

In a civilization called Christendom - that portion of the race embracing Christianity as a religious way of life - we find it strange how often men wonder about the practice of prayer. They call one to the other, "Show God to us"; "Teach us to pray." As a group, Christians outdo themselves in the celebration of religious holy days such as New Year's Day, Easter, Christmas, the Sabbaths, the Holy Days (both Feast and Fast Days), and the Holy Weeks. Yet they do not know, nor do they practice the actual instruction of Jesus Christ, particularly that aspect of His teaching which concerns the art of prayer. However, we know that any Christian who accepts and follows His teaching concerning prayer need never say, "Teach me to pray." Prayer, to him, will be as natural as breathing and just as necessary; for prayer moves through the consciousness of man as the breath moves through his body, to reinvigorate and bring him back to an original condition of freshness of action.

Continued attention to the instruction of Jesus Christ will emphasize certain points for every sincere seeker of truth. While each person will be impressed according to his own type of consciousness, certain authoritative directions apply to every person who seeks. For those who ask, "Teach us to pray," we refer to the words of the Master, as revealed through the Gospels. Acquaintance with the teaching enables a man to discover that he is not to pray in the manner of a hypocrite who stands in the synagogue or on a street corner to be seen of men; neither is he to use vain repetitions with the idea that God will hear his many words. "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. . . . Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him." (Matt. 6:6-8)

Jesus' instructions are steps designed to prepare a devotee for prayer. One who observes them comes to himself and turns his attention away from every outer object - adulation of men, adoration of church and its fixtures, mechanical repetition of formulas prescribed for worship, the observance of ceremonial occasions, and other following of formal procedure without thought of the meaning involved - and he gives his attention wholeheartedly to the Object of worship, GOD in the midst of his own consciousness. "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty." (Zeph. 3:17) He finds this "midst" to be the very center of his Being; and it is to this center that he and God meet. In this place within himself, he is isolated with God; he is consciously aware of God. No other person can enter the sacred chamber in him. Even though the prayers of another may be beneficial to him, he only can know and commune with God in the midst of his own consciousness. While God is Universal and Omnipresent, each man contacts Him in a very vital and personal way in the secret place of the Most High.

Jesus located it when He said, "The Kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:21) It is here that God will save a man; that He will rejoice over him with joy; that He will rest in His love and joy over him with singing; for man is God's highest creation, made in His own Image and Likeness, and endowed with His Name and Nature. In his midst, man can be conscious of His Creator; but he must remember that it is in him that God can be aware of Himself. Few men know this. More words on this subject would neither amplify nor clarify its meaning. Therefore, we shall turn to the simple, efficacious words of Jesus Christ. "After this manner therefore pray ye:

"Our Father" - Everything filling the Universe (our world in particular) is fathered by this ONE to whom we pray. Our Father is the Life-giving Principle that enlivens all created things. Our Father is the Father of all

mankind, the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, the creeping and flying things, and the fish of the sea. From Him alone the essential Life-element stirs all with Livingness. The One Life - His Life - begets and supports all living creation.

"Which art" - The word "which" indicates the impersonal, the neuter gender of THAT which IS; and it is THAT to which we pray. He who comes to God must believe that God IS, and that He is the Rewarder of those who seek Him.

"In heaven," - In the realm of Dominion, in the Governor's Seat. We pray to Him who is above the mundane world, to Him who rules from a domain, of which the special province is Spirit, and from which His rule prevails throughout the Universe. Our relation to the Father is so intimate that we may sense His Divine Presence in the midst of our consciousness and from there lift up our hearts unto the Most High God; for God within and God above is One God, and we are one with THAT One. "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord." (Jer. 23:23-24)

"Hallowed be Thy Name." - Allness, wholeness, fullness, completeness manifests Thy Nature and Character. Man does what he does by and for the glory of the power of this Name, this Good Character, Jesus Christ, doing what He did for the glory of this Name, so charged the Identity, Jesus Christ, with all the power of that Name that, to this day, miracles are still performed in the Name of Jesus Christ. The disciples performed their works in His Name.

"Thy Kingdom come." - A petition asking God for His own Kingdom seems, on the surface, presumptuous; but a more mature examination reveals the truth that God, being the Nature and Character He IS, has nothing but Himself and His Dominion to give; and this He gives freely to His most precious creation - man. Are we prepared to receive as graciously as God gives?

