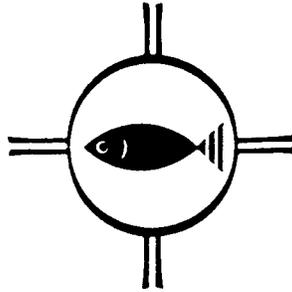


# LIBERAL CATHOLIC INSTITUTE OF STUDIES



## UNIT 2

### PREPARATIVE : MEDITATION

#### PAPER 1

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UNIT 2

MEDITATION

PAPER 1

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# THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MEDITATION

## PART I: THEORY

### SET READING:

- E. Wood: "An Introduction to the Science of Prayer" (St. Alban Press)  
C. Codd: "Meditation, Its Practice and Results" (TPH Adyar 4<sup>th</sup> Ed.)

### BOOKS RECOMMENDED FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY:

- A. Gardner: "Meditation, a Practical Study" (Quest Books, 1968)  
V. Hanson (Ed.): "Approaches to Meditation" (Quest, 1973)  
F.C. Happold: "The Journey Inwards" (Darton, Longman & Todd London)  
E. Wood: "Concentration, An Approach to Meditation" (Quest, 1967)

## SHORT PREFACE

The subject of meditation has increased in importance during the last decades. It is therefore advisable that candidates for Major Orders should have some general knowledge on this subject, and if the circumstances permit, they themselves should be able to practice some form of meditation.

In the early days of our Church, practically all candidates for Orders had undergone training in meditation, mainly in the Esoteric School of Theosophy, an organisation connected with the Theosophical Society (T.S.). Today, few candidates have undergone this type of training, and therefore it is necessary that some teaching on this subject should be given.

If the student is already practicing meditation, following the method of one of the many schools teaching meditation, he should continue with this practice.

To the student who does not practice meditation we strongly recommend that he should do so. This would entail setting apart a short period every morning and evening for this purpose. In this case the student must notify the Institute, as Practice papers will only be issued on request.

+Sten.

### "THE THEORY OF MEDITATION"

By the Rt. Rev. F.C. Bannister

Meditation appears to have originated in India several thousand years ago, and its teachings and practice have for long been part of the Hindu religion. The Lord Buddha, who was born a Hindu, developed its practice in his own way, and by this means achieved "enlightenment". Since then it has been a most important part of the life of a practicing Buddhist. There is evidence that the mysteries of Egypt received this knowledge from India, from whence, as secret teaching for the few, it spread to Persia and Greece, and ultimately to Europe. In recent times its practice has increased, spreading to the Western world, firstly in the latter half of the last century, through organisations such as the Theosophical Society, and now as a result of the practice of meditation by various cults based on Indian Philosophy, which have attracted groups of younger people who have become disenchanted with Western culture.

The Christian Church concentrated on prayer rather than meditation, as a means by which the aspirant was able to feel himself to be closer to God. In this it followed the older Jewish tradition, for Jesus was born into the Jewish faith and Christianity was therefore in many ways built upon Hebrew foundations. However, some forms of meditation were also practiced in the Christian Church, especially in monasteries and convents, but it was perhaps more spontaneous, less well understood in detail and less formal than in the Indian systems. It should here be noted that the highest form of impersonal prayer has much in common with meditation. As with so many spiritual

things the methods and beliefs may vary, but the ultimate realisation of the objective is often almost identical.

Definition: Most books on meditation seek to define it. The difficulties of doing so are reflected in the fact that these definitions vary from book to book. This is because the way in which a person meditates and the direction of his achievement depend on his spiritual awareness as well as on his unique temperament. Thus meditation can never be quite the same thing to any two people. With this reservation we may say that meditation is the understanding, control, and use of our vehicles and faculties, with the object of more fully comprehending reality. The word “vehicles” is here meant to imply the material body, the emotions, the finite mind of reason as well as the vehicles through which the spiritual faculties operate. “Reality” is meant to signify as much as we can possibly comprehend of God the Absolute, and of His many manifestations.

Assumptions: Certain assumptions are necessary if we are to understand the nature and objectives of the practice of meditation. It is not necessary to believe implicitly in these assumptions, but their substantial acceptance, as a working hypothesis, is necessary for the understanding and practice of meditation as herein explained. The assumptions are:

1. The supreme God, Creator of the whole universe, both visible and invisible, and of all the laws that govern its operation, change, growth, and development, must remain unknowable to us. We can only come to know a small part of Him by learning through experience, that part of His manifestation, which is within range of our experience and comprehension.

