

The meditation given to Fellowship members for use in the week of February 24, 1957, was:
“In the Spirit of Knowledge there is no ignorance, there is no fear, there is no weakness: let the Spirit of Knowledge within me come forth.”

Marian Dunlop added the following footnote:

“The negative words in the meditation . . . should not be *dwelt on*. Repeat them just often enough to induce the mind to accept the idea that awareness of the Spirit of Knowledge will banish ignorance, fear and weakness. Then repeat only the last part of the sentence.” It is recommended that the meditation which is the subject of this booklet should be used in a similar way.

Alternatively, readers may use the shorter form of words suggested by Marian Dunlop in the booklet: “I thank Thee that Thy Divine Love is now making me whole.”

A MEDITATION

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PREFACE

IN the New Order of Meditation (as it is called to distinguish it from discursive meditation) the attention is held purposefully still on one word or sentence chosen for the Life and Truth that is in it. To this end we often use the Words given us by Christ Himself, in the desire that our consciousness may be transmuted into some likeness of that Divine Consciousness which His Words represent. And if, to rouse ourselves from the mental inertia into which familiar words may lull us, we seek a different form of words for the Truth He taught, we should only do so as the outcome of pondering and experience. Not all 'Affirmations' lead to the Kingdom of Heaven! It is all too easy to reach a fools' paradise by their means.

Having chosen the words for a Meditation, we must be ready to lay aside our own thoughts and feelings, our aspirations and memories, and simply repeat the words mentally as often as any idea presents itself. Again and again we repeat them, till attention, purpose and desire are unified in a calm in which it is possible for us to receive some measure of the Truth which the words contain.

This method of approach to God, and consequently of re-making our consciousness, is so simple that paradoxically it should be studied

under a teacher who can help the learner to avoid the complexities in which the 'natural' man delights. Books on the subject can do little more than show that such a method exists, and should be used sparingly. Unless we can put all our grandeur aside, and sit down and *do* what this method says, we shall never really understand the most elementary primer about Meditation.

The practice is not easy, specially in the early days when so little seems to happen as estimated by our dulled perceptions; but as we persevere we find a power emerging from our times of daily Meditation that can change the whole of life, because it is drawn from Him Who is the Life.

A MEDITATION ON DIVINE LOVE

I THANK THEE THAT THY DIVINE LOVE
IS NOW MAKING ME WHOLE

I SUPPOSE most of us know what it is to feel at times that the circumstances of our lives are such as to justify our feeling downcast and hardly used. We may be able to keep our bitterness within bounds and to curb the outward expression of our feelings. But the feeling of self-pity is there, tinged in varying degrees by resentment against the hardness of our lot.

Life *is* hard; we have much to bear; it would argue lack of intelligence, a sort of cow-like acquiescence on our part *not* to feel resentment or regret at the way life has used us. That is a mood we probably all have at times.

It cannot be claimed that as soon as we begin the practice of Meditation such a mood will never trouble us again. Long-standing habits of response to our environment can only be changed gradually. The old moods will re-appear; but once we have experienced any change of consciousness as a result of meditation, there stirs within us something which makes us ask ourselves: 'What am I going to *do* with this feeling of depression or regret? Am I going to let this feeling dominate and darken my whole outlook? Or am I going to bring it into the Light of the Divine

Presence to be transmuted?' That is a very different mental attitude from the usual one which leads us to ask, 'Who or what will change this circumstance that is making me unhappy?'

Meditation does not, of course, teach us to disregard circumstances or to consider them of no importance. But it does teach us that of greater importance, because of its far-reaching influence, is the way we *feel* towards the circumstance. It teaches us to deal with the feeling at once, before we attempt in any way to deal with the circumstance. This teaching comes to us in the actual times of meditation; we may quicken our apprehension and our readiness to receive by reading books on the theoretical side of the matter, but it is in the Silence that we learn.

The prayer of Meditation is not entreaty that the cause of our suffering may be removed; we do not ask God to make changes for us in our surroundings; but we pray Him to cleanse and heal and enlighten our feeling-nature so that we may re-act to circumstance in a consciousness filled with the realization of His Love.

