
CHAPTER I — PRAYER

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For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him.

— **CHRIST JESUS.**

- 1 THE prayer that reforms the sinner and heals the
sick is an absolute faith that all things are
3 possible to God,— a spiritual understanding of Him,
an unselfed love. Regardless of what another may say
or think on this subject, I speak from experience.
6 Prayer, watching, and working, combined with self-im-
molation, are God's gracious means for accomplishing
whatever has been successfully done for the Christian-
9 ization and health of mankind.

- Thoughts unspoken are not unknown to the divine
Mind. Desire is prayer; and no loss can occur from
12 trusting God with our desires, that they may be
moulded and exalted before they take form in words
and in deeds.

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Right motives

- 1 What are the motives for prayer? Do we pray to
make ourselves better or to benefit those who hear us,
3 to enlighten the infinite or to be heard of
men? Are we benefited by praying? Yes,
the desire which goes forth hungering after righteous-
6 ness is blessed of our Father, and it does not return
unto us void.

Deity unchangeable

- 9 God is not moved by the breath of praise to do more
than He has already done, nor can the infinite do less
than bestow all good, since He is unchang-
ing wisdom and Love. We can do more for
12 ourselves by humble fervent petitions, but the All-lov-
ing does not grant them simply on the ground of lip-
service, for He already knows all.
- 15 Prayer cannot change the Science of being, but it
tends to bring us into harmony with it. Goodness at-
tains the demonstration of Truth. A request that
18 God will save us is not all that is required. The mere
habit of pleading with the divine Mind, as one pleads
with a human being, perpetuates the belief in God as
21 humanly circumscribed,— an error which impedes spirit-
ual growth.

God's standard

- 24 God is Love. Can we ask Him to be more? God is
intelligence. Can we inform the infinite Mind of any-
thing He does not already comprehend?
Do we expect to change perfection? Shall
27 we plead for more at the open fount, which is pour-
ing forth more than we accept? The unspoken desire

30 does bring us nearer the source of all existence and
blessedness.

Asking God to *be* God is a vain repetition. God is
"the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever;" and

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1 He who is immutably right will do right without being
reminded of His province. The wisdom of man is not
3 sufficient to warrant him in advising God.

The spiritual mathematics

Who would stand before a blackboard, and pray the
principle of mathematics to solve the problem? The
6 rule is already established, and it is our
task to work out the solution. Shall we
ask the divine Principle of all goodness to do His own
9 work? His work is done, and we have only to avail
ourselves of God's rule in order to receive His blessing,
which enables us to work out our own salvation.

12 The Divine Being must be reflected by man, — else
man is not the image and likeness of the patient,
tender, and true, the One "altogether lovely;" but to
15 understand God is the work of eternity, and demands
absolute consecration of thought, energy, and desire.

Prayerful ingratitude

How empty are our conceptions of Deity! We admit
18 theoretically that God is good, omnipotent, omni-
present, infinite, and then we try to give
information to this infinite Mind. We plead
21 for unmerited pardon and for a liberal outpouring of

benefactions. Are we really grateful for the good
already received? Then we shall avail ourselves of the
24 blessings we have, and thus be fitted to receive more.
Gratitude is much more than a verbal expression of
thanks. Action expresses more gratitude than speech.

27 If we are ungrateful for Life, Truth, and Love, and
yet return thanks to God for all blessings, we are in-
sincere and incur the sharp censure our Master pro-
30 nounces on hypocrites. In such a case, the only
acceptable prayer is to put the finger on the lips and
remember our blessings. While the heart is far from

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1 divine Truth and Love, we cannot conceal the ingrati-
tude of barren lives.

Efficacious petitions

3 What we most need is the prayer of fervent desire
for growth in grace, expressed in patience, meekness,
love, and good deeds. To keep the com-
6 mandments of our Master and follow his
example, is our proper debt to him and the only
worthy evidence of our gratitude for all that he has
9 done. Outward worship is not of itself sufficient to
express loyal and heartfelt gratitude, since he has
said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

12 The habitual struggle to be always good is unceas-
ing prayer. Its motives are made manifest in the
blessings they bring,— blessings which, even if not
15 acknowledged in audible words, attest our worthiness

to be partakers of Love.

Watchfulness requisite

18 Simply asking that we may love God will never
make us love Him; but the longing to be better
and holier, expressed in daily watchful-
ness and in striving to assimilate more of
21 the divine character, will mould and fashion us
anew, until we awake in His likeness. We reach the
Science of Christianity through demonstration of the
24 divine nature; but in this wicked world goodness
will "be evil spoken of," and patience must bring
experience.