2. This Supreme God, for reasons beyond our knowing, breathed His own divine life into this Universe and clothed that life with the manifestation of matter in various forms and degrees of density. This manifestation is not an external projection from divinity, but a veritable permeation by Him of every cell and fibre, every atom whether animate or inanimate, visible or invisible.

3. Each person has a personality which he received anew with each new physical birth, comprising the *mortal body*, the *emotional vehicle* and the vehicle of the *finite mind*. He also has a permanent part of him, the *real* person, which lives through all his mortal lives and beyond, which is the repository for the spiritual development that results from the experiences of each incarnation. This, the permanent person, again manifests in various “degrees of density”: The *higher mind*, which concerns itself with the realities of spiritual being; the *intuition*, which mirrors the spirit of God within; the *spiritual*, in which God manifests as a trinity, or triple spirit; and finally the *divine*, the spark of unmanifested divinity within. It will be seen that in all there are seven degrees of manifestation, each becoming denser, four permanent and three, which are formed anew at each birth. The “Spirit, Soul, and Body” of St. Paul can be equated to this system, if we regard the spirit as the divine spark within, the soul as the spiritual, the intuition, and higher mind, together, and the body as the mortal body with the emotions and lower mind considered as one.

*The Purpose of Meditation:* You may ask, “Why should I meditate?” This question will now be answered in the context of the Liberal Catholic Priesthood. The present and future of our Church depends almost entirely on its priesthood (and on the bishops who are recruited therefrom). The priest administers the sacraments of the Church as Christ’s representative by virtue of his ordination, but he can also, if he is spiritually aware, be used much more effectively by Our Lord for the helping of others. He must be a teacher of his flock, giving them not cold belief, but the vivid spiritual inspiration of one who has himself experienced, so that his teaching will have the stamp of truth, the aura of reality. Also, in his own life he must set an example for others to follow, not only his outward behaviour but also the inner urge of the spirit that shines through him.

Our two founding bishops and a considerable majority of the early members of our Church practiced meditation daily as part of their spiritual discipline. It is the writer’s firm belief that a great deal of the reality and vitality that pervaded our Church at that time stemmed from this fact. Meditation accelerates a person’s spiritual awareness as nothing else can. Therefore, if we are to serve the Christ as His priests, we have no right to neglect this method of making ourselves more useful to Him. Because the technique of meditation originated in India in pre-Christian times there are some who may regard it as un-Christian, although Jesus is said to have visited India before commencing his ministry. There are biblical references to occasions when He sought solitude for this purpose, whether we call it prayer or meditation. The historical Church has not emphasised meditation nearly as much as prayer, but the Christian mystics certainly used it, even if not always by that name. Surely, in a developing world, it is wise not to be too strongly bound by past tradition, but to use all our latent powers in the service of God, the living Christ, and of humanity.

*The Process of meditation:* Various stages along the road to meditation can be discerned. The student will benefit even if he only practices some of the earlier stages, but each one is a pre-requisite for those succeeding it, although there is a considerable merging of the boundaries. Also, some variations of terminology and classification will be found in the various books on the subject. For our purpose these stages are: Purification, Relaxation, Concentration, Meditation, Contemplation. (There is the possibility of reaching beyond contemplation, but for the vast majority of people this will be the limit). Each of these will now be considered.

1. *Purification.* This commences with the body. We have reached a stage of evolution where we are beginning to see that the traditional concept of an external God who is good, creating and controlling, often capriciously, man, who is evil, represents a very primitive concept of reality. Our assumptions postulated the spirit of God within us, our task being to control and develop ourselves in such a way that this spirit can become more manifest without, can express Himself more completely through our personalities, which must be made to mirror Him. Our bodies are often polluted with coarse and sometimes excessive food and drink, unnatural drugs, lack of exercise, inadequate sleep, and the stresses of undisciplined and sometimes coarse thoughts and feelings. We should see our bodies as instruments in His service, to be kept pure and healthy for His use. For these reasons our founding bishops most forcefully emphasised total abstention

from flesh foods, tobacco, and alcohol. More recent drugs of addition are of course even worse.