"Thy will be done in earth." - Every form of Good (invisible and visible) is given of God and is the result of His Will. In reality, His Will is the only Will, the One Will that causes and forms every good and perfect gift that man can be aware of. For this reason, we are sure that God's Will for our highest Good is the point from which we are to consider and will our highest good for ourselves. Whoever is fortunate enough to have the presence of mind to put himself in agreement with this Good Will shall be the joyous recipient of all Its highest and best gifts - gifts that will take form and be filled with lasting, Divine qualities. They will be visible, manifest, and usable; for whatever is recognized as obtaining in God's Kingdom, is established on the earth. Since man controls whatever is established in the earth, and has jurisdiction over manifest things, he wields a power of such magnitude that he can bind or loose them. And what he does to them on earth is duplicated in heaven. By this, the man who lacks understanding destroys himself. As Jesus put it: "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." Hence, the more treasure a man lays up in heaven, the more will his body and circumstances (the earth) be full of treasure, not only of material and mental worth, but of spiritual value as well.

"As it is in heaven." - As "earth" is the realm of the physical and mental characteristics of man which have the capacity to receive and enjoy the blessings of God, so "heaven" is the realm of the spiritual characteristic of man. Man is a spiritual Being, made in the Image and Likeness of God. His home is in heaven; that is, his true existence is in that higher phase of Being where he is in control of himself to the extent that he lets God's Will be his will. "I can of mine own self do nothing: . . . because I seek not mine own will, but the Will of the Father which hath sent me," said Jesus. (Jn.19:30) In this Prayer, heaven refers to man's inner awareness of God's Presence that is higher than the earth (man's outer awareness of God). This inner, higher realm is the motivating area and the more man's heart is there, the more of Its treasure he

will have on all planes. Man always moves toward and both possesses and is possessed by that which he loves.

"Give us this day our daily bread:" - God is the Giver, not only of good and perfect gifts, but of Himself. The recipient of God (and of His blessings) may expect to see and to receive an outpouring of superabundant substance that will fill the consciousness and spill over into the affairs and the estate, not only of himself, but of his fellow men: friends, enemies, and even the strangers within his gates. The Prayer has to do with this day, the present time. In the teaching and practice of Jesus Christ, there is no hereafter. God's benefits are receivable and usable as of now - today. Only in the sense that now is eternity is there a future. The bread is the body-building Word that was with God in the beginning. It is the Spiritual Substance that activates as Soul which, in turn, is clothed with flesh (form) and becomes visible. This is our Bread that sustains our bodies (and affairs) this day - every day.

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." - God is singular; man (the human) is plural. There is One God; there are many men. Always we address our communication to the One; always man shares his blessings with the many. A general treatment of forgiveness throughout the whole consciousness is conducive to a receptive attitude toward God and a fuller capacity to receive His unspeakable riches. When man forgives man, God forgives (or pours Himself into) that forgiving attitude of mind. Debts denote a withholding or nonpayment of some medium of exchange or service. In this Prayer, the reference is to a withholding of the self from God, a nonpayment of attention. All man can do for God is give Him attention - pay attention. Delinquency in attention is a racial acquisition. The individual who sees and acknowledges it as such prepares the way for a sort of universal rehabilitation that will be set up throughout the entire creation, including himself as chief beneficiary. An ability to forgive the selfishness and shortsightedness of others is requisite to receiving the fuller benefits of the Spiritual estate. In the life of Jesus Christ, the statement, "Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do," preceded the greatest demonstration of record, the overcoming of death.

"And lead us" - After being forgiven, man enters an initiation into spiritual powers and principles where he needs the guidance and direction of the All-Knowing Intelligence to which he is being acclimated.

