

THE DIVINE ART OF LIVING

by

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Northwoods is pleased to have located this book by Mrs Besly and welcomes the opportunity to reprint this important New Thought work. Although this book is attributed to "The Home of Truth" denomination, an advertisement in the Divine Science Monthly Vol. XV, No. 6, June 1930, indicates it could be purchased from The Colorado College of Divine Science in Denver, hence its implied compatibility with our teachings.

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Foreword

What we give to life we may have in return. We may have happiness if we give happiness to others. We may have sorrow if we extend sorrow to those about us.

Right living goes with right thinking. The spoken word is the outward manifestation of the power of thought. As every act is preceded by thought, it follows that thought is real, and that if it is right, evil cannot follow.

This little book has been planned as a help and guide for those who would have a method of living from which they may draw the maximum of happiness and interest. If it brings a tithe of that result to those who read it, the author's work will have been richly rewarded.

K. M. H. B.

Omnipresence

In every Christian church stands the doctrine that God is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient.

The very foundation stone of our teaching is the omnipresence of the Holy Spirit, and this we accept without reserve.

We accept the word in its full meaning as defined, "Presence in every place at the same time, unbounded, universal presence, ubiquity."

We know that the Holy Spirit is everywhere and in everything. We know that the Holy Spirit is the creator and must be in the creation that never ends. His word is the power that makes all things.

In the first chapter of Genesis is recorded, "And God said let there be light and there was light." The record of each act of creation is prefaced by the words, "And God said."

The creative force is thus expressed by the word. A word is merely the expression of thought. Thought is the power.

God created this wonderful universe from his own substance, from Spirit. He put Himself into everything He created and is therefore omnipresent and in everything. Necessarily this omnipresent spirit in everything is God; but at this point arises the question, If God the good is omnipresent, why is there evil in the world?

Why, it is asked, is there sin, sickness and death, wars, pestilence and misery?

The answer is, that these things which seem so dreadful to our senses are not realities. When we have learned to see only good, these manifestations will cease. All will disappear when we come to a full realization of the Omnipresence. Then we will overcome sin and its results, sickness and death.

There is no real death. Life is omnipresent because God is life. After our bodies have been given up, indeed, we think we shall live more intensely than before.

The Infinite Omnipresence is love. Love cannot exist with hate. Hate and fear and all horrors are cast out by love just as a light turned on in a room casts out darkness.

It is only the external or outer man that suffers the horrors of war and starvation and the multitude of human ills. Some day he will awaken to the blessings of peace, harmony and

brotherly love. This will come with the growth of faith in the Omnipresent Good. Meanwhile, as is our duty, we gladly send forth healing thoughts and gifts of money, food and clothing to alleviate suffering.

Buckle, in his History of Civilization, says that God is just as civilized as the people who worship him. Putting this thought in another way, Ingersoll said:

“Man created God in his own image and likeness.”

These sayings which shock some people are quite true. People who are swayed by human passions create a god of their own kind. If we are cruel and require human sacrifices we worship a god who requires such sacrifices.

The ancient Greeks loved pleasure and beauty and so created gods who typified these desires. The Puritans who came to America for religious freedom worshipped a God who stood for austerity, stern justice and hard labor.

We believe that the Spiritual light shines for each and all of us but that it can be seen only by those whose spiritual eyes are open.

As the evidence of the Omnipresence grows clearer we approach a realization of the importance of making this truth a working basis for the conduct of our lives. As we are creatures of the Holy Spirit, so we are a part of the Holy Spirit. It is our duty then to live according to the law of our creation. This is the foundation stone of our work and of our play and we must take it into every nook and corner of our lives.

Love

The essence of all religion is love. If we had perfect and universal love, we would have realized all of the teachings of Jesus. The world would be rid of all evil.

St. Paul has given the clearest and most wonderful analysis of love in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Paul at that writing was an old man. He had endured many trials. His soul had passed through the crucible of fire. He had been the author of massacres and tortures. He was present at the stoning of Stephen. His hands were stained with blood when he was converted on the road to Damascus.

We must know then that Paul was fairly inspired when he wrote this letter to the Corinthians, and we must conclude that his definition of love was the result of his own wonderful experience.

Paul tells us that love is the combination of nine qualities: patience, kindness, generosity,

humility, courtesy, unselfishness, good temper, guilelessness and sincerity.

All of these qualities may be acquired by earnest, persevering effort. The degree of happiness resultant is dependent wholly upon the strength of effort.

Patience is a rare and noble quality, and difficult for most of us. It may be acquired by the desire along with constant watchfulness. We often yield to impatience with what we regard as stupidity in others, forgetting that we ourselves are often stupid.

Kindness is, of course, an integral part of love. It goes with patience. Kindness that is doleful or studied is of little value. It is the kingdom that comes spontaneously that upbuilds character. Out of it come joy and optimism. As has been said, the thought that precedes the act is the vital thing. Thus, when we constantly cultivate kind thoughts, kind acts follow.

Generosity does not lie wholly in the gifts of money or things. We can readily recall men and women who make large gifts to philanthropy because by so doing they may advance to a higher place in what is known as fashionable society. That purpose is altogether selfish.

Real generosity is found in sacrifice, in the giving of ourselves in loving service and in extending strong, helpful thoughts.

True humility lies in the knowledge that all power comes from God, and in giving credit to the Infinite Spirit for all good. We are the children of God, but we must realize our limitations. "Of myself I can do nothing." We know that all things are possible to God and that God is omnipresent in each one of us as well as everywhere.

