



I SPEAKS

Within each one of us there is a Presence, a something more real than anything we can know, with a vision beyond our vision. This it is that is living our life for us. Too often, however, because we are not aware of this Presence, we are determined to live our own life: to make our own decisions and to rely on our personal wisdom, judgment, or strength; but that is only because we have not yet come into the actual experience of This that is within us.

Before this Presence makes Itself known to us, there usually comes a period in which we recognize that It exists. On the metaphysical and sometimes on the spiritual path, the student can believe this only because it is told to him by a teacher who has experienced It or because in the scriptural writings of the world he has read that It exists.

In one way or another, regardless of how It is brought to our attention, there must come an awareness that there is a

Presence within, a He that is greater than he that is in the world, a Spirit. With this knowledge comes the continuous recognition that It abides within us, that It walks beside us, that It is our vision, our guidance, and our direction. There must be an abiding in that truth until the experience comes to our conscious awareness. When It does, It speaks very much as we might imagine the Master speaking: "Fear not, *I* am with you. *I* will never leave you nor forsake you.¹ *I* will be with you to the end of the world."² It often speaks in the word *I*: "It is *I*; be not afraid,³" and It continually brings to our awareness the fact that we are not walking the earth alone.

THE TREE INCLUDES ITS BRANCHES

Sometimes we feel that when we acknowledge God in us, or the Christ indwelling, we are indulging duality or twoness, but this is not true. It cannot be explained logically any more than God can be explained, but the truth is that this *I* within us, this presence of God, does not make for duality because It is actually the Self of our being—not only the Self of my being but also the Self of your being.

This Self and you are one, but It is greater than you. Can you not see that what is invisible, the source of your inspiration, the source of your life, the cause and the creative principle of your life, even though you are one with It, is greater than you? It is greater in the same sense that we speak of the branch of a tree and the tree as if they were two, but a branch

of a tree and a tree are not two: they are one, one tree, and the tree includes the branch.

So God includes individual being, just as the whole tree includes the branches. There is no such thing as the life of a tree and the life of a branch of the tree. The life of the tree is the life of the branch as long as they are one, but from the moment the branch is severed from the tree that life withers.

So the human being who sees himself separate and apart from God is withering, going toward his threescore years and ten, a few years less or a few years more. But everyone must learn that there are adjustments that take place in the life of every individual as this thing called time goes on. He must realize that he will not always have his friends, relatives, parents, or children, because in the human scheme of life, where the human being lives as a branch separate from the tree, there is birth and there is death, and the very birth itself is the forerunner of the death that is to come.

There is only one way in which this can be overcome, and that is to realize that since we are a branch of the Tree, one with the Tree, we have no branch-life, no life that has a beginning, no life that has an ending. We have the infinite and eternal life of the whole Tree. Because of our relationship to the Tree, a branch that is one with the Tree, we have no personal responsibility, no personal life. We have the life which is God. A branch could say, "I and the tree are one, but the tree is greater than I." So we can say, "I am one with the life which is God, yet the life which is God is greater than

any of Its branches. It is even greater than the sum total of all Its branches.”

REESTABLISHING OUR UNITY WITH THE TREE OF LIFE

To bring this relationship into active expression in our lives, there must be a specific act. When the Prodigal realized his situation as separate and apart from his father, when he realized to what a state his desire to be something of himself had brought him, he got up and started the journey back to his father's house. He did not continue sitting there; he got up and started back.

There comes a moment in our lives when we realize that we have lived as human beings cut off from our source. We have been the branch separate and apart from the Tree of Life. When we realize that, we perform an act. This act is described in scripture as “repent, and turn yourselves.” It is an act in which we consciously make an about-face and declare:

I have been living separate and apart from God; I have been living the life of a human being, living by bread, water, and air; I have been living by external means. Now I return to the Father's house, and I realize consciously that from now on I am fed from the eternal spring that is within me. I am fed by the bread of life, the staff of life which I am. I draw from within, from my Father's storehouse.

RECOGNIZE Me

As we abide in this truth, there comes an experience. It may come with an assurance from within:

I have never left you. I have never been separate or apart from you. I have walked with you every step of the way, awaiting your recognition. Long have I awaited you; long have I awaited your awakening; long have I awaited your return; long have I awaited your recognition. Look within, and find Me, for I am within you. I am the very fabric, the very source of your life.

The headaches you have known, the problems you have suffered—all these have been only because of this sense of separation which has kept your gaze on the outer realm, instead of compelling you to turn it within where I am to be found. I am to be found within your consciousness, within your awareness. I am to be found in quietness, in stillness, in confidence.

