied by demanding it - fails. Making the search for things

the chief object of life can lead only to unhappiness and frustration.

The more we clutter our lives up with possessions and gadgets, the less happy we become. Life should be made as simple as possible. But simplification in itself is not sufficient. Indeed, if followed as a thing in itself, it may make life more difficult. What is required is that we should find our true path in life, putting first things first; then if we do this all things necessary will be added. When we have a true aim in life we naturally shed ourselves and our lives of useless impedimenta. This is the true simplicity.

Jesus said: 'but seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' He did not say that we were to seek first the loaves and fishes, and the Kingdom of God would then be added to us. This, however, is what I did at first, and because of this I had to suffer.

Nefarious teaching always turns upside down the real and true; it takes truth and then inverts it. It teaches its dupes to seek first the material things of life, and to use occult powers in order to force them into manifestation.

It even teaches them to say such things as 'I am God' or 'I am Divine Spirit' which has the effect of inflating the false ego, that is, the self which has to die before we can ever enter the path which leads to the Kingdom. Thus if we follow such teachings we are prevented from making a start in the right direction. Before we can go up, we must first of all go down, down, down, until there is nothing of the selfhood left. Then, and not till then, God is able to raise us up to be His instruments in the world. It is when we are willing to lose all as regards this world, that God is able to make all things new and fill our

life with blessedness.

Yes, God is at work in the life of each one of us. Not only have I experienced it in my own life, but I have seen it in the lives of others. There have been those who have been able to make demonstrations every time, who thought that they had complete mastery over their own lives. But there came a time when they could make no demonstrations at all; everything failed, and they went down lower and lower until they died, and then rose again a new creation. The death of the 'self' is a painful experience, but first the 'I' and the 'me' and the 'mine' have to pass away before the Christ in us can be lifted up.

I have been through this experience. I started out to improve my outward life first, and after that I might think about the Kingdom of God. I was reversing the teaching of Jesus. I sought the things of this life first and succeeded, but because this was a reversal of Truth it brought me much dissatisfaction and sorrow. 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' I was like the prodigal son. I had wasted my spiritual substance on acquiring the things of this world, and the things which I had won were as dust and ashes. What the husks given to the swine were to the prodigal son, even so were the things of this world to me - just as unsatisfying and nauseating.

God was at work in my life: I had been going one way, God wanted me to go another. He let me go on until I crashed and lay broken at His feet. Then when I understood fully how foolish and wrong I had been, and that without Him I could do nothing, God raised me up.

'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it', said Jesus. But it is open to all who are willing

to die in order to live. 'He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life ... shall keep it unto life eternal.'

'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.'

When we die in this way, God gives us a fresh start as a new creation. The seed of corn dies, yet out of it springs a new life. It is not the old seed come to life again, but the old has died in order that a new creation might arise.

Again, Jesus tells us that except a man is born again he cannot enter into the Kingdom. He tells us that we have to be re-born, even as the corn of wheat is re-born when it dies to itself, so that it may arise as a new creation. We are re-born out of the material into the spiritual, after which we pray no more for material good, but desire only God and His perfect order, and are content to wait for things to be added to us, in God's own way, and in God's good time.

Yes, God is at work in each individual life. When we are ready for it, and if we are willing for it to take place, the transformation is brought to pass - but for most of us the transition is far from easy, while for many it may yet lie in the future. Everything, however, comes to pass at the right time. 'God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform.'

There was once a student who wrote to say that for many years she had been bed-ridden, in spite of the fact that she had prayed almost continuously for Divine healing. She had put her healing first and God second. And so the years went on, and still she remained unhealed and bed-ridden. But, in the great mercy of God, there came a time when the sufferer received such a realization of God that she prayed that if being healed were to mean

that she would lose her new precious awareness of God, then she would rather not be healed. She wanted God, as well as to retain her 'knowing' of Him above all things. She would rather not be healed, if only she could have God. The result was that she was immediately healed and raised up. 'But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you ...

God was at work in the life of that woman. She was brought to see that her prayers were the opposite of what Jesus taught. Then as soon as she put God first and gave up her desire for material good, she not only experienced the ineffable joy of 'knowing' God, but the healing for which she had vainly prayed so long, was added.

God also has been at work in my own life. I have been brought to see that without God I can do nothing, and that all that I had achieved was but dust and ashes. But this woman and I are not special people, singled out by God for special treatment; what is true of us and our lives must be true of all people and all lives, for God is no respecter of persons. Also, Divine law works always the same and cannot alter: if it did alter or change then it would not be Divine law.

There is a right course for each one of us. We may try many things before we find our true niche in life; then as we look back, we see that each thing which we have attempted has been a preparation for the work we are doing at the present time, and that what appeared to us at the time as our greatest hindrances were really blessings in disguise and stepping-stones to higher things.

Life unfolds to us as we are borne along on the stream of time, and gradually the Divine pattern is revealed. Also, more and more it becomes

evident to us that the Divine purpose is love. Love is the key to every situation in life, and love is the secret power which brings every Divine adjustment to pass.

As I look back on my life, I can see that it has been love all the way. At all times love has been heaped upon me, in spite of my unworthiness. We do not have to wait until we are good in order to be recipients of Divine love - it comes to us wherever we may be; it blesses us no matter how unworthy we may be.

Love does not make our life soft or our path easy, but it supports us all the day long, and blesses all that we attempt to do.

God is at work in the lives of all, therefore He is at work in the lives of nations and in the life of the world. Although God is All and is the only doer, yet He is not the cause of man's disorder and suffering. God creates all things in perfection, order and wholeness. Thus, in the true world which is the perfect expression of the Divine Idea, everything comes to pass at the right time in perfect order and harmony. In this true world, our real inner self has its being. This outer self is a falsity; likewise the world which we cognize through the senses is a fake world, or rather a distorted reflection or counterfeit of the real world of perfection. The world, too, is largely a reflection of our thoughts and the thoughts of others. If we think good thoughts - that is, thoughts in accord with the interior Divine order, then goodness manifests in our life; if we think evil thoughts, then evil manifests. It is because the thoughts of mankind are evil (not according to the Divine order), that disorder abounds. There can, of course, be no improvement

in the world until mankind alters its thoughts and its feelings.

We all know this, of course. The point that I want to make however is this: the changes which take place in the real world, have also to take place in this phantasmal world. But whereas in the real world the changes are orderly, beautiful and harmonious, in this world they can be achieved only through strife and struggle. This is because we have departed from the Divine order, so that 'My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the LORD.' The will of God which is Divine order, beauty, harmony, is always being done: the Divine action is always taking place: but we work in opposition to it, thus creating disorder in place of order. But although we create disorder yet God, as Divine Love, is always at work in our life, drawing us back to Himself and into His order and harmony. God is at work in all our lives; that is, in the life of each one of us and it is a great satisfaction to know this. For He doeth all things well.

20 LOVE THE KEY

But the greatest of these is love - I Corinthians 13: 13.

For a good many years now I have made a practice of sending out my love to all mankind daily, in the well-known words:

Dear people, everywhere, I love you all.
I love you all, I love you.