Courtesy is love manifested in our relations with one another. It means gentleness of speech and thought, the absence of rudeness, the employment of kindness and consideration in the conduct of the daily affairs of life. A false courtesy is that which comes alone from the cold and trained form of education and acts automatically. A truly courteous man or woman is one possessed of a loving spirit, always seeking to be helpful.

Unselfishness requires nothing in return for service. One truly unselfish gives freely of everything without thought of the value, without expectation or hope of gratitude. The act of giving brings its own joy and happiness.

A fundamental of good character is good temper. It should go without saying that a man with a good temper is much better loved and served than one with a bad temper. It does not follow that a good tempered man or woman is more easily deceived or used. Neither should a stern man command more respect.

More important yet, one who habitually controls his temper finds it easier to control others and thus adds a practical side to general efficiency.

Guilelessness and sincerity imply uprightness, the absence of evil or impure thoughts, honest, genuine endeavor to think and act on the lines of absolute truth and honor.

Besides these nine qualities of love, there is an almost indefinable value that we might compare with the light that makes the colors of the prism visible. It is the spirit of joy that comes with well doing, the light that spreads happiness and gladness to others.

The path of duty need not lead along such dark and somber ways as our Puritan fathers followed. Rather should it be illumined by radiant cheerfulness.

Love has been outlined as the constant practice of simple, homely virtues. It eases all burdens and makes living an endless joy. If we follow its way we have learned the most important lesson of life.

Faith

After the lapse of many centuries, the best definition of faith is found in the Scriptures. "Faith," says Paul, "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen."

It has been further defined as an assent to a truth, the evidence of which is not complete. Thus Lowell has said that, "science was faith once." The faith of Columbus led him to the discovery of a new world. Almost every great invention may be traced to the faith of the inventor.

The farmer sows his seed and has faith that the ripened grain will follow, though he is wholly unable to prove the source of the process. The child lacking faith digs up his seed to see if it has taken root.

When we are children in the Truth we do not trust wholly to divine power; we impatiently root out our seeds. We cannot quite trust to the word but seek other means to bring forth the harvest, and fail.

After many trials we learn the power of Divine love by actual experience; we wait for the harvest. We learn that we must not be impatient but must trust wholly to the Infinite Spirit.

Thus our faith becomes grounded and a part of ourselves. If we have faith we shall find the substance and the things hoped for shall come into our consciousness.

Emily Cady says, "Faith takes hold of the substance of things hoped for and brings into evidence

or visibility the things not seen.”

So it is with us when we go to sleep at night. We take hold of the substance and bring it into evidence in the morning when we awaken with new vigor for the day’s work. We have faith that God will work this change.

That is the faith of which Emerson speaks when he says:

“The man who knows the law is sure that his welfare is dear to the heart of Being; he believes that he cannot escape from his God.”

To manifest the fruits of faith we must have absolute confidence in our belief. When Peter was certain that, like his Master, he could walk upon the water, he succeeded. When a doubt arose in his mind he began to sink and reached for the assistance of the Master’s hand.

The actor who has confidence and is sure of his part succeeds; the one who is uncertain and fearful fails.

A common experience with all is that we accomplish when we have neither doubt nor hesitation and are sure of ourselves. If we have faith in a cause, we can interest and convince others. On the contrary, if our faith is lacking, so we lack the power of winning advocates.

The elemental requisite of a successful salesman is faith with enthusiasm. Any great employer will tell you that.

Jesus of Nazareth, when healing the sick, often said:

“According to thy faith be it done unto Thee.”

To his somewhat self-sufficient disciples who asked why they had failed, he replied:

“Because of your little faith.”

Yet these same disciples succeeded when charged with the dynamic force of the faith of Jesus. When their faith was great, other needs were supplied and their healing was marvelous.

The early Christians for three hundred years healed the sick and did all the work taught by Christ without a thought of self or reward. This power lessened and finally vanished when luxury, greed for gold, and lust for worldly power possessed the Christian Church.

That teaching of Christ was true and vital. It should be our duty and our desire to increase our

faith to the end that we may do the work of the Master. All efforts should be concentrated for that purpose.

There is in progress a great world awakening to the truth that practical Christianity is to be had when we make our lives Christ-like.

Jesus was a good teacher and a wise philosopher. He gave full instructions. If we fail to follow them it is because of our little faith.

Living the True Life

With each of us there is the strong desire to lead the life that holds the greatest sum of happiness. What is that life? Is it the life of social dissipation or that of study or sensual indulgence? Or is it the spiritual life?

Those who have endured many trials and sorrows and have viewed life from many points, have decided that social dissipation is hollow, that study of material science unelevated by spiritual science is fruitless, that a life of sensual indulgence is followed only by misery and degradation.

The conclusion reached is that the only life worth living and worth while is the spiritual life. If that is true, it is important above all things for us to learn the meaning of the spiritual life and how to live it.

At the beginning, we must know that we must live to our highest and do our best in the circumstances in which we are placed. Associated with this effort must be our realization of the Omnipresence of God. If God is omnipresent there can be no separation between the material and spiritual.

With this as an accepted view, we cannot think one thing more wonderful than another because God, the Infinite Perfection, is in and of everything.

People often complain of the monotony of life. The attitude toward life depends wholly upon the individual. The interest is as one makes it. There need be nothing monotonous in living life as we find it.

There are things of wonderful interest all about us. The renewal of the earth each spring, the change of the seasons, the glory of light and shade, the wonder of color that changes with the light -- all these are of marvelous interest to the observant mind. Above all is the joy of helping one's friends and neighbors, or strangers.