Veritable devotion

27 Audible prayer can never do the works of spiritual
understanding, which regenerates; but silent prayer,
watchfulness, and devout obedience enable
30 us to follow Jesus' example. Long prayers,
superstition, and creeds clip the strong pinions of love,
and clothe religion in human forms. Whatever mate-

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1 rializes worship hinders man's spiritual growth and keeps
him from demonstrating his power over error.

Sorrow and reformation

3 Sorrow for wrong-doing is but one step towards reform
and the very easiest step. The next and great step re-
quired by wisdom is the test of our sincerity,
6 — namely, reformation. To this end we are
placed under the stress of circumstances. Temptation
bids us repeat the offence, and woe comes in return for

9 what is done. So it will ever be, till we learn that there
is no discount in the law of justice and that we must pay
"the uttermost farthing." The measure ye mete "shall
12 be measured to you again," and it will be full "and run-
ning over."

Saints and sinners get their full award, but not always
15 in this world. The followers of Christ drank his cup.
Ingratitude and persecution filled it to the brim; but God
pours the riches of His love into the understanding and
18 affections, giving us strength according to our day. Sin-
ners flourish "like a green bay tree;" but, looking farther,
the Psalmist could see their end, — the destruction of sin
21 through suffering.

Cancellation of human sin

Prayer is not to be used as a confessional to cancel sin.
Such an error would impede true religion. Sin is forgiven
24 only as it is destroyed by Christ, — Truth and
Life. If prayer nourishes the belief that sin is
cancelled, and that man is made better merely by praying,
27 prayer is an evil. He grows worse who continues in sin
because he fancies himself forgiven.

Diabolism destroyed

An apostle says that the Son of God [Christ] came to
30 "destroy the *works* of the devil." We should
follow our divine Exemplar, and seek the de-
struction of all evil works, error and disease included.

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1 We cannot escape the penalty due for sin. The Scrip-

tures say, that if we deny Christ, "he also will deny us."

Pardon and amendment

3 Divine Love corrects and governs man. Men may
pardon, but this divine Principle alone reforms the
sinner. God is not separate from the wis-
6 dom He bestows. The talents He gives we
must improve. Calling on Him to forgive our work
badly done or left undone, implies the vain supposition
9 that we have nothing to do but to ask pardon, and
that afterwards we shall be free to repeat the offence.

12 To cause suffering as the result of sin, is the means
of destroying sin. Every supposed pleasure in sin
will furnish more than its equivalent of pain, until be-
lief in material life and sin is destroyed. To reach
15 heaven, the harmony of being, we must understand
the divine Principle of being.

Mercy without partiality

"God is Love." More than this we cannot ask,
18 higher we cannot look, farther we cannot go. To
suppose that God forgives or punishes sin
according as His mercy is sought or un-
21 sought, is to misunderstand Love and to make prayer
the safety-valve for wrong-doing.

Divine severity

24 Jesus uncovered and rebuked sin before he cast it
out. Of a sick woman he said that Satan had bound
her, and to Peter he said, "Thou art an of-
fence unto me." He came teaching and
27 showing men how to destroy sin, sickness, and death.
He said of the fruitless tree, "[It] is hewn down."

30 It is believed by many that a certain magistrate,
who lived in the time of Jesus, left this record: "His
rebuke is fearful." The strong language of our Mas-
ter confirms this description.

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1 The only civil sentence which he had for error was,
"Get thee behind me, Satan." Still stronger evidence
3 that Jesus' reproof was pointed and pungent is found
in his own words,— showing the necessity for such
forcible utterance, when he cast out devils and healed
6 the sick and sinning. The relinquishment of error de-
prives material sense of its false claims.

Audible praying

Audible prayer is impressive; it gives momentary
9 solemnity and elevation to thought. But does it pro-
duce any lasting benefit? Looking deeply
into these things, we find that "a zeal . . .
12 not according to knowledge" gives occasion for reac-
tion unfavorable to spiritual growth, sober resolve, and
wholesome perception of God's requirements. The mo-
15 tives for verbal prayer may embrace too much love of
applause to induce or encourage Christian sentiment.

Emotional utterances

Physical sensation, not Soul, produces material ec-
18 stasy and emotion. If spiritual sense always guided
men, there would grow out of ecstatic mo-
ments a higher experience and a better life
21 with more devout self-abnegation and purity. A self-
satisfied ventilation of fervent sentiments never makes
a Christian. God is not influenced by man. The "di-
24 vine ear" is not an auditory nerve. It is the all-hearing

and all-knowing Mind, to whom each need of man is always known and by whom it will be supplied.