I think that I came across these words, or

something like them, in Trine's In Tune with the Infinite, about forty-five years ago. Afterwards I found the same idea, but in different language in the much older writings of an Eastern sage. He suggested that we should turn to the east, the west, the north and the south and bless all humanity.

The mere repetition of 'Dear people, everywhere, I love you', although an admirable practice, cannot in itself achieve much if we do not charge the words with the all-powerful vibrations of love. But what do I mean by 'love'? By love I mean agape, which, so scholars inform us, is the Greek word translated 'charity' in the Authorized Version of the New Testament. This was done, so I imagine, to distinguish it from physical love, i.e. that love which demands something in return for what it gives. Agapé, some scholars assure us, really means the Divine nature poured out, which is a giving of Itself to the uttermost without any thought of, or desire for a return of any kind. In my own small way I sometimes think that I understand, in a very feeble measure of course, something of what Jesus must have felt when He wept over Jerusalem, and also when He said: 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem ...how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.' As I utter the words: 'Dear people, everywhere, I love you al, I love you', I feel that I am pouring out my soul with all the strength of my being upon all men. It is not merely an utterance of words, but an outpouring of the soul with all the strength of which I am capable.

As I do this I experience a feeling of great power in my solar plexus. While uttering the words silently, I breathe out as strongly as I can,

putting all the feeling of which I am capable into what I am saying, and this generates a greater feeling of power in the same region. We have to give out, with all our might and strength, not with the idea of getting something in return, but simply in order to give and give yet more and more. It is a pouring out of the soul in utter abandon. We have to be like Jesus pouring out His soul over Jerusalem and of whom it was said that He poured out His soul unto death. As a result of this pouring out of our soul we receive more power, we become capable of more love; for by pouring out our soul thus we create a vacuum which is at once filled with love of like nature to the Divine.

This sending of our love to all mankind is however the first stage. We have such compassion towards people that we desire more than anything in the world to pray for them that they may be blessed in every possible way, especially in the best of all ways. It is our desire humanity should be at peace, that each one should have work to do, and return home tired but satisfied at the end of the day, rejoicing in 'something attempted, something done, to earn a night's repose'. That is what the masses of people everywhere really long for, but which war prevents them from enjoying. 'If only war could be prevented,' they say 'then we would sally forth at the beginning of the day to do work which is necessary and well worth doing, after which all our needs would be supplied.' But war cannot be prevented without a change of heart—only agapé can prevent war.

Consequently when we pray that all mankind should be blessed, we mean that they should be blessed in the best possible of all ways, instead of in only a material way. And so we continue sending forth our love, adding:

May you be divinely blest in every possible way;
may your lives be filled with harmony, joy and
peace,
and may the deepest longings of your soul be
satisfied, in God.

We pray with all our might that all men should
enjoy the same blessings and satisfactions of soul
which we ourselves desire. In the words of Jesus,
we love our neighbour as we do ourself.

Jesus also said that we should love God with all
our mind and strength: this means that we should
pour out our soul in love, adoration and gratitude
when we pray to God.

When we pray to Him, we should pray with all the
fervour of which our nature is capable.

I have found it helpful to make use of the opening
words of the Psalm 103: 'Bless the LORD, O my
soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy
name.' This can be made a powerful exercise if we
say mentally the first half of the text while we
are inhaling deeply, and the second half whilst we
are exhaling strongly. But perhaps everyone might
not like to do this; in fact many could not do so,
because of their inability to breathe deeply
enough or to control their breath.

Therefore I do not recommend readers to try it,
but merely state that it can be done.

The effect that this practice of sending out our
love has upon those of us who practice it, is
that we enter into a state of union with all
mankind. We become a universal lover of humanity;
in our heart we have a place for all men. We see
the Christ in everyone - the beggar at our door,
the king in his palace - all are alike to us. We
are all one underneath the surface - all brothers
and friends, united in God our Source. Yes,

underneath the surface we are all one. 'I am the Vine, and ye are the branches', said Jesus. All the branches of the vine are united in the parent stem, and all have flowing through them the same one life of the Vine.

When there are quarrels and disputes, a recognition of this fact soon puts an end to them. I have frequently noticed a wonderful change take place when I have suggested to disputing and quarrelling people that 'deep down we are all friends, really'. A smile has come to their faces and their better nature has been displayed in their changed expression. Yes, we are all friends below the surface. We are all one in God.

We need not however stop at sending our love to our enemies and to all mankind, for we can proceed to extend it to all creation. We can say:

Dear earth and sky and land and sea, I love you all, I love you.

Dear trees and flowers and rivers and streams, I love you all, I love you.

And so we can proceed throughout all inanimate nature; we can send our love to mountains and valleys, to moor and fen, and so on.

But we can go yet farther. We can send our love to animate nature. We can say: Dear birds and beasts and live things everywhere, I love you all, I love you.

As we utter these words, pouring our soul in love upon all things, we become one with them all. The effect of saying that we love all things is that in course of time we really love them with a love which stirs our being, even though previously we may not have loved them at all.

Eventually we become universal lovers in whose

arms the whole creation can find refuge and sanctuary. Behind the birds and the animals there are their archetypes from whom they proceed and to whom they return. These receive us as universal brothers into their everlasting habitations. Thus we come to the end of all strife and struggle, into a state of peace, for it is intimated to us that we are at one with all creation and that we rest together on the bosom of God.

Love is indeed the key to every situation in which we may find ourselves. When we are attacked, criticized and abused the natural thing to do is to hit back, thus returning evil for evil; but the Jesus or Love way is to send our love, pity, compassion, forgiveness, to our enemy, like a beam from a searchlight. Love applied in this way is dynamic.

The shafts of malice directed against us return to the sender -consequently love is the best defense. But I do not think that self-defense should be our motive, for that would be using the greatest power of the Spirit for our personal advantage.

This may however be the best thing that we can do at the time. Indeed, it is a great achievement for a beginner to refrain from retaliating, and to send forth love in return for injury, even though he does so in self-defense.

We should aim however at a higher love than that applied in self-interest; we should send our love and pour out our soul in order that our enemy may be blessed. What one might term metaphysical love - that is, love used as a weapon of defense or to achieve certain ends - is really a counterfeit of the real love (agapé) which is the Divine nature poured forth.

When however we can love and bless our enemy with all the power of our deepest soul nature, desiring

above everything that he should be blessed in every possible way, according to heavenly standards, and also desiring no benefit for ourselves, it is then that our love becomes like unto the love of Him who poured out His soul unto death.

And the same thing applies to our competitors. It is usual to look upon them as enemies and to do everything possible to hinder and thwart them. But when competitors arrive on the scene, the first thing we should do is to pray for their success, and to bless their undertaking. We should next call upon them and wish them every success. And finally, we should always speak well of them whenever their names are mentioned.

Jesus taught the secret of successful and harmonious living, which was to deal with every situation and experience in a spirit of love and co-operation. If everyone were to do this, we should have heavenly conditions almost at once; but alas, only too often we act, not according to the Jesus way of life, but rather to the worldly way of self-interest and opposition. Instead of loving and co-operating with each situation as it arises, we either try to avoid it or else fight against it. Or we might even pray to have it removed.