Next the emotions must be purified by practicing serenity, concentrating on love, sympathy, devotion, concern for others. In this way the coarser emotions of jealousy, fear, envy, anger, sensuality, will weaken and die through lack of nourishment. This is achieved by imposing a mood upon the personality by the will, not by suppressing the undesirable, but by activating the desirable emotions. Note that both the physical well being and mental capacities are adversely influenced by undesirable emotion, so there is interaction between the three vehicles of the personality. Improvement in one assists the other two.

Lastly, and perhaps most difficult to purify, is the mind. At our stage of development we are most influenced by thought. The mind analyses impulses received from the five senses, which give us contact with the world around us, and stores the physical, emotional and mental experience derived there from in the memory. It has the capacity for imagination, by which images, actions, thoughts, and feelings can be either recreated from memory of the past, or creatively originated. This imagination is our greatest asset when used wisely, for the unconscious mind seeks to fulfil in fact the image a person has of himself. The student should therefore spend time quietly each day, during his meditation, vividly imagining himself living as he wishes to live, physically, emotionally and mentally. Gradually the mind will adjust to this and unconsciously cause him to live in accordance with the image of himself, which he has created with the will.

2. *Relaxation.* This involves the elimination of all tension, physically, emotionally, and mentally. To attempt medication without first learning to relax can have serious results physically. Remember that life is a natural process of growth or unfolding, not a violent forcing. Therefore adopt a comfortable position, close the eyes and learn to relax every muscle in the body completely, until no single muscle contains any tension at all, not even a toe or an eyelid. Breathe quietly and slowly, as during sleep, for as far as the body is concerned you *are* asleep. The only energy required is for the heart, lungs, and certain other unconscious functions, so your oxygen intake will be considerably less than usual. Now use the will to impose a mood of utter serenity upon the emotions and the mind, cease feeling any emotion at all. Finally, and this is difficult for most people, discard all thought from the mind, cease thinking. As a first step imagine that you are in a remote place looking at the sky. Feel the peace and serenity of it and hold this mood until intruding thoughts fade away. Do not try to *force* them to go, simply ignore them.

3. *Concentration.* Concentration is a pre-requisite for meditation and of course it is a very valuable ability in many aspects of life unconnected with the spiritual. Many people find it hard at first, usually because they are trying to *force* the mind to concentrate. To place a marble on a table and to think of nothing but the marble for five minutes is difficult, because the mind is naturally active, engaged in exploration. But now imagine that you go to the table, pick up the marble, feel it in your fingers, its smoothness, hardness, and weight. Why was it made? Think of similar things to marbles such as ball bearings, billiard balls, lead shot and cannon balls. Parade in your imagination all the different kinds of marbles you have ever seen, large, small, plain, coloured, glass, stone, ceramic.

Creatively visualise marbles you have *never* seen. But in all this do not lose sight of your particular marble. You will find that this exercise is fairly easy, because the mind, although controlled and induced to concentrate, has operated normally. Also, you now know very much more about the marble than you ever did before and have really experienced a very simple form of meditation. (Ernest Wood's books give detailed explanations of the ways in which the mind works and how this knowledge can be used to develop concentration, memory, and character).

4. *Meditation.* Having made reasonable progress with the purification of the body, emotions, and thoughts, and having learned to relax these vehicles, to free them from stress and tension, and having achieved some progress in the art of concentration, the student is now ready to commence meditation proper.

There are several kinds or degrees of meditation, but basically it involves the use of the mind (and indeed of all the faculties) to thoroughly and exhaustively explore, experience, and comprehend a particular subject, so that every possible facet is examined in imagination and becomes a permanent example above, or an abstract idea such as innocence or loyalty. One can meditate upon a piece of poetry or prose, trying to extract from it every possible shade of meaning and understanding, bringing to it all previous knowledge, experience, understanding, and feeling, which in any way relates to it. If the subject of meditation involves action, then feel that you are actually participating in the action, if feelings are included then you actually *feel*. Thus the experience of meditation is limited only by the capacity to comprehend, to become fully aware of and involved in the subject of meditation. The person meditating draws on his own resources to the utmost. More wonderful subjects for meditation can be found in the Bible, the Yoga Sutras or Patanjali, the teachings of Buddhism, and many other sources. You can meditate upon an object of beauty, or upon different parts of the Liturgy, particularly the Holy Eucharist, taking one section at a time and meditating on it for a week.

