

THE REQUIREMENTS OF PRAYER

MOORE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE LIBRARY



3 2042 00189585 7

MARY
LAMOREAUX
BURNELL

MOORE COLLEGE
LIBRARY

The Requirements of Prayer

THE NAME OF GOD

Lecture Number

One Hundred Sixteen

in the series

Via Negativa

By

MARY LAMOREAUX BURNELL

290 West Foothill Boulevard,
Arcadia, California, U.S.A.

Published by
Burnell Foundation

Copyright, 1931
Mary Lamoreaux Burnell

*The Requirements of Prayer

There is a law which governs mind in regard to its approach to God. As there is a law of gravity that brings the rain down to the earth, another law that raises the waters once more to the sky, so there is a law that lifts the mind to consideration of truth. This law seems to insist upon several requirements; by which we mean that one could not approach the truth unless he followed certain requirements, for they are a sort of levitation to divinity; they fulfil the law that lifts. This action of mental levitation takes place in the mind while it is under the influence of the quality of darkness, drawing it, as by a certain force, to consideration of that which is outside its atramental borders.

The first requirement has been stated in a term, designated under a name which for ages and ages has been in use, and that word is "prayer." It is a word that stands for getting

*(Class lecture, April 9, 1930)

near to God. Therefore the first requirement is nearness.

This is very simple, but we must understand why this word has stood in the languages of the human race so long. It is true that in modern times we change words about; that is, substitute, try to obtain a synonym, thinking that we can freshen up religion a little bit by giving it a different terminology. Therefore we sometimes call "prayer" by the name of "treatment." In modern speech we say, if we wish to get near to God, I must give a treatment. But that word "treatment" really has a technicality that does not exactly belong to religion nor to philosophy; it belongs more to physics, as used in chemistry where one might change one chemical by contact with another chemical. It is more fittingly used as a physicist's term. It is proper enough to use, and has become a custom among many, but I am explaining to you that the word "prayer" has a peculiar significance in that it means nearness.

Some object to the word "prayer" as old-fashioned. Some disapprove of the word

"treatment" as not savoring of religion. Now, you may cancel words as much as you like; as when you have solved your problem, you cancel the x and the y—whatever term or letter was used to stand for the unknown quality or quantity. Having obtained your answer, you may then cancel your terminology. But until that time when you have arrived at such nearness to God as to need no speech at all, you might as well use the time-honored name which means closeness or nearness to God.

The first requirement in this approach to God is nearness. To illustrate the first requirement: if you are cold, if you come out of a wintry blast, wishing to be warm, the first requirement is that you get near the stove. So nearness is the result of the first action, the first mental action, and the most natural action. It is almost an unconscious act, to draw near to that which holds the supply of good which you require.

Now, having come near, the second requirement is that you present your case. And there are different ways in which you present your

case when you offer up a prayer, when you give a treatment. One way is like this: men when shipwrecked at sea, utter the one word "help"; and it is said that men who never in their lives have prayed, when they are brought in juxtaposition to some liability, like a great storm at sea, fall on their knees and say, O God, help! Well, that is called supplication or petition. It is asking for help in an ejaculative fashion; it is a burst of appeal. All this takes place because there is an upper region, as we say, above the mind, which attracts, like gravity, drawing the mind to contemplation of that which is above itself, and in case of great stress, the mind bursts forth with a spontaneous and indiscriminate appeal for help, a call to the imponderable Mystery.

Now, there is another manner of presenting one's case before the high court, which, in the terminology of those who have discussed the subject of prayer very profoundly, is called postulation. You will like this word because it suggests to you the act of reason. As one says, That which is postulated is stated def-

initely from premise to conclusion; it is a presentation in rational form. Postulation is like making a final statement; with it one merely states his case.

You have observed—if inclined to be watchful of the procedure of your own mind, you have observed that when you wish to have something attended to, you desire to have your wish definitely known by Almighty God, and you make the statement clearly before this Presence. Your statement may be in the form of a desire. You may say, I desire this—whatever it may be. And usually the desire is a very personal matter. I desire money to meet conditions. I desire strength to carry out my responsibilities. I desire health. I desire friendship. I desire opportunity—whatever. The desire when stated is clear. We call that a postulation: a definite statement of what is desired or required.

Now, there is another form of this same postulation, which is called the second movement or the requirements imposed upon you if you wish to come near to truth; and that,

in the terminology of those who profoundly discuss the subject, is called insinuation. This is where your case is presented as though God knew more about it than you yourself—a sort of working on His sympathies, if you will, or being as subtle as truth is; as though you might catch the action of truth by being as subtle, as silent.