But the right thing to do is to welcome and co-operate with each experience as it arises, and to bless it. Father J. P. Caussade says (in his book Abandonment) that the secret of sanctification is to do willingly those duties which we would be compelled by life in any event to do. By this he means that we should have to pass through the experiences in any case, and that if we cooperate with them we become sanctified whereas, if we do not cooperate, we gain nothing from what we endure. How true it is that we have nothing to

fear if we surrender and abandon ourselves to the will of God - if we cooperate with life instead of fighting against it or trying to avoid its disciplines!

Loving co-operation, so I have found, is the great secret.

When passing through times of almost incredible difficulty and complication, I have found that by co-operating with the experience and doing the best that I could with it, and being as faithful as possible in a practical way, looking to God to bring about an adjustment in His own way and at His own time, God has in every case brought me victoriously through. And not only so, but I have been advanced in spiritual understanding and considerably strengthened and developed by having had to pass through the experience; or rather I should say that it has been through acceptance, and co-operation that the experience which - if opposed would have been most hurtful - has been turned into a blessed means of spiritual quickening and advancement. But by co-operation and acceptance I do not mean resignation. When I was young it was believed that God sent disease and sickness and other negative ills and that, if we gave into them, then that was doing God's will. This was called being resigned - by which it was meant that we were resigned to, and prepared for, the worst.

That, so it seems to me, was all wrong: Divine Love does not send disease or other negative conditions. It means that we have got hold of, or have sunk down into, an inversion of the real and true. A sinner is a kind of inverted saint.

When however he is converted or turned round, he may grow into a saint because he will then be growing and developing in the right direction.

Thus, when we co-operate with an experience we do

not become resigned to the worst, but instead accept it in order to work through it and overcome it. For instance, if we meet with insult and injury, hatred and violence, we know that it is all due to lack of love, and that it is really an inversion of love. Consequently we apply love to the situation, thus turning disharmony and disorder into harmony and order.

From this it is easy to see that love is always the key to every situation in life.

God is Love, and God is All. We live and move and have our being in God, therefore we are immersed in Love even as a fish is immersed in the sea. The vibrations of Divine Love impinge upon us and would penetrate through us if we were not insulated against them. This insulation of separation and selfishness, however, wears thinner if we ourselves make use of the love which gives itself (looking for no reward) to the world. Also, active love and adoration towards God are equally efficient in wearing away and dissolving the insulation which separates us from Him.

From this we see how vital is the teaching of Jesus in emphasizing the two commandments that we should love the Lord our God with all our mind and strength, and our neighbour even as we do ourselves. Through following these commandments we enter into Divine union; we are in God and God is in us. Actually God has been in us all the time, for we could never have any desire to seek God if it were not for the fact that there is That in us which corresponds to God and is of the same nature, for only God can know God. Of ourselves we can do nothing and are nothing.

It is the Spirit of God in us who knows God.
God immanent gazes face to face with God
transcendent.

The Son has returned to his Father, saying:
I and my Father are one.
God, our Centre and Source.

When I wrote these words I thought that they were original and that it was a very daring thing to write, but now I find that the same thing was said much better by Hans Denck in 1542. In *The Luminous Trail*, by Rufus Jones (Macmillan, New York), we are told that Denck in one of his little books which is preserved in the University of Marburg, wrote:

'Apart from God, no one can either seek or find God, for he who seeks God already in truth has Him.'

Dr. Jones adds the oft-quoted saying of Pascal: 'Thou wouldst not be seeking God if thou hadst not already found Him.' It gave me a thrill when I read this, for it shewed me that there always have been those who have realized this great truth, and that even as the Wise Man said, 'there is nothing new under the sun'.

Of course, it is useless for us to send our love to all mankind, if we do not also put love into practice in our dealings with our fellow men - indeed, we do ourselves great harm if we do not practice what we preach. But sending our love to all mankind makes it much easier for us to act in a loving way in the common affairs of everyday life. If we pray for a certain person that he should be blessed in every possible way, then we find. that we want to do him the greatest possible

amount of good. Also, if in a moment of forgetfulness, we act outside love, we feel very miserable until we have confessed our error to the one we have hurt and made amends for it. Thus we prove that if we have love (and act in love) we have everything; whereas if we act without love we lose everything and become 'as the heath in the desert'. The way of love is not all loss and sacrifice, and by that I mean that we do not give our love in vain, although at the time it may appear to be so, and we must be willing that it should be so.

Rufus Moseley tells of the love of a woman who took upon herself the care and upkeep of her sister's five orphan children, in spite of the fact that she herself was almost sick unto death. He writes: 'Her love and her will to live enabled the God of love and life to lift her up and to make her well. She did magnificently by the five children and in doing so opened the way for almost unbelievable blessings to come to her.' Then Moseley adds that there are no investments like those of pure love and mercy. It is when we look for no reward and expect no return that it is then possible for the richest blessings of Heaven to come to us.

21 INTERIOR RESPIRATION

With each Divine impulse the mind (soul) rends the thin rind of the visible and finite; and comes out into eternity, and inspires and expires its air. It converses with truths that have always been spoken in the world.

-Emerson: *'The Over-Soul.'*

I use the term 'interior respiration' to indicate a type of inner breathing by the soul, as distinct from ordinary breathing by the lungs.

For the greater part of my life I was quite unaware that there was such a thing as interior respiration. No religious teacher had ever hinted at it, neither did I find it mentioned in books. That for which I never sought came to me in due course of its own volition. On looking back, it seems to me that I became aware of interior respiration as a result of practicing interior prayer, and also that it followed the deep rhythmic breathing which came to me about the same time.

The same law operates both in nature and throughout our spiritual life; indeed, our spiritual unfoldment is similar to the growth of a plant and the unfoldment of a flower, and if we observe the unfoldment of a rose bud (for instance) we see the orderliness of the process. There is no hurry or fuss, yet everything comes to pass at the right time, and each stage of unfoldment takes place in its proper order and sequence. So it is with our spiritual unfoldment; it proceeds with perfect order, each stage being reached in its right sequence, and in due course - if we are patient - all stages will be reached. In my own case these successive stages were not clearly defined, and three stages appear to be

somewhat merged and Intermixed. Never having kept a diary, I must rely on memory alone, but as far as I can remember it began in this fashion. First of all I noticed a sense of life and power in the region of the solar plexus and 'within you is the power' became a real experience so that I could feel the Power.

After this came the deep, rhythmic breathing in which my physical respiration seemed to be 'caught up' and conformed to the Hidden Life. It seemed to me as though there was a deeper breathing going on all the time, but that we humans were not in accord with it. Suddenly, as a result of contemplation, the two breathings seemed to merge into one, and I found myself inhaling and exhaling in rhythm with the breath of Hidden Life. I found my breath becoming deeper and deeper, so that I was led to say:

Interiorly, my life has infinite extensions
Beyond time and space.

All this is mixed up in my memory with the discovery of God's Inward Peace. It seems to me now that it was when I found God's Inward Peace flowing through me like a river, that I became aware of my real life having infinite extensions beyond time and space. It seems to me now that practicing inward prayer had something to do with my discovery of the Hidden Life. Praying inwardly in time with the beating of the heart, and the breathing of the lungs, is a very potent practice and must surely have a considerable influence upon one's spiritual progress. I do not recommend others to practice interior prayer, but I have to record the fact that I have done so myself.