Meditation relies on both knowledge and understanding. If you have never seen or heard of a marble your meditation thereon will be its visual appearance, but the greater your knowledge and experience of marbles the more opportunity meditation will give you to expand that understanding. Therefore read, study, think, and feel. Try in every way to expand your sphere of contact with the thoughts and aspirations of others.

The more exhaustive examination of a subject in meditation will be easier and more thorough if the idea relationships normally used by the mind are understood, memorised, and systematically applied to the subject of meditation. If this is done it will be found that concentration is much easier and the different aspects of a subject can be explored without the risk of overlooking one of importance. Ernest Wood's book "Memory Training" lists nine idea relationships, with mnemonic diagrams for each, and the reader is referred to this publication for details. It will be found that these relationships are applicable to abstract as well as concrete subjects, but all nine of them will not always apply to every subject.

Another kind of meditation is to identify with other animate or inanimate things. Perhaps you are near a tree in the bush or in your garden. Try to get inside the tree.

Imagine that you *are* the tree. Feel your roots in the moist, cool earth, the wind blowing through your branches and leaves, your trunk tensing to take the strain imposed upon it by the wind, the sunlight on your leaves, the birds and the insects upon you. The same exercise can be carried out using such subjects as rocks, your dog, or a whole valley, ocean, or mountain. Each has an identity, and to experience this is to expand your own awareness and understanding.

5. *Contemplation.* With contemplation an endeavour is made to shift the centre of consciousness beyond the personality of body, emotion, and mind, into the permanent realms of the higher mind, intuition, and even perhaps of the spirit. When our consciousness dwells in the personality, which is usual, we contact and experience the external world of matter, feeling, and logical thought, people, other living and inanimate things. This is our normal world. But if we can focus our consciousness on the eternal, spiritual part of ourselves, which is the true self, then through this we can gradually become aware of the spiritual world, its significance and its reality above all realities. Also as we contact other people and things through our physical senses, so, during contemplation, working outwards from our more permanent spiritual selves, we can contact the spiritual selves of others. Yet “contact” is scarcely the word, for here all life is one. The dewdrop of our separateness merges with the shining sea of the one universal Divine Life, not separate, but permeating all.

We can also join with some of the great spiritual beings and the forces they control.

The practice of contemplation will commence, as with all forms of meditation, by seeking a quiet time and place where you will not be disturbed and then adopting a posture that is comfortable and which enables you to relax every muscle of the body completely. Next, use the will to impose upon yourself a mood of utter serenity, after which you may meditate for perhaps ten minutes upon the Christ, trying to comprehend all that He was and is. Then in devotion offer yourself to Him, try to make the whole personality completely quiescent. Feel your consciousness outside your usual self, focussed in this new world of the spirit. Now try to make your consciousness one with Him, merging your spiritual self with Him, and then outward to all the world He loves, all life, all being. Feel that you are no longer separate, but one with the great Divine Life Stream, which permeates all creation, one with the spiritual selves of all mankind. Try to actually experience this oneness, not just think about it as a mental concept, for the mind should be still, the consciousness elsewhere. Feel one with the tremendous force of this Divine Love. Feel it pouring into you and you into it. Finally channel this almost overpowering force outward from yourself, directing it with your will to all people, that they may in their personalities become aware of the Spirit of God within and without. “That the earth shall be filled with the glory of God, as the waters cover the sea”.

*Conclusion.* Meditation aims, through understanding and practice, to develop capacities that are latent in all of us, some which we may be using to some extent without realising it. It is a conscious study of certain mental, emotional, and spiritual faculties, which we then gradually learn to use. Thus we become in very truth born again into a new understanding of life and its purpose. We cannot expect sudden results, and more than you can become expert at golf or tennis, or take a degree at a university with self-

discipline, study and practice extending over many years. Yet it should be understood that meditation is an acceleration of natural and inevitable development.

One thing is of paramount importance: If you practice meditation for the sake of your own development you will fail, for in spiritual things the first lesson to learn is that one does not live for one's self alone, but for others. The priest who is entering the ministry to help others to the feet of our Lord the Christ will find that meditation is one of the most important ways in which he can expand the efficacy of his ministry, both in the sacraments of the Church and in his pastoral work, for it will accomplish within a few years what otherwise may not be reached in a lifetime. It will help him to realise the full potentialities initiated at his ordination, which unhappily so often remain dormant.