Danger from audible prayer

27 The danger from prayer is that it may lead us into temptation. By it we may become involuntary hypocrites, uttering desires which are not real and consoling
30 ourselves in the midst of sin with the recollection that we have prayed over it or mean to ask forgiveness at some later day. Hypocrisy is fatal to religion.

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1 A wordy prayer may afford a quiet sense of self-justification, though it makes the sinner a hypocrite.
3 We never need to despair of an honest heart; but there is little hope for those who come only spasmodically face to face with their wickedness and then seek to
6 hide it. Their prayers are indexes which do not correspond with their character. They hold secret fellowship with sin, and such externals are spoken of by Jesus as "like
9 unto whited sepulchres . . . full . . . of all uncleanness."

Aspiration and love

If a man, though apparently fervent and prayerful, is impure and therefore insincere, what must be the
12 comment upon him? If he reached the loftiness of his prayer, there would be no occasion for comment. If we feel the aspiration, humility, gratitude, and love which our words express,—
15 this God accepts; and it is wise not to try to deceive ourselves or others, for "there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed." Professions and audible prayers are like charity in one respect,— they "cover the
18 multitude of sins." Praying for humility with whatever fervency of expression does not always mean a
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24 desire for it. If we turn away from the poor, we are
not ready to receive the reward of Him who blesses
the poor. We confess to having a very wicked heart
and ask that it may be laid bare before us, but do
27 we not already know more of this heart than we are
willing to have our neighbor see?

Searching the heart

30 We should examine ourselves and learn what is the
affection and purpose of the heart, for in this way
only can we learn what we honestly are. If a
friend informs us of a fault, do we listen pa-
tiently to the rebuke and credit what is said? Do we not

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1 rather give thanks that we are "not as other men"?
During many years the author has been most grateful
3 for merited rebuke. The wrong lies in unmerited cen-
sure,— in the falsehood which does no one any good.

Summit of aspiration

6 The test of all prayer lies in the answer to these
questions: Do we love our neighbor better because of
this asking? Do we pursue the old selfish-
ness, satisfied with having prayed for some-
9 thing better, though we give no evidence of the sin-
cerity of our requests by living consistently with our
prayer? If selfishness has given place to kindness,
12 we shall regard our neighbor unselfishly, and bless
them that curse us; but we shall never meet this great
duty simply by asking that it may be done. There is
15 a cross to be taken up before we can enjoy the fruition
of our hope and faith.

Practical religion

18 Dost thou "love the Lord thy God with all thy
heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind"?
This command includes much, even the sur-
21 render of all merely material sensation, affec-
tion, and worship. This is the El Dorado of Christianity.
It involves the Science of Life, and recognizes only the
24 divine control of Spirit, in which Soul is our master,
and material sense and human will have no place.

The chalice sacrificial

Are you willing to leave all for Christ, for Truth, and
so be counted among sinners? No! Do you really desire
27 to attain this point? No! Then why make long
prayers about it and ask to be Christians,
since you do not care to tread in the footsteps of our
30 dear Master? If unwilling to follow his example, why
pray with the lips that you may be partakers of his
nature? Consistent prayer is the desire to do right.

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1 Prayer means that we desire to walk and will walk in
the light so far as we receive it, even though with bleed-
3 ing footsteps, and that waiting patiently on the Lord,
we will leave our real desires to be rewarded by Him.

6 The world must grow to the spiritual understanding
of prayer. If good enough to profit by Jesus' cup of
earthly sorrows, God will sustain us under these sor-
9 rows. Until we are thus divinely qualified and are
willing to drink his cup, millions of vain repetitions
will never pour into prayer the unction of Spirit in
demonstration of power and "with signs following."
12 Christian Science reveals a necessity for overcoming the

world, the flesh, and evil, and thus destroying all error.

15 Seeking is not sufficient. It is striving that enables
us to enter. Spiritual attainments open the door to a
higher understanding of the divine Life.

Perfunctory prayers

18 One of the forms of worship in Thibet is to carry a
praying-machine through the streets, and stop at the
doors to earn a penny by grinding out a
21 prayer. But the advance guard of progress has
paid for the privilege of prayer the price of persecution.

Asking amiss

24 Experience teaches us that we do not always receive
the blessings we ask for in prayer. There is some mis-
apprehension of the source and means of
all goodness and blessedness, or we should
certainly receive that for which we ask. The Scrip-
27 tures say: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask
amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." That
which we desire and for which we ask, it is not always
30 best for us to receive. In this case infinite Love will
not grant the request. Do you ask wisdom to be mer-
ciful and not to punish sin? Then "ye ask amiss."