After a time I began to notice something else which is much more difficult to describe. I became

conscious deep down within my being that I belonged to a larger world which was also a world of finer texture. It was certainly not the world of departed spirits, but the world of true substance -the world of Reality. This was the world in which my soul functioned. But I realized by intuition that my soul life could be greatly strengthened by conscious co-operation on my part. I realized that deep down within me I could make my soul breathe the finer ethers of a most inward life, and in the same way that the inward peace which I had previously experienced was the same peace which God Himself enjoys, so also the finer ethers which my soul was able to breathe were indeed the very breath of God.

Now when I discovered that I could recognize this inward respiration by the soul, and encourage it by co-operating with it, I hesitated doing anything about it, for here was a vast new field, uncharted and unexplored, of which I was entirely ignorant. Neither did anyone else apparently know anything about it. St. Paul speaks only once of contacting what he described as the 'third heaven', but in order to do this he had to leave his body and go to another place. But as Jesus said, we do not have to go anywhere: 'Neither shall they say, lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.' It is true that Swedenborg was said to have practiced interior respiration, which was followed by what he termed 'open vision', so that like William Blake he could see angels and denizens of other planes and converse with them. But my experience was entirely different from either St. Paul's or Swedenborg's. I did not leave my body, neither did I have open vision on other planes; but inwardly I knew that my soul inhabited Eternity and that my life was as deep as the Universe. This experience

was quite big enough for me: I had discovered that interiorly I was a denizen of a great uncharted (by me) country. But I knew of no one who could give me any information so I hesitated to go forward, preferring to wait. There is an old adage amongst those who try to live by faith and who are content to be guided by the Spirit, that 'when in doubt, wait'. So I waited.

I have already said that the practice of inward prayer was a preparation for interior respiration; this applied particularly to the prayer of thanksgiving and praise. As I prayed 'I thank Thee, I thank Thee, I thank Thee', especially while I exhaled -- completely emptying my lungs -- consciousness of my interior life became extended. We have to make a practice of looking within, for if we do so we find all that we need. We find a new life and a new world - or so it appears to us. In the words of the parable, it is the home-coming of the prodigal son. Long have we wandered in the wilderness of duality, separate and apparently alone; now at long last we have returned to our Father's home. We have discovered our true identity; we have discovered that we are our Father's son and heir.

'Beloved, now are we the Sons of God.' As we look within we realize that it is our soul which breathes the breath of God. Our soul is infinitely deeper than our surface self, but it has been starved through lack of attention - now we can encourage it to breathe the finer ethers of the Hidden Life.

Our soul is not something separate. We speak of our soul and of our spirit, but they are not separate entities: in spite of our various parts, we are complete unified beings, yet what we are at the Centre cannot be defined; in other words, we

cannot say what we truly are, we can only say what we are not. We can say:

I am not this body
I am not this mind
I am not this soul
I am not this spirit

But that is as far as we can get, for what we truly are can no more be defined than God can be defined; indeed, as soon as we try to say what God is we lose Him, for the God whom we define is merely a creation of the human mind. God is beyond all human thought and imagination, and that is why the mystic in his approach to God has to cast aside all his knowledge about God; all that he has learned he has to exfoliate, like a tree in autumn. It is only when we have cast aside everything and have come to nothing that we find everything - God.

Finding God's inward peace is indeed a most wonderful experience, as also is the deep inward breathing which comes to us of its own volition; but neither is sufficient in itself, nor are the two combined sufficient. There is something else needed: we have to co-operate and begin the interior respiration of the soul and this has to be a conscious act on our part. This can be illustrated in the following simple way.

On the way of my office hangs a clock which has a long pendulum. When I forget to wind it, it stops; then seeing that it has stopped, I wind it and set the hands to the right time. But something else is needed - that is that I must start the pendulum swinging. Without such help the clock cannot function, but with it it can carry on for another long period. It is much the same with the soul.

Everything that is necessary is ready - with the exception of giving the final impulse. And it seems that the choice is left to us as to whether we let the soul remain quiescent or give it attention and co-operate with it, thus starting interior respiration.

One may often wonder where this new development may lead. It is early yet to forecast, but I am convinced that it can lead to nothing psychic (against which the saints have warned us, such as visions, lights, converse with angels and - so on), but rather to a deeper understanding of God and a closer union with Him. Also, although it makes us know in a way and to a degree never before experienced that we are immortals, yet it will never lead to physical immortality.

Jesus did not promise physical immortality, but He certainly said that some would not see death. This has puzzled the saints of all ages. What did He mean by this remarkable statement? I think that Jesus meant that with some, their physical body would be transmuted so that they would be translated even as Enoch was. 'Enoch walked with God: and was not; for God took him.' (Genesis 5:24.) We also read in Hebrews II:5, 'By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him..

Translation is very different from physical immortality.

It is promotion to celestial realms with a body of like nature and substance in which to function, but whether anyone now living in a physical body will be changed in such a fashion it is impossible to say. It is said of some that their bodies emit light which streams from every pore, and in such cases it is evident that 'the Light that is in every man coming into the world' is making

progress.

It seems to me that those who are living the life of regeneration are having built up within them a celestial or light body in which to function on higher planes, and that in some cases this has advanced to such an extent as to shine through the physical body so that those who are 'in tune' are able to see the light. It may be that interior respiration may have something to do with this building-up process; but it is not possible for anyone to say, neither do I think that we should speculate about it. Everything will come to pass at the right time. We pass from one stage of unfoldment to the next without struggle or strain in much the same way that a flower bud does not worry or strain itself by ill-advised efforts to unfold itself.

All that we can do is to place our spiritual unfoldment in the hands of God, and then He will bring everything to pass at the right time. The pace at which our unfoldment takes place will always be exactly right and as it should be; we need never worry because others seem to be more advanced than we are, neither should we be envious of those who seem to have experiences which we think we ought to have. The essential thing is that we should keep in living touch with our Divine Centre through frequent recollection, and through looking inward and practicing interior prayer of praise, adoration and thanksgiving. These seem to be the most important things which we can do -after which we can leave all other things to God.

22 PRACTISING THE PRESENCE

Most of us are familiar with the little book, *The Practice of the Presence of God*, which tells of the way of life of one Nicholas Herman of Lorraine who is more generally known as Brother Lawrence. He was a humble 17th century Carmelite lay-brother, a mere hewer of wood and drawer of water for those about him in the monastery. We are told that Brother Lawrence lived in an irreligious age, amid a sceptical people, yet he found God and lived his life in God, and found God within his own being.

So much so indeed that some who were much above him in his order, and also other orders, came to him to ask questions and be instructed.

Brother Lawrence's methods were simplicity itself. Instead of studying books of doctrine and theories about God, he started off with the assumption that God was everpresent with him, and therefore could be spoken to, and confided in, at all times. Thus he made direct contact with God, in utter childlike simplicity, from the very beginning. He had no theoretical difficulties; he simply took God for granted, as a child takes its parents for granted.