Be not afraid; be not afraid; it is I. I, the I that is speaking to you, is the I of that army that is marching against you. The I that is your abiding place, your dwelling place, is the I of the being of your friends and of your foes. I dwell in you, and I dwell in them. As I dwell in you, so do I dwell in them and so do I dwell in all. In meeting friend and in meeting foe, you are meeting Me. Recognize Me in the midst of you. Then recognize Me in the midst of your friends, and recognize Me in the midst of your foes.

Recognize that there is but one divine Selfhood, one Father of all, and you will soon see that the only enemies you ever had

consisted of your own belief in a selfhood separate and apart from Me. Even if you recognize Me as your selfhood, you may still have thought of others as having some selfhood apart from Me. But I am your selfhood, and I am the selfhood of all those others.

I am your staff of life; I am your wisdom; I am your bread, your meat, your wine, and your water; but I am this to all men. I am this in the midst of your friends and your loved ones, and I am this in the midst of your foes.

Recognize Me in the midst of all, and then you will find that I am in all, and I greet you through all. I greet you through those you thought were your friends, and I greet you through those you thought were your enemies; for you can never be greeted by any other than I because I am infinite. I am infinite omnipresence; I am omnipotent omnipresence; I am the presence that stands within you, before you, beside you, behind you. I am that presence; therefore be not afraid, it is I. It is I.

I am not in the whirlwind, and therefore recognize that there is no power in a whirlwind. The only power there is, is in I, that I Am That I Am which is the life of your being, the life of your friend's being, the life of your enemy's being. I am the life of all being.

THE UNIVERSALITY AND OMNIPRESENCE OF THE PRESENCE

When this Presence announces Itself to you in an inner assurance that It is present, remember that this means not

only Its presence in you, but Its infinite omnipresence. It is not announcing that God is present in you, separate and apart from all others. It is announcing that this *I* is present in you, present in me, present in him, present in her, present in it. In other words, you cannot “finitize” God; you cannot channel God to be in one person or in one place. When you recognize the presence of God, you are recognizing the universal presence of God.

When, before you enter your automobile, you are given the assurance from within, “*I* am with you, and *I* go with you,” remember that this does not mean you, separate and apart from everyone else on the road. It means you are to recognize “*My* presence,” the divine Presence, as being omnipresence, all-presence, everywhere-presence, and in any particular moment you can realize that Presence.

So it is that when the Spirit is announcing *Itself* and *Its* presence, It is not saying to me, “Joel, *I* am present in you.” No, It is saying, “*I* am present.” How tragic it would be if God could announce, “*I* am present with you, Joel,” and then leave out everybody else. Such a thing is not possible. When the Father assures you, “*I* am present with thee; *I* go with thee wherever thou goest; *I* will never leave thee,” God is announcing His presence equally everywhere, universally. He is announcing omnipresence: the Presence in you, the Presence in those near and those far because there are none near or far. All this universe and all its people are embraced in your consciousness.

My consciousness is infinite, and I embrace in my consciousness the Jews and the Gentiles, the Occidentals and the Orientals, the Africans, the Asians, and persons of all types and places and kinds. I embrace in my consciousness Americans, Canadians, Russians, French, and English. I embrace in my consciousness this entire universe because my consciousness is infinite.

I can close my eyes and instantaneously have within me the peoples of all races and of all ages: past, present, and future. My consciousness is large enough to embody all of these, and therefore, if the presence of God is with me in my consciousness, then the presence of God is with everyone and everything in my consciousness, and nothing exists outside of my consciousness, for my consciousness is infinite. Why is it infinite? Because God and I are one, and all that the Father has is mine. Therefore all the God-consciousness is my consciousness individualized, and that Consciousness embraces all there is in this universe that constitutes the world, and the worlds beyond worlds, and the worlds of outer space.

If these were not embodied in our consciousness, we could have no knowledge of them; but because they are embodied in our consciousness, we will eventually know all about them, just as we are discovering the secrets of outer space. Why are we now attaining the secrets of outer space? Because these secrets are not in outer space. They are embodied in our consciousness, and we are discovering them there; they are being revealed to us there. Every person who is

working with problems of outer space is working with something that is within range of his own consciousness, or he could not be aware of it. Therefore outer space is in our consciousness, and be assured God also is there.

There may be no church in outer space. I would not know. But God is in outer space. There is no place where life is not, no place where the Spirit is not. Why? Because all that exists, exists in Consciousness, and that Consciousness is mine and that Consciousness is yours. The Master said it in these words: "Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee." We are all embodied in the divine consciousness which is God. Our awakening to this truth brings it into conscious experience.

THE HOLY GROUND OF I

I am with you means that I am with all. But a thousand will still fall at your left and at my left, and ten thousand at our right until they awaken to the presence of Me, the presence that I Am, the Presence that is within them. As each individual awakens to that Presence, that individual in some measure becomes free, free of the limitations of mortal sense, free of the limitations that would set one person apart from another, or one person's interests apart from another.