In a short paper such as this, it has only been possible to outline the basis and principles of this ancient discipline. Part 2 of this subject will explain in greater depth the actual practice of meditation. To understand this subject fully it will be necessary to read and study at least some of the recommended books. And now a final warning: Complete relaxation, serenity and unselfishness are essential. This kind of development is a matter of natural growth. To try and force the body or the mind before they are prepared can do irreversible damage, as can the use of these practices for selfish or evil purposes. Therefore be careful to whom you impart this knowledge.

+Christopher

## PART II: PRACTICE

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

By the Rt. Rev. Sten von Krusenstierna

From reading Part I: Theory of the Meditation Unit, the student will have learned that there are many methods of meditation. Confusion sometimes arises because the word meditation is used with two different meanings:

Meaning *any* method including quiet introspection by which we turn inwards into ourselves instead of outwards towards the world around us.

A more restricted meaning, signifying a particular step in the long process of striving towards unification with the Divine. This process is traditionally described as: unification, Concentration, Meditation, Contemplation, Union. (See for further particulars the book by Professor Ernest Wood: "An Introduction to the Science of Prayer", published by St. Alban Press.)

As with all endeavours in life before commencing meditation, the student should examine his motives. If he wishes to improve his personality that he may be of greater service in the work of the Church and be of some help to his fellowmen, then he may

safely undertake the limited, but effective practice as set out in this course. Other motives may require careful consideration before embarking upon such a practice of meditation as taught in this course. Having thus made his decision, the student must steadfastly persevere with the regular practice of the simple and short practice set out in the course.

In whatever sense we understand meditation; it means a turning inward into a world totally unknown to most of us, our own selves. It therefore requires first of all some initial understanding of the nature of Man. For meditation is chiefly a method by which we train our minds and emotions.

#### THE NATURE OF MAN

Man is a complex being consisting of many parts functioning through different vehicles on the seven planes of existence, which make up the visible and invisible worlds.

St. Paul divided Man into spirit, soul and body. Bishop Leadbeater went into more detail and spoke of the Divine Spark in Man, the Monad, who puts itself down into the spiritual, intuitional and higher-mental planes, thereby forming the three-fold soul or ego of Man. The soul in its turn sends out a part of itself into the lower mental, astral and physical planes, thereby creating the three-fold personality of Man, consisting of the mind, the emotions and the physical body.

The Pauline classification still stands: the monad is the spirit; the three-fold soul or ego is the soul; and the three-fold personality is the body. The student should study the diagrams on page 169 in "The Inner Side of Christian Festivals" or the one on page 605 in the "Science of the Sacraments". The nature of Man will be dealt with in further detail in the Unit on Liberal Catholic Doctrine.

#### THE DIVINE PLAN

The method for the spiritual evolution of Man is that he should develop from below upwards (or from the outer inwards). He must first learn to control and develop his personality. Much later he shall have to develop the soul.

The majority of humanity has only just learned how to control the physical body and even that not quite fully yet. The emotions and minds of most people are uncontrolled and undeveloped. The great law of evolution, which slowly pushes Man forwards through many incarnations on earth in various personalities will help him to develop and gain control also of the emotional body and the mind. But it is an exceedingly slow process.

It is part of the Divine Plan that Man should at a certain stage in one of his many lives on earth wake up and become aware of the fact that he can help forward and hasten this process of spiritual evolution himself. From the moment he will no longer drift apparently aimlessly through life but will start taking himself in hand. He will set his feet for the first time on "the path of Return" to the deity from Whom he came in the far distant past. This is what is called "the Way of Holiness" in Isaiah 35:8.

His attitude will now gradually change; he will slowly begin to realise that all life is one, that he is part of the greater Life and that at his present stage he must no longer live for selfish pleasure or profit, but for the good of the whole of creation. This is the beginning of the awakening of birth of the Christ-spirit in Man.

This new attitude will find expression in his life in many ways. He will want primarily to give and not to take. He will learn to love and not to hate. He will be intent on helping forward God's great plan for His Creation, to the best of his ability, even if it is in a small way only at first. Gradually he will extend his loving care and concern to other realms of nature, trying to alleviate the suffering of both men and animals.