Some people believe that an extensive knowledge of the Bible is necessary. I have known people however who have been great students of Holy Writ who made a practice of reading it through from beginning to end, at least once a year, and yet they did not really know God, although no doubt they knew a lot about God, which is a very different matter. But Brother Lawrence did not know much about the Bible - at any rate, his little book shews no sign of any such knowledge.

(I remember once some years ago taking - copy of *The Practice of the Presence of God* with me to

read In the train, when visiting a friend. He noticed the book and expressed an interest in it, so I handed it to him. While I was engaged in visiting a sick relative, my friend read the book, or rather raced through it, and when I left by train a few hours later, he handed it back to me with the remark that he did not think much of it, because it was not scriptural ! Yet this lay-brother knew God; he knew God through constant prayer and intercourse with Him. Reading about God is not sufficient, even though it may be the Bible that we read. This is helpful up to a point, but we have to get beyond the stage of knowing about God - we have to have intercourse with God, and finally become one with Him.

Brother Lawrence did not think of God as being afar off in another place; instead he thought of Him as being with him amongst the pots and pans of the monastery scullery, and as much interested as he himself was in their efficient scouring and polishing. Now Brother Lawrence was what might be termed a natural saint through and through - he owed nothing to the schools; he had no teacher but the Holy Spirit. He was not converted in the ordinary way, for God dealt with him direct in the same way that He dealt with Saul of Tarsus, turning him into Paul the Apostle in a matter of seconds.

The following extract taken from the First Convergation in the book tells in a few words of the wonderful transformation wrought by the Holy Spirit in this unlearned kitchen menial:

He (Brother Lawrence) told me that God had done him a singular favour, in his conversion at the age of eighteen.

That in the winter, seeing a tree stripped of its leaves, and considering that within a little time,

the leaves would be renewed, and after that the flowers and fruit appear, he received a high view of the Providence and Power of God, which has never since been effaced from his soul. That this view had perfectly set him loose from the world, and kindled in him such a love for God, that he could not tell whether it had increased in above forty years that he had lived since.

There surely has never been a clearer case of direct action by the Holy Spirit than this! And it was all accomplished through Nature, not through ecclesiastical channels at all.

He looks at a tree in winter stripped of its leaves and behold, the miracle takes place. It was much the same with Jacob Boehme who one day in 1600 was 'sitting ...in his room when his eye fell upon a burnished pewter dish which reflected the sunshine with such marvellous splendour, that he fell into a deep inward ecstasy, and it seemed to him as if he could now look into the principles and deepest foundations of things'. Jacob was a humble and unlearned shoemaker; Brother Lawrence was a one-time soldier and footman.

Jesus called not learned people, but fishermen, to be His disciples and to carry on His work after He had ascended.

Now our lay-brother took God's immediate presence for granted; he made a practice of speaking direct to, and making a confidant of, Him. He believed that God was with him as an invisible presence, in whom he could confide at all times.

And this reminds me of a story told by that great man, the late F. B. Meyer. One day he was travelling in a tram when he noticed a sad-faced and tired woman sitting opposite to him. She told him that she was a widow, that she lived alone in one room, that she went out charring all day, and

that when she returned home at night, her room was in darkness, without fire or meal ready. And oh, how lonely and hopeless it all was. Mr. Meyer sympathized with the woman but, discovering that she was a follower of Jesus, he proposed that she should believe that He was in her room. He also suggested that she should reserve a chair for Him, believing that He was sitting in it. Then she was to speak to Him just as though His visible presence were with her: also she should tell Him all her troubles, and also all her hopes. At night, when she came home from work, she was to knock at the door, and say: ' Are you there, Lord Jesus?' In every way she was to act precisely as though He Were actually present.

The woman listened to all that Mr. Meyer had to say and determined to put his suggestions into practice. Some months afterwards they met again. But he did not recognize the former sad and unhappy woman, for she was transformed. She was now happy and radiant. She made herself known to him, and then told him all that had taken place since their first meeting. She had put his suggestions into practice with the result that she was no longer lonely, neither was she alone, for the presence of Jesus was always with her.

That was her way of practicing the presence of God which was not so very different from Brother Lawrence's.

Their methods were the same in principle, although differing in detail. Brother Lawrence found God amidst the pots and pans of the scullery in which he worked, while the woman found Jesus in her one-roomed home. Both were simple and unlettered people, neither of them spent their time in reading books about God: instead, they worked at their humble tasks and found God in the ordinary affairs of life. Neither would they have read

books on psychology (if such had been available in their respective times), yet what they practiced was based upon a great psychological law.

Brother Lawrence asked for God's help before beginning each task. Then when it was finished, he thanked God for having helped him to perform it perfectly. We can imagine how interested he became in the work which formerly he loathed and despised! God became very real to him and was always present with him, and this filled him with such joy and happiness that he had great difficulty in restraining himself from bursting into such exuberance as would have been an annoyance to those around him.

But after all, the practice of the presence of God as followed both by the charwoman and Brother Lawrence, is but the beginning of a wonderful adventure into Omnipresence.

First of all, it is as though a person were in the room with us -a loved friend, real although invisible. If we can realize this, it is indeed a great achievement, sufficient in itself to transform our life. When our life and all its actions become based upon a realization of this truth, it means goodbye to our inclination to sin, to worry, to fear, and to be selfish.

But as I say, such practices are only at the beginning of the great adventure into Omnipresence. We have to advance by stages, and we are brought to each stage in God's good time.

Let me cite a personal experience which has an indirect bearing on the subject. All my life I have been subject to heavy colds. In winter time, almost as soon as one cold has run its course, another would begin. This was very discouraging, for they continued in spite of all my attempts to overcome my weakness by means of what are called Nature Cure methods. Even after I had gained quite

a lot of benefit from right thinking and mental self-treatments, I still remained a victim. Now, when a cold was coming on I used to feel chilly and shivery and want to sit by a fire with much more clothing on than usual. I knew that this was all wrong, so one day I started imagining the very opposite of this. I saw myself mentally in the open air with the wind blowing on my body, the sun shining upon me, and rain - even hail and snow - falling on me. I imagined and felt myself to be one with the elements and welcomed all these forces of nature and co-operated with them. I noticed that after practicing this applied imagination for a time, I began to feel better, while the congestion of the cold seemed to grow less. But I had to repeat the practice many times before getting the better of the cold.

I relate this experience simply to shew how my experiment with Omnipresence began. In course of time, as I practiced this method, the realization came to me that the forces which played upon my body were part of the life of God. I recalled the words of St. Paul: 'In Him we live, and move, and have our being.' I had thought of these Nature forces as being apart from God; but gradually I began to realize that they are an outward manifestation of inward spiritual powers, and that that was why my imaginative exercise was helpful to me. I realized that the sunshine, the wind, the rain, were not merely beating on my body, but were entering and passing through it; or rather, the invisible forces and rays of Infinite Life which they represented, were doing so. Of Course, it was all done in my imagination; actually I did not stir from my chair while I experienced and felt the forces of Nature beating upon my body.

Later I used to say to myself: 'God is in this

room: His presence fills it.' Then I would try to realize that there was not a fraction of an inch space in the room which was not filled with the presence of God; then after realizing this I would add: 'His presence is Love.' Jesus said: 'God is Spirit' - which means the one universal Spirit in which we live, and from which everything proceeds. Spirit surrounds us like an atmosphere and penetrates us, just as wireless waves pass through concrete or brick walls.