Let us never forget that to the degree in which we feel depression, or regret, or resentment or condemnation, it is impossible to feel the Presence of God's Love and Wisdom and Peace. No man can serve two masters. If we serve the one kind of 'natural' feeling we cannot serve the eternal Divine feeling. By 'serving' is meant continuing to *attend* to the feelings of whichever kind, brooding on them, abiding in them. We cannot, till

after much training, prevent the occurrence of the 'natural' feelings. But Love will melt them away, if only we will hold ourselves still in the Divine Presence. The word 'melt' gives us just the right idea of the way they disappear. We do not have to fight the untoward feelings, nor exercise strenuous forms of control; it is indeed useless to try to do so, as we know in the case of depression, which our will seems (and is) powerless to banish. But we can and should use the will to prevent the attention from centring all the while on the feeling (of depression, etc.). We must use the will to keep strictly to our times of Meditation; and to get into the habit of 'serving' the right feeling we should keep the words of some Meditation with us at other times, repeating them mentally again and again, not feverishly or aggressively, but calmly and gently.

The following words of Dr. Porter Mills are very suitable for such use:

'I thank Thee that all sadness, condemnation, resentment and regret are being melted away by the incoming of Thy Divine Love into my personal consciousness.'

Let us try now to 'serve' the Spirit of Divine Love. Repeat the words slowly and purposefully.

Silence.

It is possible that we may stumble at the use of the word 'sadness' in the above Meditation

until we develop a finer perception of Divine Joy than is yet common. But meanwhile we can all see that the sort of sadness implied in the word 'dejection' or 'depression' shuts us inside ourselves, rendering us less efficient on the human plane and making a fog between us and the Divine Vision.

This Meditation should draw our attention to the fact that we ought to *want* to be freed from the limiting states of depression, resentment, regret and condemnation. That sounds a foolishly unnecessary thing to say perhaps. Of course, we don't want to keep such uncomfortable feelings! But in practice one finds a tendency in oneself and other people to look on the acuteness of one's uncomfortable feelings as something meritorious. If we are *not* depressed when things go wrong, if we do not feel condemnation for wrong acts, if we do not continue to regret mistakes and failures, it would seem to us evidence of a lack of sensibility, even of moral discrimination. But this Meditation makes it clear that regret and condemnation are to be replaced not by indifference, but by Divine Love, the most glowing, positive, *vital* feeling we can imagine.

The point of using the present tense in meditation is partly in order to induce a state of hopeful expectancy in us; and partly it is an act of faith, obeying Christ's injunction to look on our prayer and its fulfilment as contemporaneous. And when we remember His words we are impelled to include thanksgiving in our form of words. So in

this particular Meditation we do not merely make the affirmation that the evil states are being dissolved by His Love, but we thank and praise Him that it is so.

If any one finds the wording of this Meditation too long it can be shortened to: 'I thank Thee that Thy Divine Love is now making me whole.' For we are *not* in a state of true Health (or Wholeness), while our personal consciousness is full of these hard, limiting feelings. The chief danger of them is that they keep our attention fixed on the short-comings and hardships of the little personal life, and so blind us to the recognition of the Divine Life in and around us.

In this Meditation we seek release from them, not primarily that we may be comfortable, but that we may expand our consciousness of God. *A*

'I thank Thee that all depression, resentment, condemnation and regret are being melted away by the incoming of Thy Divine Love into my personal consciousness.'

Silence.

It is not easy to draw a hard and fast line between the four states for which we seek healing in this Meditation, but they all seem to arise from an imperfect adjustment to life. Sorrow wrongly met either degenerates into regret and dejection or finds more energetic expression in condemnation and resentment, according to the tempera-

ment of the sufferer. Depression is the hardest to grapple with, I think. It is so paralysing that while in its clutches one is apt to believe that never again will one feel anything but depressed, therefore — so we imagine — it is of 'no use' to try to meditate. There are, in such a state of mind, two lines of attack open to us. Either we can boldly face the feeling with some meditation based on the idea of Divine Joy; or we can attack it more indirectly with such a meditation as 'Thy Grace is sufficient for me.' The first method is perhaps more possible and useful in the early stages, before we have sunk deep in the Slough of Despond. But you cannot tell beforehand what will most help another person: each must find out for himself. I think it is possible that most people would find help in the meditation we are using today; and I am quite sure that we should never ignore or neglect depression as soon as it shows itself.