"Not into temptation," - This stipulation has very deep import; but, for understanding in the most practical way, consider the sunbather who seeks a healthful suntan rather than a harmful sunburn. This sunbather must be moderate about his periods of exposure and use certain lotions to lessen possibility of burns. In a similar manner, the spiritual seeker sings, "Thou anointest my head with oil." "Deliver us from evil." In certain psychic practices, devotees employ fire tests, spectacular in their intensity, to prove that man has within him the capacity to cope with any outer condition or circumstance to which he might be exposed. However, Jesus Christ taught a better way, entirely free from exhibitionism of any sort. His teachings promote healthful, normal spiritual growth and development in consciousness. Excessive heats are caused by waste matters being burned and energies being disintegrated. Spiritual growth is an integrating action. Intense heat is a purging that is a sore trial. The Christ follower avoids it through repentance and forgiveness. Religion has made the error of locating this purging action in a place called Purgatory. This indicates a belief in separation, apartness from God; and this belief is sin, or evil. Man cannot be separated from God; but the error in him, like trash, can be purged: good comes out of it; but the easier experience is through forgiveness.

The use of the following doxology is optional, but it is meaningful and is a fitting climax to the greatest Prayer.

"For thine is the kingdom." - What can withstand the authority of the Creator of Authority, the Establisher of Principles, the Imposer of Laws? Surely this is the sort of God one would select from choice. He is a God able to work His Works and none shall either hinder or give permission. He is the Supreme Sovereign who says to this one, "Come!" and he comes, and to that one, "Go!" and he goes. His Word is Law; His whim is Creed; His Ways are above, beneath, and around,

"And the power." - Jesus Christ has been called the Empowered One, which He is. He lived and breathed the instructions set forth in His Prayer of Lordship. Because Jesus was Empowered and demonstrated God's power to work through His own Created One, each man may participate in and express that same Power, that same Authority. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." (John 14:12)

"And the glory," - The glory of God is the composite praise and honor of realms and revelations invisible and visible. The user of this Lord's Prayer will find himself glorifying God continuously, as God settles into and shows forth through him as the Power, and the Glory of His Perfect Presence.

"Forever. Amen." The "Forever, Amen" is another lesson and is a logical addition to the Lord's Prayer.

000

SPIRITICITY, July 1951

MAN IN THE UNIVERSE

By Robert Applegate
(Continued from last month)

In the May and June issues of Spiriticity we have considered the nature of the universe in which man lives, as it is viewed by the astronomers and other scientists who make it their field of study. The reason for doing that is that man's ideas of the universe, and particularly of God, determine his whole outlook on life. The man who believes in the ultimate reality of a physical cosmos is committed to a materialistic and therefore fatalistic view of life. His highest ideal can be only some vague and unconvincing concept of a good life for man here on this whirling speck of dust called earth. In this country, this point of view has led to a deification of the democratic way of life and democratic institutions. However, the quickest way to destroy anything is to idolize it, and thus the deification of democracy in the United States is leading to the destruction of democracy. This destruction is simply the logical conclusion of a materialistic philosophy. It is not a new phenomenon, nor are the times we live in unprecedented. The Athenians developed a complete democracy over two thousand years ago, yet that democracy destroyed itself by the very means by which we are seeking to destroy ourselves - by the idolization of itself.

We discovered, however, that, by the admission of the scientists themselves, the physical universe is not real, and it is impossible to say anything with certainty about it. We concluded therefore that we are free to follow the reasoning that declares that the true Universe is spiritual, eternal, and unchanging; and that man is an immortal, spiritual Being. We discovered, furthermore, that Jesus Christ proved this fact and asked us to have faith enough in His demonstration to follow in His steps.

Jesus Christ has told us how He performed His demonstration of complete spirituality. He did it by faithful employment of the law that one becomes, consciously and manifestly, like that to which he gives his steadfast attention. Jesus, describing His practice of this law, said, "I honour my Father" (that is, I respect Him, and, respecting Him, rather than the world or the opinions of men, I give my attention to Him rather than to the foolishness of mankind). Jesus repeated and emphasized this statement in many ways: "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. . . . I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." Thus Jesus stated clearly that His practice consisted of giving His attention to God and letting God work the Divine Will through Him. It is so simple that it sounds childish and impossible, but Jesus proved it; and, having proved it, He stated His conclusion: "I and my Father are one." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." He then asked men to perform the same experiment for themselves: "Follow Me."

We need no other guide than Jesus Christ; we need no other proof of the unreality of the material and transitory than that which He supplied. Nevertheless, there is comfort in numbers, and it is heartening to note that the wisest of all ages have agreed with Him. Centuries before His time, the Psalmist was inspired to praise God with the words: "Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." Similarly, to a nameless prophet of the Captivity God delivered the message for all mankind, "look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. . . . The heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein (consciously) shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished." Thus these inspired men perceived the transitoriness and unreality of the physical cosmos that the scientists are just beginning to discover, and they also perceived the eternality and changelessness of God that the materialists have not yet discovered. Is it any wonder that they cried with such passion that men should turn their attention from the dream of the senses to the Reality of the Spirit?