All such creative work must of course be done in a state of relaxation. Somebody has said (I think it was Emerson) that the Absolute abides always in smiling repose - or words to that effect. Some learners (we are all learners) think that such a thought is discouraging, for what can such a God care about them - He, in smiling repose, while they are being so tried and troubled? It is however simply a matter of relaxation; if we relax sufficiently we can experience some measure of the same smiling repose, for what we suffer is due to our tenseness and resistance. We can experience the repose of the Absolute to the extent that we truly relax, and as soon as we do so we experience a feeling of deep peace, which shews that our mind has ceased its agitation and is working in correspondence with the Divine Mind.

All our work with the imagination must therefore be done while we are in a state of relaxation. In fact, I do not think that we can use our creative imagination at all without first relaxing. But when we do so completely, so that we lean back on the Everlasting Arms, we are then able to realize that the rays of the One Infinite Life are not merely impinging upon us, but are passing through us. The more relaxed we become, the more possible it becomes for us to realize that this is actually happening.

The effect of practicing the presence of God in all its various forms is that we become changed into His likeness.

Probably the luminosity which some people exhibit is due to the Spiritual Man within and the Celestial body which is being prepared for them to use, when they pass on to: Celestial planes. But at this stage, I must repeat that we should never practice negative passivity. When I say that: we should relax, I do not mean that we should become negatively passive - far from it. Although we relax, our mind still remains concentrated upon God; consequently, we are positive. Neither should we enter the Silence when we are in a negative condition, or when we are over-tired. We should always maintain a positive attitude.

It may be wondered what this about Brother Lawrence and others may have to do with my search for Truth. This much: like Brother Lawrence, I am of humble origin with hardly any education and like him I know nothing about theology or doctrine, but at certain times in my life God has come very close to me, and has raised me up into a higher state of consciousness. Now there is an all too common idea that we can only find God if we are learned and well-educated, capable of reading very difficult books about prayer. I thank God that this is not the case, and it is my hope that this book will bring encouragement to many, seeing that it is written by one who is neither learned nor clever, but who has nevertheless found a safe and happy anchorage at last. 'What God has done, God can do.' If God has been able to bring me through in spite of my ignorance and frailties, then He can do the same with anyone and everyone. Nothing is impossible with God.

Of course, I realize the value of culture; I realize that cultured people live a fuller and

richer intellectual life than those who are not. But the point which I wish to make is: it is not necessary to be highly educated or learned in order to know God. Indeed, in the last stage of our journey we have to cast aside an our intellectual knowledge about God, like a tree shedding its leaves in autumn. This process of exfoliation casts off everything that is not God, every atom of self, until there is nothing left. Then, when we have succeeded in casting off everything and have reached nothing - we find Everything! This is indeed a great paradox.

**STANDING FOR EVER IN THE DIVINE LIGHT
AND RADIANCE AND GLORY**

JESUS said: 'I am the Light of the world: he that cometh after Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of life.' In the same way that the sun lights up the outer world, so also does the LORD, or I AM, supply that supernal Light which never was on sea or land.

Interiorly, we are children of the Light. In our true inward essence we belong to the World of Light, and it is possible for us to stand in the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory.

In the Fourth Gospel we read: 'In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God. ...In Him was life; and the life was the Light of men. ..That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.'

We are also told that the Light shineth in darkness, but that the darkness has failed to absorb or master the Light.

The Light, we are told, is in every man but it is hidden in darkness. Man, until he becomes spiritually awakened, is unaware of the fact that the Light is within him. It is as though he had a lamp inside him, but that it is covered by various wrappings of selfishness and worldly desire, so that no light can escape from it.

But in due course the Spirit of God gets to work in him, and the process of unwrapping the lamp within begins.

When once we have started out on the life of regeneration, every experience which comes to us is so designed as to make regeneration possible; and this means of course that the wrappings are being unwound from our inward lamp.

In course of time the wrappings may be so far removed as to allow a small amount of light to become visible. In place of complete darkness there then reigns a dim twilight.

The process continues over the years, during which more and yet more wrappings are removed until at last our whole body becomes full of light.

However, this in itself is not sufficient; God is not only immanent, He is also transcendent. We are not only able to find the Inner Light, we are also able to rise into the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory.

I have found this out for myself, or rather it has come to me like the dawn of a lovely spring morning after a dark and troubled night. It is all the work of the Spirit who brings everything to pass just at the right time. It is not the result of studying any theory or doctrine, but is the fruit of experience.

First of all I had to discover the Power within - not the power of the finite self or ego-hood, but the Power of the One Life or Infinite Spirit. This led to the release of the Inner Light or Imprisoned Splendour. It was after being quickened by the One Spirit in this way that I found it possible to rise into the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory.

St. Paul said that he once knew a man (probably himself) who left his body and entered the third heaven. He also said that when we are present in this material body we are absent from the Lord, and that when we are absent from this material body we are present with the Lord. I must confess that I have not yet been able to confirm this statement. I find that it is possible to be present with the Lord in an interior way while still in the body, and that no act of dissociation is necessary.

It is true that in the past I have known people who claimed that they had been absent from the body for as long as three days, and I believed them; but I could not see that they were any the better for such an experience. Indeed, if I were to find myself becoming dissociated, I should quickly pull myself up and interest myself in the practical, mundane affairs of life instead. No, what I term 'rising into the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory' is simply an act of pure contemplation.

When once we have mastered it it is almost as easy as looking out of the window. It is formless contemplation, for we are past all forms and have become lost in the Divine Light and Glory.

It is not the result of willed effort, but is an act of relaxation. I think however that the practice of interior respiration is a necessary preparation for such contemplation.

We cannot of course rise into the Divine Light if we are not attuned to the interior Divine order. We know, however, when we have reached a state of attunement, for directly we reach that state we experience a blissful sense of peace. This inward peace is God's peace which He shares with us, so that the peace which we experience is the same peace which God Himself enjoys.

If anything occurs in our life which robs us of our inward peace, then the first thing for us to do is to remove whatever is the cause of the disturbance. It would be useless for us to attempt to rise into the Divine glory if inwardly we were not in a state of harmony and peace. As Jesus said: 'First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.' Therefore the first thing to be done, so my own experience has taught me, is to find God's inward peace. After this has been accomplished, it becomes possible to rise

into the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory. I have not always realized the supreme importance of this high and pure contemplation. For too long I concentrated, on the roots part of the spiritual life. Our life, if it is to prosper, must have its roots deeply embedded in God; if it is not so rooted, then it will dry up and wither away.

Therefore it is of the first importance that the roots of our life should be in God, so that we draw from Him infinite nourishment and strength. But having established such rootage deep down in the depths of our being, it is necessary that we should grow upward and extend our branches into the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory.

The law of the spiritual life is the same as that of the natural life: indeed, the same law extends through all planes. A seed is sown in the ground after which certain changes take place. First of all, as a seed, it begins to disintegrate and die. But its potential life now starts manifesting: it shoots downwards to form a root, and also upwards to form a stem. After this has taken place, development proceeds in both direction, downwards to form more rootage, and upwards to bring forth branches and leaves.