The possibilities of the new day are infinite. If one chooses, there need be nothing tiresome or

monotonous in one's daily existence. A cultivated interest in the lives and things surrounding us gives the spirit of youth and holds back age.

We make our own lives and create our own atmosphere. The spoken word, which is the thought expressed, is the creative power. If we really desire to live the true life, we must guard our words carefully and send them to create right conditions. It is both foolish and harmful to give expression to depressive thoughts, just as it is to refer to disease or fear because these unfortunate expressions create like conditions.

A beautiful faith is the rock foundation for the right method of living, the faith that illumines our daily life, our home and our environment. The true spirituality is practical, useful in all immediate and daily affairs of life. It is not vague or misty, to be merely dreamed of, or to be viewed only as a subject for poets or singers.

Spirituality, rightly applied, enters most helpfully into all details and occupations of life. We have so many hours in each day. We desire to divide our duties properly between these hours, giving time for everything in the day's work.

The most necessary and important apportionment of time is that which is given to silent spiritual meditation. That should be a form of preparation for work.

A man's daily business at his office can be made a channel of spiritual power if he consecrates each minute of time to the highest expression of spiritual life of which he is capable, always doing his work from the highest and most honorable standpoint.

The same method may be applied to every form of occupation, housework, typewriting, the care of children. Brother Lawrence, in his kitchen, scrubbing his pots and pans or mixing his sauces, did it all for the glory of God, and his life was truly spiritual.

We need sleep and recreation and exercise. These elements of our daily life are of the greatest benefit only when consecrated to the highest purpose, and this can be done only when the spiritual thought is right.

Living in this constant thought of the omnipresence of Spirit, we must, as a logical consequence, cast our fear. We cannot fear anything or anybody if we have the full realization that God is everywhere, that God is love and that love is the great power of life. Here it may be said again that it is well to read often and to remember the wonderful thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians and make our daily life according to its teaching.

If we follow the rule of right thinking we shall obey the command, "Pray without ceasing." Our whole life will be a prayer, a song of praise to the giver of all life, a joyous, happy realization of

oneness with the Holy Spirit. That is the true prayer.

Prayer is the food of the soul and is more necessary to us than physical food.

This teaching, while called The New Thought, is not new. It is as old as thought. It has been practiced in the oldest religions. The only new thing is that it has been made to fit the needs of our new, modern life. It is a simple, practical Christianity, and like everything else taught by Jesus is easily clear to our understanding.

The fruits of this teaching we may acquire only by effort, by constant daily practice. If we fall short of our ideals, let us not be discouraged. Instead of groaning when we fail, let us begin again with the thought that there is always progress made with every renewed effort, even if the gain is not always apparent.

Knowledge and Good Judgment

Spiritual understanding is a deep, thorough consciousness, and realization of the oneness of one's self with the Father.

The vital living truth that rules our lives is found when we grasp this great idea of the omnipresence of the Holy Spirit.

The understanding or knowledge that we are striving for is spiritual and not intellectual. Much confusion and error arise from failure to grasp this distinction.

In the process of acquiring this spiritual understanding, we may begin with externals and learn to be honest in, say, money matters. Then we go a step farther and learn to be honest in our souls, honest in every thought concerning God and man and ourselves.

We must study our desires and our thoughts and learn to view everything from the spiritual standpoint. If we do this rightly, we will come to know that our bodies are the temples of the spirit.

To be honest with one's self is not easy, and can be accomplished only by tireless effort.

Emerson in speaking of the Infinite Power, the Holy Spirit, says:

“This energy does not descend into individual life on any other condition than entire possession. It comes to the lowly and simple; it comes to whomsoever will put off what is foreign and proud; it comes as insight; it comes as serenity and grandeur. When we see those whom it inhabits we are apprised of new degrees of greatness. From that inspiration the man comes back with a

changed tone. He does not talk to men with an eye to their opinion, he is plain and true; has no rose color, no fine friends, no adventures, does not want admiration, dwells in the hour that now is.”

This seems a true picture of wisdom. Let us study it often, to the end that we may acquire its full meaning.

Among the wise men of whom we have record is Brother Lawrence, who was unlettered and began life in a nobleman’s house in Paris.

Brother Lawrence was struck by the power of God. When looking at a leafless tree he realized, with wonder, how it would be clothed again and again by the goodness of the spirit. He became filled with a desire to devote his life to the service of God, and, according to the custom of his time, he entered a monastery. There, in the humble place of cook to a large community of monks, he practiced the presence of God constantly and in his quiet way acquired wisdom and became a great power.

The abbot of Brother Lawrence’s monastery, the grand princes of the church, have faded away and been forgotten, but the power of this humble lay-brother lives today.

There is a record of his sayings transcribed by a priest who knew and admired him. It is a small unpretentious volume called “The Practice of the Presence of God.” It stands as one of the best guides to the path of true wisdom and understanding.

To acquire spiritual understanding, we must lose sight of all material goods and selfish aims. The road to uncertainty, and not to wisdom, lies in too much introspection, too much dissection of thoughts, actions and motives. This causes us to become merely critical when our desire is to see clearly the things spiritual.

We must be guided by the inner voice. It is only when we approach a subject humbly that we can hope to get knowledge of it. An arrogant, self-satisfied mind is not open to instruction. Even the most learned man may learn from the simplest things about him.

We all have something to give to each other, often a simple help to knowledge. The wisest men are humble in proportion to their wisdom.

Mrs. Militz says in her primary lessons in “Christian Living and Healing”:

“Ignorance is the cause of all evil manifestations and the grossest ignorance is to ascribe their origin in God.”