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1 Without punishment, sin would multiply. Jesus' prayer,
"Forgive us our debts," specified also the terms of
3 forgiveness. When forgiving the adulterous woman he
said, "Go, and sin no more."

Remission of penalty

6 A magistrate sometimes remits the penalty, but this
may be no moral benefit to the criminal, and at best, it
only saves the criminal from one form of
9 punishment. The moral law, which has the
right to acquit or condemn, always demands restitu-
tion before mortals can "go up higher." Broken law
brings penalty in order to compel this progress.

Truth annihilates error

12 Mere legal pardon (and there is no other, for divine
Principle never pardons our sins or mistakes till they
are corrected) leaves the offender free to re-
15 peat the offence, if indeed, he has not already
suffered sufficiently from vice to make him turn from it
with loathing. Truth bestows no pardon upon error, but
18 wipes it out in the most effectual manner. Jesus suffered
for our sins, not to annul the divine sentence for an in-
dividual's sin, but because sin brings inevitable suffering.

Desire for holiness

21 Petitions bring to mortals only the results of mor-
tals' own faith. We know that a desire for holiness is
requisite in order to gain holiness; but if we
24 desire holiness above all else, we shall sac-
rifice everything for it. We must be willing to do this,
that we may walk securely in the only practical road
27 to holiness. Prayer cannot change the unalterable
Truth, nor can prayer alone give us an understanding
of Truth; but prayer, coupled with a fervent habitual
30 desire to know and do the will of God, will bring us
into all Truth. Such a desire has little need of audible
expression. It is best expressed in thought and in life.

Prayer for the sick

1 "The prayer of faith shall save the sick," says the
Scripture. What is this healing prayer? A mere re-
3 quest that God will heal the sick has no
power to gain more of the divine presence
than is always at hand. The beneficial effect of
6 such prayer for the sick is on the human mind, mak-
ing it act more powerfully on the body through a blind
faith in God. This, however, is one belief casting out
9 another, — a belief in the unknown casting out a belief
in sickness. It is neither Science nor Truth which
acts through blind belief, nor is it the human under-
12 standing of the divine healing Principle as manifested
in Jesus, whose humble prayers were deep and con-
scientious protests of Truth, — of man's likeness to
15 God and of man's unity with Truth and Love.

Prayer to a corporeal God affects the sick like a
drug, which has no efficacy of its own but borrows its
18 power from human faith and belief. The drug does
nothing, because it has no intelligence. It is a mortal
belief, not divine Principle or Love, which causes a
21 drug to be apparently either poisonous or sanative.

The common custom of praying for the recovery of the
sick finds help in blind belief, whereas help should come
24 from the enlightened understanding. Changes in belief
may go on indefinitely, but they are the merchandise of
human thought and not the outgrowth of divine Science.

Love impartial and universal

27 Does Deity interpose in behalf of one worshipper,
and not help another who offers the same measure of
prayer? If the sick recover because they
30 pray or are prayed for audibly, only peti-

tioners (*per se* or by proxy) should get well. In divine Science, where prayers are mental, *all* may avail them-

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1 selves of God as "a very present help in trouble."
Love is impartial and universal in its adaptation and
3 bestowals. It is the open fount which cries, "Ho,
every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters."

Public exaggerations

6 In public prayer we often go beyond our convictions,
beyond the honest standpoint of fervent desire. If we
are not secretly yearning and openly striving
9 for the accomplishment of all we ask,
our prayers are "vain repetitions," such as the heathen
use. If our petitions are sincere, we labor for what we
ask; and our Father, who seeth in secret, will reward
12 us openly. Can the mere public expression of our de-
sires increase them? Do we gain the omnipotent ear
sooner by words than by thoughts? Even if prayer is
15 sincere, God knows our need before we tell Him or our
fellow-beings about it. If we cherish the desire hon-
estly and silently and humbly, God will bless it, and
18 we shall incur less risk of overwhelming our real
wishes with a torrent of words.

Corporeal ignorance

21 If we pray to God as a corporeal person, this will
prevent us from relinquishing the human doubts and
fears which attend such a belief, and so we
cannot grasp the wonders wrought by infi-
24 nite, incorporeal Love, to whom all things are possible.
Because of human ignorance of the divine Principle,
Love, the Father of all is represented as a corporeal
27 creator; hence men recognize themselves as merely

physical, and are ignorant of man as God's image or reflection and of man's eternal incorporeal existence. The world of error is ignorant of the world of Truth, — blind to the reality of man's existence, — for the world of sensation is not cognizant of life in Soul, not in body.