Development proceeds downwards in the dark and upwards in the light and sunshine.

It is the same with our spiritual life. We are brought by the Spirit to that point where our self-sufficiency begins to break down and disintegrate; then after many experiences we find at last that we possess a new life - a life whose roots are in God. We cannot however stop at this point. Having established our rootage in the One Life, we have to look upwards towards the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory.

Or to put it in other words: it is not sufficient that we learn to meditate and practice it; the

time has arrived for us to learn to practice the art of contemplation.

In meditation, we close our eyes and look within, ever more deeply, until we reach the point where our life merges into the life of God, In contemplation, also with closed eyes, we look upwards until the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory flood our consciousness: we become bathed in it and permeated by it; we also become one with it.

'The light of the body is the eye, said Jesus, 'if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.' When we with closed eyes look upwards, our spiritual eye begins to function with the result that our whole being, including our body, becomes filled with Divine Light.

Such contemplation is not a thing in itself, or by itself; it is the cumulative result of many things. First, there is the looking deeply within until we realize that the roots of our life are in God; then there is the deep breathing which comes to us as the result of such realizing; next, there is the interior respiration of the soul, breathing 'the sweet ethers blowing of the breath of God'. These are accomplished by a complete relaxation - a perfect resting in the Love of God - which is like floating out on to the ocean of God' s peace, while at the same time God' s peace flows through us like a river.

Finally, as a crowning result of all these, we find that we have entered into the glorious liberty of the children of God, that we have become filled with all the fullness of God and raised into the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory. We have found the Ineffable because something has been opened within us that is of the same nature as the Ineffable. It is nothing of our own; it does not belong to the egohood at all. It

is entirely of God.

It has been said that only God can know God. We (that is, the self-hood) cannot know God, but there has been planted within us by God something that is part of Himself.

It is this which is able to know the Ineffable, and stand forever in the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory.

We see the same law operative in nature. An acorn does not create within itself a potential oak tree. This is inherent in it and is according to the mind of the Creator. All that the acorn has to do is to co-operate with forces within itself and also with forces outside itself - then in due course it becomes an oak tree, a true replica of its progenitor.

I am writing this because I do not wish it to be thought that our self-hood is in any way self-sufficient. What I want to emphasize is the fact that we, as far as the self-hood is concerned, are nothing and that God is everything. It is only because God is, that I am. Without God I am nothing; not even a memory. God is all and in all. Now although the process of regeneration is all the work of the Spirit, yet we have to do our part - which is to co-operate with the experiences which come to us, and also to watch and pray. Then when we are ready we are raised to the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory. The extreme importance of contemplation is seen at once when we remember that we become changed into the likeness of that which we contemplate. If indeed there is a royal road to final attainment, then this is surely it. The extent of our contemplation of the Divine Light and Glory becomes the measure of our transformation into its likeness. In the last stage of regeneration we are found to be a likeness and image of our Divine archetype. This

is attained to, not through personal effort, but through contemplation. Of course we have to cooperate with the experiences which may come to us. We may be maligned, misrepresented and even persecuted by those who do not understand, and who may think that they are doing God 's will by attacking us. But instead of justifying ourselves, we make no defense: we turn the other cheek; we go the other mile. Such experiences when borne with meekness and co-operated with instead of resisted, draw us nearer to God and help to break down the hard shell of egoism which separates us from full union with God.

How much experience we may unconsciously avoid through contemplation I know not, but I should think that it is considerable. By this I mean that if we practice contemplation we may attain to a certain extent without the necessity of having to learn through practical experience. The object of practical experience through trial and suffering is simply that we should be changed into the Divine likeness.

As the effect of contemplation is that we become transformed into the likeness of That which we contemplate, it would appear that the more we practice it the less we have to learn through experience.

In case this may sound too simple and easy, let me say at once that contemplation is the most difficult to master of all the spiritual arts. As already stated, it is the accumulated result of many things. Before it can be practiced, everything leading up to it has to be just right. Everything, from the deepest depths of our being to the highest supernal heights, has to be in a state of perfect functioning and also has to be in complete harmony with everything else.

Consequently the least thing can upset our

contemplation and make it quite impossible of achievement. If we are emotionally upset, then no matter how much we may try, all our effort will be in vain. One wrong thought may spoil everything; also bad news, worry, a feeling of hurt or grievance - any of these may make the act of contemplation impossible.

If or when any of these things happens, what we first have to do is to find out what is wrong, after which we set about putting it right. By this I mean that if we have been invaded by a certain fear, then we must overcome the fear; if we have a worry we must master it by concentrating on certain scriptural texts or other statements of Truth. Whatever it may be we make use of Truth until we find again God's peace, after which we can generally re-start our contemplation. Then we ought to find that from the deepest depths of our being, right up to the summits of Divine Glory, all is completely free and deliciously harmonious. We realize that our life has its roots in God, and also that it has infinite extensions beyond time and space. What, however, is achieved by contemplation? St. Paul supplies the answer, I think, in the following words:

'But we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

From this we see that while we contemplate the glory of the Lord, the Spirit of the Lord changes us into the same image, from glory to glory. It is all the work of the Spirit. All that we have to do is to contemplate.

But our contemplation is not formed contemplation. Some people concentrate on pictures (mental or

otherwise) of Jesus or one of the saints, and call it contemplation. But they are merely using the human mind and not the super-conscious mind at all. Real contemplation regards not the form, but the glory of the Lord. We enter into the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory and then in turn we become filled with the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory, the result of which is that it changes us into Its own likeness.

Such contemplation is possible only through the use of the superconscious mind. This is the mind of discernment, the mind which knows the deep things of God by direct knowing and not through the intellect at all, and often in spite of it. This mind is called by some the mind of Christ. St. Paul said, 'But we have the mind of Christ'; he also said that spiritual things could only be spiritually discerned, and that the carnal mind was incapable of understanding or grasping the things of the Spirit.

What all this means is that an upper mind -- call it superconscious, Christ or Buddhic, as you will - is opened up and begins to function. This mind knows by direct knowing the deep things of God - the great spiritual truths of the Real Man, created in the image and likeness of Elohim.

This mind of Christ in us is used when we contemplate. We become, so to speak, lost in the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory while at the same time It fills us, so that our physical body becomes a veil, covering It from the vulgar eye. The consequence of this is that there is formed in us a body of light substance which is indestructible and in which we can function on Celestial or Light planes. Without another body we should, after leaving our physical body, be merely disembodied spirits. Not having a body of light substance, we should be unable to function on the

planes of Celestial Light.

Jesus illustrated this in the parable of the marriage of the king's son. When the king came to look at his guests he found one who was not wearing a wedding garment. So the man had to leave, for he was not 'clothed upon' with a garment suitable for such company.

The effect of standing in the Divine Light, Radiance and Glory is the formation in us of a body which is made of that same Light, Radiance and Glory. St. Paul suggests that our material body becomes changed or transmuted in the process. Be this as it may, it is a fact that those who are much given to prayer and communion with God have a light and bright and semi-translucent appearance. With some it is as though light streamed from every pore. In comparison ordinary unawakened and unillumined people look dull and opaque; it is as though a shadow rested upon them. The light is in them, but it shineth in darkness; their time of awakening is not yet come.