For the working out of life's problems, tools have been given to us and it is our duty to see that these are kept in good order. We must not over feed our bodies to the point where we become inactive or lazy. We must not over strain our nerves. We must not think injurious thoughts.

Certainly, we do not believe in the use of medicines or drugs or stimulants, but we do believe in keeping our bodies in cleanliness and our appearance neat, for these conditions are necessary for our sense of harmony and beauty.

Mrs. Militz says again:

“To follow after the riches and wisdom of a world of change and decay is the act of one who tries to possess and control a shadow without knowledge of a hold upon the object back of it.”

Some of us, after landing from a ship, have experienced the sensation of the earth swaying under us and tossing as with the waves. Our judgment tells us that this sensation is a mere delusion but as long as we cling to the sensation it is real to us. So it is with disease and misery and unhappiness. These are real only as we cling to the belief in them, and leave us when we turn to real knowledge and understanding.

It is important for us to obtain the true knowledge, if we would divest our minds of all prejudices. Even if we cannot agree with our neighbor's belief, we must have respect for it. Prejudice and jealousy blind the spiritual eyes of which we have great need.

Prejudice is among the most subtle and insidious of evils. We are quite apt to think that our prejudices are not prejudices at all, but simply the result of good judgment and good breeding. This view was once expressed by a friend who said:

“I have no prejudices but of course I know what is right.”

It is only by severe mental training and earnest prayer, that we may come to a realization that our neighbor's belief is quite as sacred to him as our own belief is to us, and should be respected accordingly.

Our own viewpoint is narrowed if we refuse to see and respect another's viewpoint. A lack of judgment is shown when we become heated in argument. When feeling ourselves yielding to such foolishness we should cease discussion. It is only when we are able to discuss our beliefs with calmness that we may get valuable light on matters not wholly clear to us, or that we may be able to clear doubts in the mind of another.

Once, a woman, in speaking of another, said, “She is utterly without religion. She is no better than a heathen.”

This answer followed: "I think you are mistaken. She believes in New Thought and is trying her best to live up to it."

"That is a question I cannot discuss with you," was the indignant reply.

The inference was that we, who are trying in all humility to put the teachings of Jesus into daily practice, are no better than heathen, and without religion. This illustrates the ease with which we blind ourselves.

Jealousy also must be guarded against. When we come to understand that there is no separation, that the fountain of all good, all talent, all supply, is open to everyone, we shall have no cause to envy our brother and no incentive to jealousy.

When we love truly and without hope of reward, without any selfish desire, we shall not be jealous of others.

These questions of prejudice and jealousy are, in the last æ analysis, questions of selfishness and will be eliminated when we acquire unselfishness.

Casting Out Fear

Fear is a state of apprehension or expectancy of evil. If we believe and practice the presence of God, we eliminate fear because we know that where God exists there is no place or space for evil. In that condition we do not and can not fear.

The truth is that we have not discarded fear because we have not come to fully realize the omnipresence of God.

"That which I feared has come upon me."

Naturally, our thought is most directed upon the object of our fear. Thought is the great attractive power. We attract the thing feared as we continually think of it.

In learning to ride the bicycle, the pupil often collides with objects he wishes to avoid, because he keeps his mind on those objects. An instructor told his pupils to look away from the object they feared, and to keep their eyes fixed on the point they wished to reach.

That advice holds good in the spiritual realm. If we would avoid errors we must not continually keep them in mind. Let us rather hold up to our vision the good that we desire to possess.

The expectation of evil goes with fear. If we expect evil we are likely to attract it in some form. If

we fear that a man is planning to cheat us, we are likely to express it in our manner. Then we may carry the suggestion to him, and thus bring upon ourselves that which we fear.

One wonderful and striking illustration of this lesson lies in the great European War. For many years the nations involved feared, expected and awaited this terrible world tragedy. Finally that which they feared came upon them. Everyone knows that it might have been avoided. It came because the thoughts of the various peoples concerned had been directed upon it for decades.

It has been proved many times, that running away from that which we fear offers the easiest way to be overwhelmed by it.

A story often told to me by my father, who was familiar with the facts, illustrates this truth. More than fifty years ago, an epidemic of Asiatic cholera swept the country and came to Chicago. A well known Chicago physician was possessed by such a fear of this disease that he refused to care for patients. When the first case appeared he packed his baggage and started for Europe.

On board ship this physician was taken with what he thought were symptoms of the dreaded disease. He was so terrified that he died. The ship's physician insisted that the disease was not cholera and that there were no other cases aboard. Fear killed this man. No other Chicago physician died of cholera.

There is no better illustration than that classic fable of the wise man who, while on his way to Bagdad, met the plague. The wise man asked the plague the purpose of his journey, and the answer was:

“To kill five thousand men.”

When the wise man returned, he met the plague coming away from Bagdad. He said to the plague:

“You said you were only going to kill five thousand men and now I hear you have killed fifty thousand.”

“Oh, no!” replied the plague. “I only killed five thousand. Fear killed the others.”

There is literal truth in the familiar expression, “Paralyzed with fear.” When great fear seizes a person, the power of motion is suddenly removed. Stage fright causes the brain to cease its functions, dries the throat so that no words come. Fear blanches the cheeks and causes the hair to rise. It causes contraction of the muscles and brings on various diseases.

Asthma is mostly caused by fear. People who fear colds are more likely to contract them than

others. A woman once boasted that each winter she had four serious colds which she feared, and awaited, and they never failed her.

To inspire fear in children is wicked and unnecessary. A nurse who tells terrifying tales to her charges is cruel. Many children have been made cowards for life by such treatment. Parents who rule children by fear, rather than by love, lose much of the joy of life and often start children downward on the road to ruin.