An instance of this insinuation is in the life of Jesus, where He was approached by His followers, who said to Him:

* . . . he whom thou lovest is sick.

There was no petition about it, no begging, no appeal, no asking, no sign of calling for help; but:

. . . he who thou lovest is sick.

And this method of approach, which is one form of the second requirement in presenting yourself before the truth, is called insinuation.

Now, many times you find that your approach to truth is more satisfactory when it is in this way, like an insinuation, where you do not really state what you want at all; you

*St. John 11: 3

do not present your case as a petition; you do not present it in the form of a postulation or statement; no statement about it, but as though God ought to see about it all for Himself, what your postulation really is.

When His followers made that statement to Jesus:

. . . he whom thou lovest is sick,

they asked for nothing at all. It wasn't necessary. He ought to know Himself what was required. Can you not feel this kind of relationship between yourself and God, so that you can let Him arrive at the knowledge of what you want merely by an insinuation on your part? Where you are too concerned about your affairs, too selfishly interested, too personally absorbed in yourself, you are always expressing your desires and making your appeals. But there is a finer, more delicate approach, one that relies upon the Spirit of Truth Itself to know all your needs before you can speak them.

When Jesus was told of this sickness of His friend, He answered:

. . . This sickness is not [a sickness] unto death . . .

He meant that there was no finality about it, such as fate and destiny would install; such as would be written in the book of destiny. He said:

. . . but [this sickness is] for the glory of God . . .

. . . he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

And after two days, He said to His disciples:

. . . let us go into Judea . . .

But the Disciples very promptly spoke up: Why dost thou go thither? Dost thou not know, dost thou not recall that that is the place where they stoned thee?

And He made a very cryptic answer, such as the people of modern times have tried to incorporate in their metaphysics; for they sense, in this statement, a marvelous truth. He said:

. . . Are there not twelve hours in the day?

He called their attention to the world in which they were accustomed to live, which they knew about through their senses, and He made His application and drew His parable from that.

. . . Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

And then He added:

. . . Lazarus sleepeth . . .

And the Disciples said, He does well. For they thought that if he was sleeping, he surely must be improving; that that was certainly a sign of his getting better. Then Jesus added further:

. . . Lazarus is dead.

You notice that He was not afraid to use the word "dead." You will observe that many people are afraid of their speech; they are afraid to name certain diseases and afraid to speak of death; they think they must refer to the death of some one as, He has passed on; or they use some sentence that seems to cover up the actual suggestion that the evil thing

has happened. But Jesus was not afraid of speech; He was not afraid of names.

The reason you need not be afraid of names is because there is only one Name. There is only one Name that is genuine, one Name that is true; all other names are make-believe; they are fictional. Therefore it doesn't make much difference which choice you make in the use of common speech. But if you carry in your soul, deep within you, the consciousness of the one Name that is the Name of God, you need not be afraid; you may take up serpents and they shall not hurt you; drink any deadly thing and it shall not hurt you. Nothing shall do you any damage at all if that Name which is the true Word is written within your heart. And that Name is: HE WHO IS.

The great teachers of spiritual truth have said that that is the greatest name of God there is: HE WHO IS. That is the name that was given to Moses when he was told to go into Egypt. He said, By what name shall I go? It is translated: I AM THAT I AM; but the great teachers, profound students of spirit-

ual science, have said, The name which was uttered then was, HE WHO IS.

Thomas Aquinas says that is the greatest name for two reasons. One reason is on account of its significance, because its significance stands for essence; it stands for existence. And what more profound, what greater and more beautiful than that which is? In other words, it is the name Truth—what really is.

Thomas Aquinas says that the second reason for that name being so important is that it is universal. For it is true everywhere, since the "everywhere" is existence. And if there were any place where existence is not, it would be impossible to conceive of, on account of that which is, being all. Thus the universality of it is the second reason.

The third reason for the importance of the name, HE WHO IS, is that it stands for the present. No past, no future about it; but now HE WHO IS.

It means a great deal to have the future and the past stripped off your mind by the pronunciation of the word, the name of God,

HE WHO IS; and can you not feel when you pronounce the Name that there is something, a dynamic force, which causes the crumbling away of things foreign and false to that Being who is, and who is all?

Whoever has this Name written within him has the conviction of existence, has the conviction of essence and of substance, and this conviction is not something he needs to arouse, it is not something that needs to be whipped up; it stays, like something real. And when you carry that Name about with you, it is as though the Word, which is the name of God, made its impression upon everything about you. You have the scent of reality about you; you have the fragrance of integrity. You convey, as by an atmosphere, definiteness and certainty that is reality; so that the people who are living in false worlds, feel a trembling of these worlds as they come about you. They actually feel these worlds shaken. This is why it is said that when a person comes to illumination, there is physically produced in his world

an earthquake, for so positively does spiritual action take hold of one's affairs.