Condemnation is a state of mind easier to control by ordinary methods; it is possible to exercise some measure of self-control and at least not give rein to our critical faculty. In Meditation, however, it is not merely curbed. By imperceptible degrees, as we meditate, the focus of our attention is changed, and our power of discrimination is used to detect what is good and beautiful around us. We are not blind to evil and ugliness if it should be our duty to see them; for meditation does not teach us to put on blinkers or stop up our ears; rather it enables us to be aware of sin

(using the word in a very wide sense) without believing the sin to be a permanent and essential part of the sinner. In the states of condemnation to which we are all prone, we fasten the attention on the lower part of our nature; having once met with a fault in some one we mentally connect him inseparably with that fault; and, by binding our blame on him, by expecting a recurrence of the fault, we are making it easier for him to fall into a repetition of the fault — for we all are suggestible to varying degrees — and he has to contend not only with his tendency to commit the fault but with our censorious expectation of it.

Condemnation arises from our inability to see ourself or our neighbour as a child of God. The more, humanly speaking, we have the 'right' to condemn the more we need to be freed from our condemnation; the more anyone has wronged us, the more we need the Divine Love, which is also Divine Wisdom, to enable us to judge righteous judgment and not according to the senses.

So also, we shall be delivered from resentment, which is a feeling of bitterness for suffering which we consider undeserved, perhaps in our own life, perhaps in that of another. We feel it for what we think is an unfair hardness in our lot, or because of unjust dealing on the part of others. Resentment is often the warped expression of an intense desire for, and love of, fairness; but it is also sometimes the expression of a self-love that demands preferential treatment of life. Whatever the cause, it is one of those states of mind that shuts us

inside our little individual selves and keeps our attention fixed on our personal ailments and griefs.

Regret in the same way confines us within a narrow boundary, but regret we feel for our own mistakes and sins and lost opportunities. It must be distinguished from repentance.

Regret makes us keep on repeating: 'I wish I hadn't.' Repentance makes us say, 'I will arise and go to my Father.' Repentance takes us forward into a fresh future. Regret makes us live in the past. We live over again in *emotion* what has happened. If our regret is deep and intense we have little vitality of feeling left to devote to the present.

In all these states, depression, condemnation, resentment and regret the fundamental feeling is that life is against us. We think we have to fight in order to wrest from life what happiness and good we can; and often the odds are too much for us and we give up the struggle, accepting our defeat with a feeling of injury.

As Christians we might be expected to look on life as fundamentally good, the power behind phenomena as friendly; that is partly what we might be expected to mean when we say that God is Love. But I have quite often heard Christians speak as though the experiences of life were apart from the Love of God, which Love would be made manifest in a future state by making up to us for the discomforts and sorrows of this life.

Yet since God the Omnipresent Spirit is

Eternal, His Love must be here with us now as much as it can ever be in the future, only we are blind to it. Meditation opens our eyes to His Presence.

His Love is here. That is not to say that our present conditions *express* His Love: often all that is best in us cries out that they are evil, man-made. But affirming the Presence of His Eternal Love is to acknowledge that His Love is seeking us all the while, *through* the conditions. If we open to receive It, the Divine Love may become manifest through us, and may use us as vehicles to overcome the evil in conditions.

This Meditation helps us to see in part in what way Divine Love will work on the facts of our lives. First it will transmute our hard, painful, imprisoning feelings. It will give us a different consciousness with which to respond to conditions which have hitherto called up condemnation, resentment, regret and depression. This is the point to remember when it seems to us that nothing short of a miracle can effect any change for the better in our lives: our feelings can be changed. How our lives may then be transformed we are not, *before* the change of feeling, at all in a position to estimate. But every time we are tempted to harbour one of the untoward, faithless feelings I have been talking about, we may if we choose bring that feeling into the Divine Presence; and even if we do not at first feel any startling change we know that as we come into contact with the Divine Love, we are bound to absorb enough

patience and gentleness, courage and forbearance to carry us through the next few hours — and there are times when we can only deal with our difficulties hour by hour.

I once heard a doctor who practises this teaching declare that half our mental unrest and worry, with its attendant illnesses comes from our brooding over old experiences or wondering apprehensively about the future, and that the other half comes from our envisaging our troubles too many at a time. We have to learn to bring just the need of the moment to the Christ within that we may be given sufficient strength and wisdom to deal with it.

Taking no anxious thought for the morrow we must keep on holding our minds still in the Light of God's Presence, and in His Light we shall see Light.

We thank Thee that all depression, condemnation, resentment and regret are being melted away by the incoming of Thy Love into our personal consciousness.

Silence.