We were once taught that we should fear God, and thus an abject and groveling attitude was regarded as religious and holy. We are struggling today for release from that erroneous thought but the elimination is not easy.

Fear is removed by a full realization of the Omnipresence, but before that realization comes our fears may bring many tortures.

There is an old story of a monk who opened a coffin where a dead abbot lay, in order to remove a valuable ring on the dead man's finger. The robber's robe was caught by a nail as he turned to leave, and he was held. The monk died then and there of fright.

Mothers who fear to send their children to school because of microbes do much to attract these microbes to their children.

Healing

To be healed is to be made whole. When one is made whole, not the body alone but the soul as well is healed.

There are many methods of healing but there is only one healer. There is but one source from which all healing comes.

A patient is acting within his rights if he chooses a physician or surgeon, or uses drugs or the knife. God is the healer regardless of all methods. We need not condemn these methods or quarrel with those who use them. The source of healing may be reached in countless ways.

In the early days of Christianity, healing through the spirit was common. Jesus gave instructions that all who followed him should "heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, and raise the dead." He told them to do precisely as he did, because he was not different from the rest of humanity. He said that we were one with him and one with the Father.

For three hundred years after Christ this teaching was faithfully followed. Healing was constantly practiced by Christians. It was not until the lust for power and the greed for gold

entered the church that healing was abandoned as a necessary part of the practice of Christianity. Even then there arose great souls who lived the perfect Christian life and did exactly as the Master taught. Healing was not considered by the early Christians as a mark of special sanctity, but rather as a natural and legitimate consequence of following Jesus.

The Master shows very plainly that neither special formula nor practice is necessary. He does show that faith, love, concentration and hope are very essential. Peter, James and John, the three disciples standing for faith, hope and love, were with Jesus when he accomplished his greatest healing.

Jesus often went apart and concentrated his thought on the spirit, where, indeed, his thought was always turned. Jesus was always faithful. He proved that it is faithfulness, and not experience, that gives the greatest power of healing. Effects are produced by realization and not by time.

No rules may be given for the treatment of patients beyond the general rules that insist upon purity of thought, faith, hope, love, honesty and sincerity. Each patient must be treated in a manner that will reach him and might not reach his neighbor. The spirit guides both healer and patient. The patient could not come for spiritual healing if the Holy Spirit did not guide him.

We often hear one say, "I have not much faith in your methods, but I decided to try your treatment because I could not see how I would be injured."

That does not sound like faith, yet one would not have come at all unless one had some faith, some hope, some love. We must never refuse help, no matter if that help bears little fruit.

In treatment, it is necessary for the healer to become quiet to concentrate his whole being on the spirit, to await very humbly for the guidance of the spirit and to follow that guidance obediently. The words we are led to speak are not our words; the thoughts are not our thoughts. These words and thoughts belong to the Spirit. In proportion as we are able to give the words and thoughts of the Spirit with faith and earnestness, so the healing goes out.

Sometimes the Master spoke the word when at a distance from his patient, and such was his power that instant healing followed. Sometimes, the patient was healed by a touch of his hand. Very often he required the patient to make a definite effort of his own accord.

"Take up thy bed and walk."

"Go and sin no more."

"Go show yourselves to the priests and fulfill the law of Moses."

Once the Master was known to mix clay and spittle, probably because he saw that this particular patient needed the aid of something that he could feel. Many people think they are not being helped unless they can see, touch or swallow something. They are weak in faith. If the Spirit so guides, you may give them what they desire. Thus they are satisfied and the way is open to the real healing which has no connection with these external things.

Many physicians have given to patients bread pills coated with sugar, and with excellent results. Only the faith of the patient produced the cure.

If the touch of a hand quiets a patient and removes pain, why withhold that comfort? The person's hand does not heal. The healing comes from the divine Spirit reaching through that channel. Jesus often employed that method but many of his greatest cures were made through absent treatments. The Centurion's servant was healed instantly by the absent treatment of the spoken word, and Jesus remarked on the wonderful faith of the Roman soldier.

When the lepers came to Jesus he did not relieve them instantly from their troubles, but sent them to do that which the law prescribed, namely, to show themselves to the priests, to bathe and to be received again into the haunts of men. On the way, while obeying Jesus, all ten were healed. One only, a stranger, returned to give thanks. That was about the proportion of gratitude shown by those helped, and explains why many who have been healed fall back later into the same trouble.

If those who have been healed would give thanks to the Holy Spirit and remember the great blessings bestowed, they would remain healed and would not fall again into the same error.

The Power of the Word

In studying this outline of a method of right thinking, and consequently of right living, we must keep with us constantly the realization of the omnipresence of God. That is important above all things. It is the basis of everything and must be accepted in the fullest meaning.

The Psalmist asks:

“Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up to heaven thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.”

As man is God's image and likeness, God is with him wherever he goes. God is all good and if we made his omnipresence a reality in our consciousness, there would be neither sin, sickness nor death.

How may we apply this basic idea of omnipresence to our everyday life? If we are to have the

benefits, we must make the application in all events, under all circumstances, conditions and environments.

The spoken word creates conditions. It conveys meaning to the listener, and from this arises nearly everything that is accomplished by man.

But behind the word is the thought which is the real creative force. The thought must precede the word. The reality must first be pictured and worked out in the architect's mind. Thought, then, is the prime mover in all creation.

“As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.”

Sin, sickness and death follow unwise thinking. Thoughts of disease should be replaced by thoughts of health. It is an established fact that people who read medical works, and especially young medical students, often fear that the disease of which they read has become fastened upon them. They look for symptoms. A physical disturbance follows, though this may not always be related to the special subject of study.