I in the midst of you am where you are. I in the midst of you am where your friends are. I in the midst of you am where your enemies are.

There is no place, no time, no space, no person where I am

not. Be not afraid; it is I—whether you are looking into the face of your friend or the face of your foe, whether you are looking into the face of a placid lake or of a raging storm. Be not afraid; it is I. Omnipresence! Omnipresence! There is no power in the whirlwind; there is no power in the storm; there is no power in the problem. I am there; I am the only power. Besides Me, there are no powers, and I am omnipresence.

“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.” Always remember that in My house, in this divine Consciousness, there are many mansions. Remember that I in the midst of you go to prepare a place for you. Whether you remain at home or leave home for business, marketing, or shopping, I am there to prepare a place for you.

You bring this *I* into tangible expression only in the degree of your conscious awareness of It. There must be action; there must be conscious action, conscious recognition. “Repent. . . . Turn yourselves, and live ye⁴. . . . In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths⁵. . . . Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.”⁶

Action! Action! Action! An activity of consciousness! And as your consciousness is active in truth, with truth, through truth, you will find that the truth, active in your consciousness, becomes the very fabric of the new life.

NOT YESTERDAY,
NOT TOMORROW: ONLY TODAY

You must learn to live as if there were no yesterdays, as if there had been no mistakes yesterday and no sins yesterday. You have to live as if yesterday had passed. Just as you mark off the date on your calendar or pull off the sheet of the month gone by and throw it into the wastebasket, so do you have to tear up your entire past consciously and actively and live as if today were the only day given you to live. If you try to relive yesterday, you will be reliving its mistakes and errors, so you might as well make up your mind to let bygones be bygones.

Let yesterday go, and live as if this were the day the Lord had made, and no other. Only this day is made, not yesterday and not tomorrow. Yesterday is not made, and tomorrow is not made. Our mistakes are over and done with; our sins are over and done with; our fears are over and done with. Now, now is the appointed day.

Now is the day in which I recognize the spirit of God present within me, and thereby recognize the presence of God present within you: you, my friends, and you, my enemies, those who like me and those who do not. I recognize God in the midst of all. I greet the God in them, and they in turn recognize the God in me. There are no yesterdays; all this is happening today.

When midnight comes and goes, it is still today—still today in which I am living in the life of omnipresence, still today in

which I am living in the realization of a presence within me that goes before me to prepare mansions, that goes to prepare a place for me. Now! Today! Today!

Without meditation, such an unfoldment as this cannot come. It cannot come from the air; it cannot come from outside; it has to come from within. But if it is to come from within, how can it come if there are not periods of quiet, of rest, of confidence, of assurance, periods of listening to this *I* that is in the midst of us? How can we be taught of the Spirit if we do not sit down to commune with that Spirit, and let It reveal Itself to us in wisdom, in truth, in life, in love?

THE ACTIVITY OF MEDITATION, WITHIN CHANGES THE WITHOUT

Meditation is an activity. It is not a laziness, either physical or mental, even though others looking at us in meditation may think that we are trying to escape from the world. We are not trying to escape from the world: we are trying to meet the reality of the world which is within us. Outside of us, the picture is always changing in accord with the changing of our consciousness, but the world outside will never change for the better if there is not something from inside to bring it about, and that something is this recognition:

There is a Presence, and this Presence is within me to instruct me and to give me light. Just as the life of the tree is flowing up through the trunk and out into the branches, so is the

life which is God flowing universally in the invisible, and yet I can feel It pouring into me, the branch, individually. As It pours into me as a branch, so too It is pouring Itself into all those out in the world who are also branches, giving them newness of life, which in time will appear as leaves, buds, blossoms, and finally fruitage, rich fruitage.

A branch cannot bear fruit of itself. A branch can bear fruit only by virtue of its oneness with its source. I of my own self can do nothing; but by my turning within, the Father instructs, feeds, guides, directs, and protects me, goes before me, walks beside me and behind me, above and beneath, for this I that is within me is omnipresence. It rides the planes; It rides the submarines; It rides the ships, the trains, the automobiles. It is omnipresence; It is omnipresence within me and within you, wherever I may be and wherever you may be. I in the midst of me am the life of all being. I in the midst of me am the safety, the security, the peace, the prosperity, and the joy of all being.

My joy no man takes from me. Why? Because my joy is not dependent on baubles outside in the world; my joy is not due to the fruit on my tree: my joy is mine because of the omnipresence of life which inevitably must appear as fruit. I glory not in the fruit on my tree, but in the spirit of God in me which is the fabric of the fruit which is to appear. I can take the fruit, eat it, sell it, or use it; but within me is the substance, the essence, the I, the presence, the fabric of all the fruit that is to come for every today that there is unto eternity.