The unanimity with which the mystics have urged that men should seek God, since He is the only Reality, is in itself an impressive testimony to the truth of their view. This view is stated succinctly in Proverbs: "The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from the hell beneath." Theologians have childishly insisted that hell is a place; whereas it is simply a consciousness of separation from God. Primitive men always first perceive Truth symbolically, but their successors make the mistake of solidifying the symbol and building up an absurd dogma around it. Hell is traditionally regarded as a place of heat, of bondage, and of separation from God. It is thus an admirable symbol for the result of giving the attention to the external; for this view pictures all energy as disintegrating into heat, it binds man in the belief in materiality and death, and it produces a consciousness of separation from God. In man's consciousness is the only place that he can be separated from the Omnipresent One, and thus hell must be in man's consciousness; and, in fact, many people are quite conscious of living in hell. General Sherman made the often quoted remark, "War is hell." But war is simply the most violent outpicturing of man's belief in materiality and his consequent striving to get and to hold; and thus we may say, "Belief in materiality is hell." It is clear then that the way of

Life - the only way that leads to Life - is above, and wise are they who follow it.

We may now summarize our findings as follows: 1) man seems to be a mortal, material being living in a slowly dying universe; 2) this picture, produced by belief in the reports of the senses, is not real, but, in Reality, man is an eternal, changeless, spiritual being, living in an immutable, spiritual Universe; 3) Jesus Christ proved this, and, in so doing, showed the way to rise from the dream world, in which man seems to be bound, into the spiritual Realm, which is his true Home; 4) the mystics of all ages are unanimous in their agreement that God alone is Real.

We may note, in closing, that, since both the universe and man are already spiritual and perfect, the only change that it is possible for man to make is in his own consciousness, or awareness. As he changes his consciousness (by turning his attention from the unreal to the Real) a corresponding change is automatically produced in manifestation, which thereby comes closer to Reality. Jesus Christ did not try to do anything to God, man, or the universe, because He knew these to be already perfect. He therefore concerned Himself entirely with His own consciousness. As He purified this consciousness, the Reality of His eternal spirituality became more and more manifest until men could see It in all Its perfection; and at the same time conditions around Him changed (or seemed to change): people were healed, prospered, and gladdened.

As man changes his consciousness, the law that energy runs downhill is completely reversed. As he gives his attention to God, the energies within him, instead of running steadily downward, assume ever higher and finer forms. The end of this process is not death, but that awareness of Life that Jesus Christ had when He was able to drop His corporeal body into the grave and pick it up again transformed into a body of Light.

(The End)

ALPHABET OF
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day Of The Month

JULY 1951

2. AWAKE, AWAKE, put on strength
3. BUY the truth.
4. CEASE not to CRY unto the Lord.
5. DRAW out at length thy loving kindness.
6. EXALT ye the Lord our God.
7. FORGIVE, and ye shall be FORGIVEN.

*

9. He will GUIDE you into all Truth.
10. The Lord will be the HOPE of HIS people.
11. He shall deliver the ISLAND of the INNOCENT.
12. It is God that JUSTIFIETH.
13. The Lord KNOWETH the way of the righteous.
14. Yet hath He respect to the LOWLY.

*

16. It is given to you to know the MYSTERIES of the Kingdom.
17. NOW therefore ye are NO more strangers.
18. Ye are not your OWN.
19. Ye have PURIFIED your hearts.
20. Study to be QUIET.
21. Let the peace of God RULE in your hearts.

*

23. The Lord SUSTAINED me.
24. God is my high TOWER.
25. Thanks be to God for His UNSPEAKABLE gift.
26. Thine, O Lord, is the VICTORY.
27. WE know WHAT WE WORSHIP.
28. I do rejoice, YEA, and will rejoice.

*

30. Be ZEALOUS,
31. In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

* * * * *

"When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

*

SPIRITICITY is the working Power of the Spiritual Principle,
As electricity is the working power of the electrical principle.