The old saying, that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, is as true of spiritual thought as of chemistry.

If we fail to make practical, everyday use of our power of thought, along these lines, we are likely to act foolishly and to irritate people. If we show too much enthusiasm, too much energy and persistence, we often turn people away from a possible study of the great truth, and so fail in our purpose of interesting them.

If we are earnest, we must live the truth as nearly as we are able. It is time to speak, when we are interrogated.

If we are to make our words helpful, we must rid our minds of intolerance. That is absolutely essential. The truth is that not one of us is better than the other. The idea that we are superior is a most pernicious thought. The world's greatest persecutions have resulted from it.

Some of us are blind to the truth, the eyes of others are opened a trifle, but intrinsically each is the child of God and made of the same substance. If we are to be channels for healing and for the spread of the Divine light, prejudice must go.

Our thoughts must be systematic, orderly, or, in a word, scientific. Science is not confined wholly to material things but is applicable to the spirit. After a truth has been demonstrated to our satisfaction, our words will speak only the truth, as our thoughts hold it. Our knowledge of the truth may be arranged so that our words will carry power and conviction.

Our thoughts must be concentrated to be efficacious. We must think clearly and specifically of that which we wish to demonstrate. All else must be excluded.

As Divine Spirit is all pure, holy, good, so we must think only pure, holy and good thoughts if we would bring forth right conditions. We never reach positive results by dwelling upon the negative side. That is why we, who believe in the power of thought, must not allow our thoughts to concentrate upon evil, sin and disease.

Depressing thoughts breed disease. Let the sunshine flood your mentality. Do not say that you are stupid or dull or unhappy. Realize that you are a part of the great Spirit, and not an insignificant personality. When you merge that personality into the great and holy Spirit, the creative power, gloom is dispersed and life made beautiful. Love and truth, joy and happiness, are beautiful because they are the expression of Deity.

Therefore, words are concrete thoughts. As thoughts are of value so the words will be of value. Prayers are thoughts, and all of our thoughts should be prayers. We may pray without ceasing only when every thought, every breath is a prayer.

Prayer is not necessarily a spoken word; it does not mean any special attitude. Prayer means only a conscious connection with the Holy Spirit. We do not do away with prayer, as some accuse us of doing. We simply increase prayer until it takes in all of life. Of

what value is the repetition of words if these words are not the expression of thought? Words merely repeated, parrot-like, mean nothing. The Chinese still have prayer wheels, and believe by turning them around they please their gods. Our God is Spirit, and must be served and prayed to in the spirit and worshipped in thought and in mind. We must realize our oneness with the great Divine Mind to be able to use creative words that will carry a message.

Forgiveness

The meaning of forgiveness is made clear, and becomes very vital when we transpose the syllables into give-for. If we give love for hate, joy for sadness, strength for weakness, health for disease, then we may be said to be going about on the Master's business.

Forgiveness takes many forms. We must forgive our fellow men, we must forgive ourselves and forgive circumstances.

To forgive one for an injury seems difficult, but if we regard the subject from the spiritual viewpoint, we will soon become convinced that we have not been injured to the degree that we had supposed. The act may have been done without intention of injury. The injury may not have been very great, and possibly we may have derived real benefit from it. Indeed, the injury may

have brought us to an understanding of ourselves that we would not have reached without it. It is our duty to release any trouble very soon.

We are all human. We continually fall back into bad habits, and at such times are likely to become angry with ourselves because of our weaknesses. That is not wise. We should learn to forgive ourselves, and in our desire to avoid repetition of the error, we should put it away from our thoughts and begin over again.

An error is made tenfold worse if we brood over it. For brooding and self condemnation, which bring disease and discomfort, we must substitute renewed effort to avoid evil.

We must learn to be tolerant with our circumstances. It is not wise to become wrathful against our environments, against the things of life that seem hard to bear, against annoyances that seem to us either great or small. If we think rightly, we will find good in the greatest difficulties. The evil in them is the result of wrong thinking. If we give patience for impatience, calmness for irritation, teaching for ignorance, pleasant companionship for arrogance, we will solve the problem.

The most important element of forgiveness is the willingness to forget. Often one says, "I can forgive but I cannot forget."

That person states a falsehood. Either he forgets and allows the past to bury its dead, or he has not forgiven. While we hold to the thought of a trouble we have not forgiven the person causing it.

Anger over real or imaginary evil causes bad blood, in a literal sense. Scientists have repeatedly shown that anger generates an actual poison. Elmer Gates has found poison in the saliva of an angry man, and has in turn found the saliva free from poison when the man was calm.

The poison that enters our blood as the result of anger, shows itself in some form of disease in the body. This may be serious or light, but the manifestation will surely follow.

It is difficult to forgive sarcasm or cutting words. To meet that we should send a thought of love, and say silently:

"You do not wish to injure me. You realize your divine brotherhood with me. I love you and you love me."

That treatment works with wonderful rapidity.

Our great example is found in the manner with which Jesus met sin. He was gentle and forgiving

when he talked to the woman in Samaria. He did not condone her offenses, but he was forgiving to the sinner. He said that sins committed in thought were as serious as those committed in act, but that all sins are forgiven when taken up and replaced by virtues.

Often his healing was performed by the words, “Go and sin no more.”

When the scribes and Pharisees wished to stone the woman taken in adultery, Jesus quietly said, “Let him who is without sin cast the first stone.” One by one, these arrogant men slunk away as each saw his own particular sin written in the sand by his Master.