I glory not in outer prosperity or outer health; I glory in the

essence which fills me, this divine Presence, so that I can spend what I have today and be renewed. I can give and I can share all that the Father gives me, and yet retain within myself the Presence, the substance, the staff of life which, in Its season, appears outwardly as still another message, still another dollar, still another trip, still another healing, still another something or other. Always within me is the essence, the substance, the fiber, the fabric of that which is to appear externally.

Our conscious recognition of this truth is what makes available to us the presence of the spirit of God within us.

TURN FROM THE PROBLEM TO I

Whenever a problem arises in your experience or the experience of others who turn to you for help, do not try to search in your mind for a solution to the problem, because then you are looking for a human solution or a human working out of the problem. Instantly turn away from the problem in the realization that this *I* within is Spirit, and it is this Spirit that is the solution to all problems.

Wait in your meditation until you have the feeling of this Presence, and then release the problem to It, and let it go. Do not dwell on the problem. Instead, see in what way *I*, the Spirit within you, will solve the problem. *I* will go out and do whatever work is necessary for you to do, work which you could not outline, which you could never conceive of, and

which you could never believe. You could not do it, and you could never give any advice that would bring it about. All you can do is turn from it in the realization that *I* within you is the solution of the problem, and then wait in your meditation until you do feel that Presence. When you do, loose the problem and let it go. Do not let the problem come back into your mind. Keep it out of your mind, for you have released it unto the *I* that you are, the *I* that is within you. Then, a day, two, or three days later, you will watch how It has solved the problem in a way you could never have understood or accomplished.

TWO OR MORE GATHERED TOGETHER

“Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,”⁷ where two or more are gathered in the recognition of this *I* as omnipresence. When we meet together and we are in the conscious remembrance that *I Am* in the midst of me, meaning *I Am* in the midst of you, and that *I Am* in the midst of all the others, then we are the two or more gathered in the name *I*, the name that I am.

It would make no difference where we were, in an Infinite Way class, at a supper, or a picnic. If we were consciously aware that the presence of *I* in us is the presence of *I* in everyone, we would be the two or more gathered together in that Name, as long as we continued to abide in that realization.

You can see the miracle and the magic of this. I cannot be envious of the *I* that I am, even if the *I* that I am is you. I cannot steal or want to steal from myself, and so, when I recognize that my Self is you, I cannot take anything from you. In this recognition we share with one another. Why? Because it is the Self sharing with the Self, two or more gathered together in the one name *I*, *I* in the midst of us.

There could be no fighting at any level, no discord or inharmony, if there were the constant recognition of *I*. It is *I* here; it is *I* there; and it is the same *I*, for we are one.

RELEASE! RELEASE! RELEASE!

Once a day, in your meditations, remember consciously to release God in the sense of releasing Him from any responsibility for the evils of the world, whether they are the evils that have come nigh your dwelling place or anyone else's, or the collective evils of this world. Remember to release God in the sense of realizing consciously that no evil has its source in God, and that nothing that does not emanate from God has power.

In that same meditation, also release all mankind from the penalty of their sins. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."⁸ They may be the sins of friends or the sins of foes; they may be the sins of your nation or the sins of other nations. But always remember that there must be a release, and it must be a conscious activity within you.

Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. Forgive them as I would be forgiven. Whatever error still lurks in me, Father, forgive me, for I do not do it consciously or willfully.

In this way, then, in releasing God from the responsibility for the evils of the world, we take all power out of the erroneous or evil nature of the world, because the major power it has comes from a universal belief that God is the cause of the world's discords and woes. Therefore, when we release God from that, it is as if we were releasing the power of evil itself into nothingness.

In the same way, as we release every individual, we are fulfilling the Lord's Prayer. "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." Forgive us in proportion as we forgive those who trespass against us. There must be a conscious release every day. I do not care whether we are talking of Americans or Russians, of the government of the United States or of Russia. I do not care whether we are talking of Chinese, Spanish, or whatnot: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Then you will find the release that you bring about within yourself. It is said that what we loose is loosed with us, and what we bind is bound with us. So it is that within ourselves, as we release God from responsibility, we find that we have released ourselves from these ills. As we release sinners from the responsibility for their sins, the sinners that we ourselves are, are released from our sins of omission and

commission. In our human experience, it is impossible not to sin. We are sinning every day in bearing false witness against somebody or other, and this we do, whether it is friend or foe. We bear false witness every day. In many ways, we fall far short of that mark which is Christhood. But we are not forgiven our sins except as we forgive those who sin against us or against this world.

Above all, be not afraid. Be not afraid, for it is I. In quietness and in confidence, shalt thou realize that I in the midst of thee am mighty. In quietness and in confidence, thou shalt realize, "Be not afraid. They have only the 'arm of flesh,' carnal weapons." I in the midst of thee am mighty, and I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. Only be not afraid, be not afraid!