
THE SECRET OF ANSWERED PRAYER

As one ponders over the multitudes of unanswered prayers, and the words of James "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss" together with the definite promise of the Master, "If ye ask anything in My name I will do it" (John 14/14) one wonders wherein does he "ask amiss" in that he does not receive those good things for which he asks in prayer and which seem necessary for his happiness and welfare.

Let us assume that one is handicapped by the lack of some good thing which seems necessary. That which he does first if he is uninstructed in the teachings of Christian Science is to ask of God through a prayer of supplication for the particular desirable thing whatever it may be, be it health, peace, life, love, money, clothing, etc. To another familiar with the teachings of Christian Science, the foregoing manner of prayer is outmoded, and instead he may send up a prayer which consists of contradictions of the particular error which is presented to him, and declare or affirm certain truths to the effect that he is at that very moment, and in spite of the contrary testimony of the physical senses, the actual recipient of whatever it may be that he seems to lack.

There is valid objection to both of these prayers, both induced as they are, by a belief in the lack of certain desirable things. To the first method whatever may be the form of prayer in the manner of supplication, there is objection, because the very prayer itself is predicated on the lack of the good thing required and desired, which lack is manifested in sickness, sin, death, poverty, or other trouble, and so is nothing more than the mental gymnastics of the human mind, for the divine Mind being "of purer eyes than to behold evil and canst not look upon iniquity" could never father such. Moreover the mere supplication or asking for something indicates the belief that one has not that for which he asks (else why ask?) and so is not in accord with the instructions of Jesus who said

(Mark 11/24): "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

The Christian Scientist has long since ceased to pray after this fashion, but nevertheless misinterpreting the plain instructions of Christian Science as set forth in "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" and that of Jesus and the prophets, he too may "jump from the frying pan into the fire" for his prayer oftentimes called "treatment" may be predicated on his belief that he or another lacks some good thing, which lack may be called sickness, sin, death, poverty or other trouble, and so his prayer too for the same reason as the other is likewise but the mental gyrations of the same human mind, which of course is utterly powerless for good or evil, or to heal or save. He tries to declare himself into another state of mind (which is still the human mind, for the divine Mind changes not from good to evil or evil to good), or he tries to acquire something which he believes he has not in spite of his asseverations to the contrary, and which he desires; whereas he should "silence the material senses" (S & H 15) or "Take NO thought" as Jesus said (Matthew 6/24 to 34), or stop his own thinking, or still the human mind, and so let the Christ, the actual presence of God, the one Mind, arise in him, for it is never "the human understanding of the divine healing Principle" (S & H 12/11 & 12) which does the work, but the divine Principle itself. "I am the Lord thy God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, the Holy One of Israel thy Saviour."

This is not done by affirming or declaring certain truths in opposition to some presented error, or by contradicting it, for this only changes one human thought for another, and which can be nothing but the same human mind again, because that Mind "which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil 2/5) is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Heb 13/8) and so cannot possibly change from good to evil or *vice versa*, but is always good—God.

Much as one may assure himself that he has that which he declares himself to possess, nevertheless the actual fact is that he does not really believe he has that desirable thing which he claims to have, and the best proof of this is that the very reason he is making

these protestations or affirmations of present possession is because in spite of his averments he is actually believing he is without that thing. Furthermore, so long as he persists in so doing, it is *prima facie* evidence that he continues to believe he is lacking in those very desirable things, otherwise he would not waste his valuable time in so doing; moreover the mere fact that he is trying to convince himself that something is true which he believes is not true, further evidences his anomalous position. As set forth this manner of prayer could not emanate from the divine Mind or God, but is wholly of the human mind and so utterly powerless for either good or evil.

What then shall be the manner of prayer in order that it may be answered? We shall praise and give thanks and glorify God for those things which we have and those things which God has promised to us, and do this quite irrespective of whatever is at the moment lacking in belief. Of course many and probably all of those affirmations and declarations, etc., previously referred to are perfectly true, and no doubt down deep in the bottom of the heart we feel them to be so, even as probably everyone has an underlying consciousness that there is immortal life, but at the time when faced with some seemingly real opposite error, we believe in the reality of the error, and so the underlying truth appears somewhat nebulous, theoretical and evanescent. However, it is a background in the picture of the Kingdom of Heaven, painted in when we grasped the fundamentals of Christian Science, so let it remain as a background, and indeed no matter how real the error may seem to be, this background will remain anyway. Have done however with those affirmations and protestations, for the continuance of them simply indicates that one continues to believe in the reality of the presented errors, which in fact are the very instigators of those contrary truths, and instead give thanks to God for blessings to come and for those already received and known to us so well that nothing could possibly make us believe otherwise. Thus doing we set up as it were, an increased contact with the universal Mind substance, or God, "the open fount which is pouring forth more than we accept" (S & H 2) and always in unlimited supply of whatever may be required of good.