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Bodily presence

1 If we are sensibly with the body and regard omnipotence as a corporeal, material person, whose ear we
3 would gain, we are not "absent from the body" and "present with the Lord" in the demonstration of Spirit. We cannot "serve two masters." To be "present with the Lord" is to have, not
6 mere emotional ecstasy or faith, but the actual demonstration and understanding of Life as revealed in
9 Christian Science. To be "with the Lord" is to be in obedience to the law of God, to be absolutely governed by divine Love,— by Spirit, not by matter.

Spiritualized consciousness

12 Become conscious for a single moment that Life and intelligence are purely spiritual, — neither in nor of matter, — and the body will then utter no
15 complaints. If suffering from a belief in sickness, you will find yourself suddenly well. Sorrow is turned into joy when the body is controlled by spiritual Life, Truth, and Love. Hence the hope of the
18 promise Jesus bestows: "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; . . . because I go unto my Father," — [because the Ego is absent from
21 the body, and present with Truth and Love.] The Lord's Prayer is the prayer of Soul, not of material
24 sense.

Entirely separate from the belief and dream of material living, is the Life divine, revealing spiritual understanding and the consciousness of man's dominion over the whole earth. This understanding casts out error and heals the sick, and with it you can speak "as one having authority."

27
30

"When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and, when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father

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1 which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

Spiritual sanctuary

3 So spake Jesus. The closet typifies the sanctuary of Spirit, the door of which shuts out sinful sense but lets in Truth, Life, and Love. Closed to error, it is open to Truth, and *vice versa*.
6 The Father in secret is unseen to the physical senses, but He knows all things and rewards according to motives, not according to speech. To enter into the heart of prayer, the door of the erring senses must be closed. Lips must be mute and materialism silent,
9 that man may have audience with Spirit, the divine Principle, Love, which destroys all error.
12

Effectual invocation

15 In order to pray aright, we must enter into the closet and shut the door. We must close the lips and silence the material senses. In the quiet sanctuary of earnest longings, we must
18 deny sin and plead God's allness. We must resolve to

take up the cross, and go forth with honest hearts to
work and watch for wisdom, Truth, and Love. We
21 must "pray without ceasing." Such prayer is an-
swered, in so far as we put our desires into practice.
The Master's injunction is, that we pray in secret and
24 let our lives attest our sincerity.

Trustworthy beneficence

Christians rejoice in secret beauty and bounty, hidden
from the world, but known to God. Self-forgetfulness,
27 purity, and affection are constant prayers.
Practice not profession, understanding not
belief, gain the ear and right hand of omnipotence and
30 they assuredly call down infinite blessings. Trustworthi-
ness is the foundation of enlightened faith. Without a
fitness for holiness, we cannot receive holiness.

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Loftiest adoration

1 A great sacrifice of material things must precede this
advanced spiritual understanding. The highest prayer
3 is not one of faith merely; it is demonstra-
tion. Such prayer heals sickness, and must
destroy sin and death. It distinguishes between Truth
6 that is sinless and the falsity of sinful sense.

The prayer of Jesus Christ

Our Master taught his disciples one brief prayer,
which we name after him the Lord's Prayer. Our Mas-
9 ter said, "After this manner therefore pray
ye," and then he gave that prayer which
covers all human needs. There is indeed some doubt
12 among Bible scholars, whether the last line is not an
addition to the prayer by a later copyist; but this does

not affect the meaning of the prayer itself.

- 15 In the phrase, "Deliver us from evil," the original
properly reads, "Deliver us from the evil one." This
18 reading strengthens our scientific apprehension of the peti-
tion, for Christian Science teaches us that "the evil one," or
one evil, is but another name for the first lie and all liars.

- 21 Only as we rise above all material sensuousness and
sin, can we reach the heaven-born aspiration and spir-
itual consciousness, which is indicated in the Lord's
Prayer and which instantaneously heals the sick.

- 24 Here let me give what I understand to be the spir-
itual sense of the Lord's Prayer:

- 27 Our Father which art in heaven,
Our Father-Mother God, all-harmonious,

Hallowed be Thy name.
Adorable One.

- 30 Thy kingdom come.
Thy kingdom is come; Thou art ever-present.

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- 1 Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.
Enable us to know,— as in heaven, so on earth,— God is
3 *omnipotent, supreme.*

Give us this day our daily bread;
Give us grace for to-day; feed the famished affections;

6 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And Love is reflected in love;

9 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from
evil;
*And God leadeth us not into temptation, but delivereth
us from sin, disease, and death.*

12 For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the
glory, forever.
*For God is infinite, all-power, all Life, Truth, Love, over
all, and All.*