A little child went into the next room when a tempestuous and stormy quarrel was going on in the household, and above the uproar of the dissension and argument, the little child was heard to repeat aloud a Psalm from David. If I were to tell you the details of this whole circumstance, which I am not permitted to do because it is a confidence brought to me under the confessional of our ministry, you would see how marvelously this Psalm resulted—spoken with the lips of a little child. The result was the quieting of the storm. That, of course, you would expect; but more than that was done; as though the hand of Heaven descended in correction, the offender was punished in the terms of his offense. The evidence was brought forth that God will not tolerate that which is false when the postulation is made. It is a very, very little thing, like the voice of a child, that brings one—and a big world at that, along with the personal concern—that brings one into contact with that

Almighty Name, HE WHO IS. All these other things—the broils, the storms, the tempests of human life, the disagreements and arguments, the hurts and pains; all these things are not. They do not exist. They fall down like the walls before the trumpets, when the Word is come nigh.

That the action of the Divine Name may take place in your life, in your body, in your eyes, in your ears, in the sense of touch, in all your organs and your senses, in all that you call your physical life, and in your world; that this Name may be felt and its spiritual action pervade all there is to you and your world, requires, in the first place, nearness, which we call under the old and ancient name of prayer, which simply means nearness, closeness, being drawn by spiritual attraction to truth. Or you may use the other form, postulation; or you may use the simple and lover-like act of insinuation.

You should have some comprehension of what prayer is, when you consider the profound way in which it has been explained.

And with all its profundity, the simplicity of it predominates; so that a little child could understand how you are to feel close to this Presence, HE WHO IS; or how you may, like a child, make your postulation; or, like a child, make your insinuation. For the Presence is the supply of all you ask. The Presence is all there is to your prayer. The Presence is all there is to asking and all there is to giving.

Swami Rama used a fine illustration of this, explaining that reality is the substance upon which we write our statements; upon which we present our case. It is like a material upon which we write our cognitions. We try to realize, do we not? But our realization is the writing upon the substance of reality. His illustration is this: that the person who writes, and the slate, and the pencil that writes upon the slate, are a co-operative act; three in one.

Thus, if you make your cognitions, your statements, your postulations, your insinuations, your prayer, and if you lay them before the Presence—HE WHO IS, who is reality, who is the substance out of which everything

is made, who is the source of supply of everything you desire, who is the fulfilment of all wishes, who is the Granter of Wishes to all asking and petitioning and requesting, the Giver of all men ask; you find that this Presence that you write your requirement upon, your statement, your postulation, and the pencil you write with, the principle of realization, belong all to the one Act of God, HE WHO IS.

Did you think you could in any way be apart from God? Did you think you could be a different entity? Did you think you could be lost in a world which is continually trampling you under foot to convince you that you are different, that you are not divine or eternal? You shall learn that this cooperation between man and God is not a step-ladder performance of man trying to climb to something nobler, to reach a little higher; but this action, this mutual cooperation, is God in man. And the material upon which man

writes his requests, is man in God. There is no separation.

Some day we shall lose this sense of separation. Some day we shall forget all about those dreams where we meandered off into suppositions, where we apparently carried a little of our being, and tucked it away in some corner, saying, Here is where I exist now, apart from you, and you, and all the rest. Those dreams last only for a little while. They are like snowflakes—they soon melt. Beautiful forms, and all different, no two ever alike—but they melt! These apart and separate entities dissolve, for they have no place. But man, as he was and as he is and as he will be, is inseparable from that One, HE WHO IS. That Name is written upon his forehead, and by that Name is he to know—to go forth into Egypt, the dark country where people dream deep and black dreams. That Name, HE WHO IS, is the support, which may carve a way through a fluid sea, which may bring forth living water from hard rock in the desert; for HE WHO IS is all man will ever need to de-

pend upon. Whether in desert, or in luxurious valley where you dream of opulence, or where you are destitute, all you need is HE WHO IS. And if you say that word a few times, you are carried to the throne of God, deep set in your own soul.

These requirements, said to be necessary in prayer—let me repeat them: nearness or closeness, which we call by the word "prayer," postulation or statement, and insinuation. These are the three ways. You can practise them all at once, or take them separately, as you approach to God. It is very simple, because the altar of worship is within yourself, within your temple where you live; so you need not go searching anywhere to find the place where you shall carry on your observations, your rituals, your ceremonies, and all those sacred obsecrations that are your claim to the satisfaction of every wish, because of the holiness, because of the purity, because of the glory and the wonder of God.