A simple illustration of what is meant is as though we had a cotton mill and some of the spindles are not functioning. The spindles and machinery are in perfect condition, and all that is needed is more power. So we throw the switch and make the contact. Immediately the power is delivered, and those spindles which have not been functioning, commence to spin and do the work expected of them and so do all the little feeders and parts which go to make up the machines. So if we find there is lacking some good and desirable thing, if the heart is not functioning properly, if some other organ has stopped its normal action, if supply does not flow as it should, if someone is hateful, angry, dishonest, ill-natured, or otherwise seems not to be functioning as the son of God, there is nothing really the matter, but all that is required is more of the power of God and if this is supplied everything will perform its work satisfactorily. In the cotton mill when the spindles do not function, we simply recognize a negative condition, but in ourselves when something is not functioning as it should, instead of regarding it as a negative condition we are liable to view it as a positive condition and name it heart disease, ill-temper, fear, death, poverty or other evil. Nevertheless it is only negative, not a something, but nothing, and so soon as the contact is made those different things under the now delivered power of God will begin to function properly and we shall know and say that all is well. ✓

In the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England is to be found a most wonderful paean of praise "Oh all ye fishes of the sea, bless ye the Lord, praise Him and magnify Him forever; oh ye birds of the air, bless ye the Lord, praise Him and magnify Him forever; oh ye sun and moon, bless ye the Lord, praise Him and magnify Him forever", and so on interminably if we wish, praising and glorifying and giving thanks to God for any and all such evident things as are our common possession and which everyone knows to be the fact. We too should similarly bless, praise, glorify, magnify and give thanks for whatever we actually have and are well aware that we possess at that very moment and which we have had in the past. Thank Him for being alive, for sight, for hearing, having food, clothes, home, lodgings, or whatever it may be; thank the Father for every little thing as well as for the great things, all ✓

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5th day

4th day

of which we are too prone to take for granted. This thanking God should be made a habit, a continual practice, a constant recognition of the presence of God, who is the Giver of all good things, for "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1/17). Thus we form the contact referred to with Omnipotence, the source of all good, and it will be found that the supply of whatever is needed will never cease to flow generously and abundantly to him who prays by giving thanks. Moreover those who turn to that one will be similarly blessed and will receive abundantly just to the exact measure of the sincerity with which they turn to the I AM or God.

In the sixth chapter of John, verses 11 to 23, it will be noted that before Jesus gave to the multitudes, he gave thanks, not alone for the great supply of food necessary to feed in excess of 5,000 people, but for the five loaves and two fishes which he well knew to be available, whereupon he evidently made the contact with that universal Mind substance, and the flood gates of divine Love were opened and there poured forth whatever was necessary to supply everyone and leave over much to be gathered up. This point of giving thanks was so marked that when referring to the occurrence, it was referred to as having taken place not where the multitudes were fed, but where the Lord had given thanks.

Your Father knoweth all things, and so knows your need before you ask Him, and since it is His good pleasure to give you the kingdom, He may be counted upon to supply you with whatever you may require for your happiness and well being, whereupon those things having been so received, they in turn must be added to those for which you have already given thanks, and then more and greater things will be added to you and poured forth upon you with great abundance—to you who are unceasingly praying by praising and glorifying and giving thanks to Him for His friendly aid, and freely given good.

Something like buying on the instalment plan. Pay the instalments and the seller will furnish you with more and better goods; but fail in the instalments and the seller will take back that which he has already furnished to you and refuse to supply you with

more. This accords with Jesus' statement "Unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."

Note what the textbook has to say on this most important point: "Are we really grateful for the good already received? Then we shall avail ourselves of the blessings we have, and thus be fitted to receive more." (S & H 3) How very simple and plain it is!

Thank God constantly for the good already received and "take no thought for the morrow, for sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," and when the next problem presents itself, there will be forthcoming abundant understanding to meet it, "the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself." (Matt 6/34)

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