Very pertinent are the words of St. Paul in 2 Cor.5 when he says: 'For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' By this 'earthly house' or tabernacle St. Paul means our material body; by 'a building of God' he means our body of Light, or Celestial body, which is eternal and which will enable us to function on Heavenly or Celestial planes. This Celestial or Light body which has been built up within us over the years is of God; it is not material, and does not belong to the earth plane, but is of the same substance as the Realms of Light in which God dwells.

St. Paul goes on to say that in this material body we groan, desiring to be delivered from its restrictions so that we can be clothed upon with

our Celestial body, and thus live in Celestial Realms. In this case, St. Paul describes our Light body as from Heaven. First of all he says that it is from God; then he says that it is from Heaven. Both, of course, mean the same thing. He then proceeds to explain that we need a Celestial or Heavenly body, so that when our material body is dissolved we shall not be found naked - meaning by this that we need a body in which to function on higher planes (in much the same way that we have a material body now in order to function on this earth plane).

He adds further that although we groan in this material body we do so - not in order to be unclothed - but rather to be clothed upon by our Heavenly body, so that mortality is swallowed up of Life. People sigh to be delivered from this life and its trials.

They would like to leave this body for good and pass on to Realms of Bliss. But if they were to do so they would be insufficiently clothed, and therefore would not be ready to function on Heavenly planes. No, we have to stay here until we are ready and until our 'house not made with hands' is ready. Then when this is accomplished, and the right hour has come, we can make a happy transition.

In the case of those who pass on prematurely, we can be quite sure that God who is Infinite Love has made provision for them so that they can make progress and development by stages. All who love God and their neighbour and who are followers of Jesus will find a Heaven exactly suited to their stage of development, and be possessed of a body to correspond. St. Paul speaks of being raised to the third Heaven from which we see that there are various grades, one of which will suit our need exactly. St. Paul speaks of three Heavens, but

there are probably more, for seven is the complete Heavenly number. All who love the Lord will find a place in one of them which will suit them exactly; and as they grow and develop they will pass, when ready, to the next Heaven above them. And so they will proceed until they reach the highest Heaven of all.

It is the same with children. Provision is made for them; indeed, I feel convinced that many of them are advanced souls who come to earth for a brief time in order to accomplish a work which they alone could do. Then when this work is completed they go back to Heaven, taking our heart with them. I am quite convinced of this, that everything is far better than we think it is, or could possibly imagine it to be. I am also equally convinced of the reality and nearness of Heaven: Heaven is all round about us and Heavenly influences are always ministering to us. We realize how true were the words of St. Paul: 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.'

Some may feel disappointed because their material body continues to grow visibly older. There have always been those who have hoped and expected that their physical body would grow younger, and thus make it possible for them to live on this earth plane for ever - yet they have all died in the ordinary way.

It is not the physical body that is renewed, but the inner one, As St. Paul said: 'Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day,' What probably has misled some people into believing in possible physical immortality

has been the fact that there is a higher order than man, There is a race or order of Immortals. An Immortal is one who can appear and function on any plane at will; he is able to do this simply by changing the rate of vibration of his body. He has mastery on all planes and is able to adapt his body to each and all of them, Also he can enter and leave a locked and barred room. We have a supreme example of this in the risen Jesus and His appearance to the apostles, as related in Luke 24, and also in John 20. In order that they should be convinced that He was not a spirit, but that His body was solid and real, Jesus said: 'Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have'. Then He clinched the whole matter by eating some solid food, In spite of this solidity, Jesus went and came by dematerializing His body in one place, and materializing it in another. He simply vanished from one place and suddenly appeared in another. In the Epistles to the Hebrews we are told that Jesus having 'learnt obedience through the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation un to all them that obey Him; called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec'. The order of Melchisedec is an order of Immortals. But this is far beyond us, so we need not discuss the matter. Sufficient for us to know that we possess an 'inner body' with which to function on Heavenly planes whenever we are ready to do so.

And so we come to the end of this book.

I would like to conclude with a prayer that you, dear reader, may be raised by the Spirit to higher things: that you may enter the glorious liberty of the children of God, and that you may stand for ever in the Divine Light and Radiance and Glory.

24 EPILOGUE

Now that we have together come to the end of the story of my search for Truth, and as by the time these pages appear in print I shall by the grace of God be in my eightieth year, it seems both desirable and fitting that I should say something in appreciation of those whose most faithful and loyal cooperation have not only made this book possible, but have also been responsible for whatever may have been achieved in my life.

I would like to say something more in grateful appreciation of my dear wife who for fifty years has been a strong supporting and steadying influence in all my endeavours.

Our married life has been full of changes and upsets, for no sooner had I become settled in one calling or occupation than I would leave it for another. In the face of all these trying vicissitudes, each one of which involved beginning life all over again, my wife always rose to the occasion both cheerfully and heroically. She could always be relied upon to back me up, no matter how wild and hopeless my many changes and experiments might seem to have been. Without her unfailing encouragement and unconquerable optimism I should have accomplished nothing. Together we learnt the saving grace of laughter. When all things would appear to be going wrong at once, we could always sit down and have a hearty laugh! This restored our sanity. It is because of this that I believe Heaven to be a place of laughter - 'the happy laughter of ransomed souls', as someone has expressed it.

This work, called for lack of a better term, Science of Thought, had to be started alone. I did not know a single person who was in sympathy or

who knew anything about the power of thought or the power within. It was indeed a lonely furrow that I had to plough. However, soon after The Science of Thought Review was started and became known in America, it attracted the attention of Henry Victor Morgan of Tacoma, Washington. He has told me that directly he had read an article of mine he realized that he had found a kindred spirit. In like manner, directly I had read some of Henry's articles and poems I too recognized in him a fellow-traveller on the journey through life.

Ever since then he and I have remained fast friends, although we have only met on those two or three rare occasions when he visited this country. On his first visit Henry was accompanied by his wife, a most gracious and spiritually-minded lady, who charmed us all. Soon afterwards, however, she departed to Higher Realms and we all felt that earth was the poorer for her passing. A few years after the starting of our magazine, Richard Whitwell came upon the scene. He, although English, was brought along and introduced by an American, Pat Helling by name, who was over here on a visit. I had never heard of either of them until they arrived, but ever since then we have been firm friends and Richard has been a regular contributor to our pages. His love and spiritual support have been a great help and encouragement through difficult times. Also that of his wife, Alice, who is the author of that charming book for children, Adventures in Wonderwood.

John Moreton, editor of The Rally, a little magazine now called The Healing Messenger, has also been a great help and most faithful friend over the years. Back in the early days he was one of my students, but he has since branched out on his own lines. He has always proved himself to be

a real friend and brother.

After him came Derek Neville, poet and freelance journalist. He too has been most helpful and steadfast, and a much-valued contributor to The Science of Thought Review.

There are others whom I would like to mention - Kate Simmons, for one, who supplies that intellectual element which I lack. She also has been a faithful, supporter over the years. Then there are the helpers in the Office who have laboured so faithful and so long --- some over thirty years. I would like to pay tribute to their most valuable services and most helpful co-operation, without which very little could have been achieved.