There is plenty of reason (and this is said to be the last requirement, the fourth require-

ment—reason), plenty of reason why you should expect to have your prayers answered. If it is Lazarus to be raised, if it is money to be taken out of the mouth of the fish; whatever it is, the fourth requirement is called the reasons why it should be. There are two reasons given.

The first reason is, because of the greatness, of the holiness, the purity, the wonder, and the glory of God. That is plenty of reason why everything should be yours; why Paul was able to say, All things are yours. Sufficient reason. As we say, If the son has a rich and kind father, there is plenty of reason why he should be supplied. So the greatness of HE WHO IS—and how great that is, no mind is able to comprehend, because the mind can only measure groups of nonentities, declaring they have such and such dimensions; but HE WHO IS is incommensurate. He is infinite and indeterminate—a substance that has no limit. But on account of this, the Being, WHO HE IS, who is all there is, sup-

plies every reason why you should have what you want.

The second reason is: thankfulness on the part of man. We think, because of the habit of what we call consecutive thought, the habit of believing in preliminaries, and in consequences as results of preliminary operations; we have the habit of thinking that thankfulness is subsequent to something else. After we have received what we want, we say, Thank you. But thankfulness is not so placed, as seen by those who understand the true relationship between thankfulness and inheritance of all that belongs to man because of HE WHO IS, the Giver of all men ask of Him. A common adage is, that gratitude is a lively sense of future favor, which is not by any means the true understanding of thankfulness. Such a concept of thankfulness would be superficial, trite, and inconceivable as a comprehension of the magnificent action of thankfulness. Thankfulness has no date; it is not related in time as resultant to some happening. Thankfulness antedates circum-

stances so far that sometimes one cannot see a connection.

I have known people to rejoice all their lives for something that has not yet happened to them. It makes no difference whether it has happened or not, they are rejoicing, they are thankful for what they know is. I have seen people recover from illnesses, bedridden conditions that were hopeless, because of a thankfulness that did not begin with the getting well. Under my own observation, a woman who was dying of typhoid fever, who was not able to turn her head upon the pillow—This was a good many years ago in Chicago, and I personally went from one of the suburbs to get a healer and take him to this woman. She could not turn her head upon the pillow because of weakness. The healer sat, giving thanks to God for what had taken place: that the woman was well. And in ten minutes she got up and dressed. And in the course of an hour she had prepared a meal for this man who had come such a long way to serve her.

Thankfulness has no subsequent connection

with circumstance; thankfulness has no place in time. Please remember this. If you ever are thankful, you may know its genuineness by its having no connection whatsoever with time or with events that transpire in time.

I have rejoiced over perfection when people have been suffering pain, and when they have been marked with disease; I have rejoiced over their health until the tears of happiness came, and yet up to that moment, there had been no sign of any healing. The healing followed the rejoicing and happy thankfulness. You might be told of many remarkable demonstrations which have taken place in this instruction. You know of many of them for yourselves, and all because of the beginninglessness and the endlessness of thankfulness.

Sometimes when a person hears the word, HE WHO IS, really hears it as though for the first time, he feels that some strong hand has been laid upon him to shake him out of his sleep, that he may arise, as the Psalmist said, like a strong man from his slumber.

MARY LAMOREAUX BURNELL

PUBLISHED BY BURNELL FOUNDATION

Books by GEORGE EDWIN BURNELL

Axioms: Book of Health & Science of Truth
The Noble Kingdom of Heaven

Booklets by GEORGE EDWIN BURNELL

Substance Answers
Classic of the Prodigal Son
Continence Only, Transmits
Dreaming True
Doctrine of the Lord
The Grace of Adoration
Holy Benefactions

Booklets by MARY LAMOREAUX BURNELL

Prayers for World Problems
The Door of Heaven
Walk by Faith
The Requirements of Prayer
The Madonna

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Booklets by GEORGE EDWIN BURNELL
and MARY LAMOREAUX BURNELL

Praying Wells

Booklets by GENEVIEVE BURNELL FORGEY

Omnipotence Assumes Bonds

Infallible Congruity

The Transfiguration of Fear

Meeting Emergencies

The Enigma of Judas

The Breath of Heaven

The Fulcrum of Prayer

The Natural Receives The Supernatural

The Laboratory of The Heart

Restoration of Nations

Gift of Counsel

Spiritual Renaissance

The Things That Are God's

The Revealed Verse

The Instruction

A compilation of excerpts from the works of George
Edwin Burnell, Mary Lamoreaux Burnell and Genevieve
Burnell Forgey.