To the woman who was left alone with the only one who was sinless, Jesus said, “Hath no man condemned thee? Neither do I. Go in peace and sin no more.”

Jesus also forgave those who tortured and killed his body. Certainly that great teacher taught forgiveness in its highest and most beautiful form.

When Peter asked Jesus how many times he should forgive, and whether it should be as many as seven times, Jesus answered:

“I say not unto thee seven times, but seventy times seven.”

That meant an unlimited number because, if he forgave seventy times, the habit would be fixed and he would continue to forgive until the end. When he had forgiven seventy times seven, he would have forgotten the nature of the original offense.

It is essential that we should make forgiveness a constant thought. We should daily forgive all who seem to be authors of our troubles, and forget the troubles as well.

Prayer

Our understanding of the meaning of prayer differs from that of the dictionary definition in that we regard prayer as an intimate, holy communion with the fountain of our being, rather than as an act of beseeching, entreating, supplicating.

God is omnipresent in us, around us, everywhere at all times. We cannot instruct this all-inclusive Spirit with regard to our needs, or His attributes. As we cannot increase the flow of life from this fountain because it is infinite, why beg that increase?

All that we may do is to increase our own capacity of drinking from that fountain. We may go to the fountain with a larger receptacle and fill it to the brim, but that neither diminishes nor arrests the infinite life flow.

Begging God to make us know Him will not furnish the insight we desire; we ourselves must make the effort to know and understand. Each effort carries one a little farther on the path of enlightenment. Nothing worthwhile is obtained without labor.

Prayer, in the right meaning, is a most essential part of the worthwhile life. The simple repetition of formulae is far from that. If words help concentration, let us use them and for that purpose only. Jesus referred to vain repetitions as of no value.

A mere supplication to God to forgive our sins will not help. We must first give up sin. Sin is forgiven when it is destroyed. God is too pure to behold iniquity.

Each person must have a realization of the things that need forgiveness and rectification. Each must go about this work by praying for more light, to make the effort in silence for instruction from the Holy Spirit and to follow that instruction as perfectly as possible.

To pray for punishment for our sins is foolish. God does not punish. Each act is followed by its logical consequences which are not punishments, but the natural and plain working out of a law that is not cruel but beneficent. What seems to us punishment often provides the best avenue of escape from our sinful condition. As love is just and God is love, so all law of God is love and the result is a beautiful harmony.

Sincerity is needed in prayer above all things. Earnestness and sincerity constitute the only value of prayer.

The Pharisees fasted, and gave alms, and prayed on the streets to be seen of men. That spirit is manifested in many other ways in this time, so that the authors may be considered godly.

Humility is necessary in our attitude toward the Holy Spirit, but this should not take an attitude of groveling or cringing. We should keep in mind that beautiful thought, "Of myself I can do nothing," which recognizes the power within which can do all things. It is humility with self-respect because we are the children of God.

Self-examination is necessary at times, but introspection is likely to lead to morbidity and is therefore both unwise and unhealthy. We may never reach our ideals, for these grow higher as we advance into the spiritual life, but by endeavoring to attain them we have always before us the hope that leads to a higher expression of what we know to be perfection of the Holy Spirit.

Self-examination should not discourage us, no matter how many faults we find within ourselves. We must know that God is with us with help at hand whenever we desire it. We will not despair when we remember the faults of Peter and Paul and the heights to which they attained.

Jesus told us to pray without ceasing, but he never told us to do the impossible. Obviously, he did not mean the use of special words or a special attitude or a special place. Unceasing prayer in that respect would be impossible. He meant by that command that we must consecrate our every word, our every thought, our every action to the Holy Spirit. To do this, we must live to the highest and best standard of our ability.

We must control our hasty tempers, control our appetites, be bright and happy and radiate joy on all sides. We must cultivate sweetness and harmony in our homes. We must do our work wherever it may be found, in the spirit of cheerfulness and with our best efforts.

To pray without ceasing, is to live always and consciously in communion with the Holy Spirit. We do not need to be alone. We can school ourselves to the silent communion in a crowd as well as in a desert but we must be quite honest with ourselves and with God.

Concentration

Concentration has been well defined as the “divine art of centering our mind upon what we please, as long as we please.”

There is nothing so important in the training of a child as the cultivation of this power of concentration. Nothing in the child’s training is more neglected. The practice of finishing a work before another is undertaken, and keeping the attention fixed upon it, is of immeasurable value.

Quite as important is the decision of an object or subject upon which the mind shall be concentrated. If we focus upon fear, then fear becomes our one great thought. If we focus upon good we become good. In a word, if we train our thoughts to dwell habitually upon one thing, we become like that thing. The thought becomes a part of one’s self. Focusing the mind upon universal perfection gives large views and makes for broadness and perfection.

The truth we are endeavoring to teach requires complete devotion, entire concentration. Perfect concentration helps to acquire the power to concentrate. Once the thought of omnipresence has taken possession of a soul, the thought is habitually turned in that direction.

The power to focus thought when fully developed, brings a clearer spiritual and material vision. Our spiritual and material senses are both sharpened and refined. This power is of vital importance in the healing of disease.

To concentrate truly, we should go into silence, though this practice may be abused. In silence we should first rid our minds of all thoughts of selfishness, greed, sensuality. We must cleanse our minds of earthly dross and prepare a dwelling place for the Most High.

Emily Cady says:

“At the great heart of humanity there is a great and awful home-sickness which never has been and never can be satisfied with anything less than a clear and vivid consciousness of the indwelling presence of God.”

This departure into silence must be orderly, if practical benefits are to be had. At first, no one can remain in silence for a long period of time without permitting the thoughts to wander. It is a matter requiring much practice.

One should select a half hour or so when one may best be quiet, alone in a room or out in the fresh air. What is distraction to one is help to another. The conditions are a matter of personal choice. For some, the early morning is best for silent, concentrated thought.

Choose a thought that appeals strongest either of love or life, gladness or peace. As an aid to concentration, repeat words which bring to mind that upon which you desire to focus your thought. If it is peace, say over many times, “Peace, peace, peace be still, be still and know that I am God.”

Gradually peace comes over you and you realize the great, deep, holy peace of the Spirit. If the feeling of peace comes only for a moment, that moment is precious.

Perhaps your thoughts will wander to many things beyond that on which you are endeavoring to focus. Do not become irritated or indignant. Know that you will do better another time. If during the day your mind will return to the thought of peace, you will be aided, regardless of how many disturbing thoughts arise. Make this period of silence a daily habit. It is well worthwhile.

Cultivate the habit of taking all problems into this silence, place them before the Holy Spirit, ask for guidance and wait. You will surely be guided in one form or another.

As no two people are alike, so no two ever receive spiritual guidance in the same form. To most of us comes a leading or urging quite as powerful and as positive as words.

We should take with us into silence a spirit of humility. It is necessary that we learn the meaning of the words, “Of myself I can do nothing.”

We must realize that it is only as we lose our small, personal selves that we find the greater self, the Omnipresent Spirit. We must willingly set aside our own small judgment and follow the larger, greater wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

Mrs. Militz tells us that when she was beginning her career as a teacher and healer, a woman

came to her for help. In the silence Mrs. Militz heard the command to tell the woman to go to bed and rest, to eat some wholesome food and drop all work. The young healer felt that such a command could not be serious because it was such advice as any physician might give, and so she refrained from giving this plain commonsense instruction.

The woman left and went on with her arduous work. She never returned to the healer and soon afterward passed away.

In the silence Mrs. Militz asked for an explanation and received the word that obedience was better than sacrifice. Since then she has always obeyed, and her work is tremendous.

The leading of the Holy Spirit will come to each of us if we humbly seek it in the secret place of the Most High. We need never fear to follow that lead.

Heaven and Hell

As the keystone of our faith is the Omnipresence of God, it becomes wholly impossible for us to conceive of a personal God who could be everywhere present. Then, too, a personal God as accepted by many religions has human passions and desires that are incompatible with the idea of Omnipresence.

We believe that as God is omnipresent, and in every particle of matter or spirit, that God as a creative force, must be Good. It is impossible to conceive of a creative force that is wicked; such a force would be destructive rather than creative.

As this Infinite creative power must of necessity be beneficent, we put the thought into words and say simply, God is Good, God is the all-good.

While there is no human science to prove that God is, every human science is founded on that fact. We know that we live and breathe and that we were born into this world through no efforts of our own. We know that we did not plan our entrance into this world, nor did we choose our parentage or environment. Yet all this must have been thought out, planned and executed in its minutest details by a great creative power which must be omnipresent, since its works are everywhere.

As this creative force made us of the substance which was in and of itself, so we must realize that there can be no separation between Spirit and substance or matter. If God is omnipresent, then He is present in matter, and the spiritual and material man are one.

The Holy Spirit created this universe as an expression of His own life and substance. We cannot, with all our science, give life to anything. Life is something apart from our bodies. Life cannot die.

Life is God. Life is Spirit. God is Life, and that Life lives in us.

The omnipresent Spirit that has given to us all the wonderful things of life is all Good. All good cannot be perfect without love. So we say, God is Love which permeates all nature.

All things work under a wonderful system of law and order. All things are done wisely and well. The creative force of all this is absolutely intelligent. This intelligence comprises all wisdom, all knowledge, all understanding. Our small human intelligence is of the same substance as that of the Spirit, but one is infinite and the other is finite. We are in God, in the Infinite Intelligence, and are able to receive fully and abundantly of that intelligence.

We accept the saying, "God is power," because this creative force must of necessity have infinite power. Power includes strength, so the source of all our power, of all our strength, is infinite Spirit.

There would be no incentive to creation without joy; therefore, this infinite creative force must have all joy in it because it is all present and all inclusive.

We who believe are convinced that God is all substance and spirit, all life and nature. God is all intelligence which includes all wisdom, knowledge and understanding. God is all power and joy, all strength and realization.

What to us is the meaning of heaven? If God is omnipresent, He cannot be in one place. We conclude, therefore, that heaven is not a place but a state of consciousness.

We make our own heaven. Heaven is a conscious realization of our oneness with the Holy Spirit, that we are of the substance of the spirit and that each and every one of our activities is of the Spirit. That heaven is to be had here and now.

When we are in this spiritual state in this heaven, we have all power, all strength. We can use that power only for good. The use of it gives a sense of peace and happiness. That brings us into perfect joy, perfect realization. That is heaven and is of our own making.

Hell, like heaven, is a state of consciousness, and not a place of torture. We make our own hell. The Holy Spirit is omnipresent, but if we so elect, we may shut ourselves from the consciousness of that presence. This state may be compared to that of a person who shuts his eyes and refuses to see the sunlight that may be all about him.

We deliberately place ourselves in hell when we permit our thoughts to dwell on the negative and unhappy side. When we think of disease and yield to illness it is because, at one time or another, we have yielded to sin. If sin were eliminated from human life there would be neither sickness nor

death.

When we eliminate the personal God, we necessarily eliminate the material heaven and hell. It is our duty to create our own heaven and to live in it. If that is done we need have nothing to fear from hell.

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