#### PURIFICATION

Since ancient times all true meditation had to be preceded and accompanied by a process of purification. To understand this we have to look objectively at the three-fold personality of Man. We see that there are certain tendencies within the personality. The physical body has a tendency to erupt into passions and desires, and the mind tends towards pride and prejudicial and dogmatic thinking. It is interesting here to compare "the seven deadly sins" of Christian theology: Pride, covetousness, lust, envy, gluttony, anger and sloth.

We find that in our personality, in our "lower self" there are certain definite trends towards lower and coarser thoughts and feelings, which we constantly have to battle against. St. Paul expresses it so well:

*"But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of the mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members".*

And

*"For the good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not that I do".* (See Rom. 7:19-23)

Psychologists can give us certain explanations for these phenomena but the one Bishop Leadbeater gives goes deeper.

The matter of which the emotional and mental bodies are built is ensouled by what he calls "elemental (or monadic) essence". This essence is part of the evolutionary life-wave on the *downward* arc of evolution (or what is sometimes called involution). It therefore instinctively seeks coarser vibrations, its goal being the mineral kingdom where it will eventually inhabit rocks and stones.

What we have to do in our meditation is to build into our bodies, matter of a finer type, with "higher" vibrations. This matter is present everywhere and is attracted and built into our bodies by unselfish and kind thoughts and feelings. (The student may study the colour-plates in C.W. Leadbeater's: "Man, Visible and Invisible"). The coarser matter will then slowly disappear from our emotional and mental bodies as long as we do not use it in our thoughts and feelings.

If we try to overcome undesirable qualities in our personalities by concentrating on them or try to “battle” against them, we may succeed eventually but it is a very hard and long battle. By concentrating on and combating these qualities we actually strengthen them. This is the negative way. The positive way is to focus our attention on the opposite virtue, leaving the matter expressing the undesirable quality to slowly disappear, as we do no longer use it.

These types of matter rejected by us will be used by other beings as part of their evolution and it finally ends up in the densest kingdom of nature, the mineral, before, in due time after millions of years, it will enter the upward arc of evolution through the plant and animal kingdoms. (See diagram “Involution and Evolution” in “The Christian Creed” and “Man, Visible and Invisible”).

What we have to keep in mind then in our meditation is to build into our bodies, matter of a finer type, with higher vibrations. This is done by developing in our personalities the virtues of unselfishness, love to all creation, devotion to God, sympathy, courage, and plain kindness.

#### KEY THOUGHTS

In the longer form of the holy Eucharist we sing:

“Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Even he that has clean hands and a pure heart.”

This gives us the clue to what we should strive for in the process of meditation. “Clean hands” means not only that we should not kill, but also that we should lead *a clean life*. This should be the motto or key-thought for our physical life and all our actions. *A pure heart* should be the motto for our emotional body and our feelings. The tendency of the mind is to close itself up within certain narrow barriers of thought and the direction for the mind must therefore be: an *open mind*.

In our meditation and also in our life we should then strive to gradually develop within ourselves: A clean life, a pure heart, and an open mind.

#### THE FIRST HALF-YEAR

*The Liturgy of the Liberal Catholic Church* is eminently suitable for use in mediation. There is intent for nearly all Sundays in the Church’s year and together with the Collects, Epistles and Gospels; they form excellent subjects for meditation. The student should set aside about 30 minutes every morning for study and meditation and a shorter period in the evening before going to bed.

During the morning period) which should preferably be taken after the morning-shower, but before breakfast), the student should first spend a few minutes in thought on the three key-mottos, seeing himself in imagination as leading a clean life, as having a pure heart, and an open mind.

Then he should meditate for a few minutes on the Intent of the Week, as given in the Liturgy.

Next he should read the Collect, Epistle and Gospel of the week, after the reading of each of which he should meditate for a few minutes on the meaning and lessons they contain.

Any time left then should be spent in reading a few passages from some devotional book, such as “The Practice of the Presence of God” by Brother Lawrence; or “The Imitation of Christ”, by Thomas a Kempis, all without haste, quietly pondering their message.

At this stage we must not yet attempt to practice the more difficult aspects of meditation. All we should do is to dwell in thought on the key thoughts and the meaning and lessons given in the Epistles and Gospels, remembering that all the stories and parables contain deeper layers of meaning.

At night, before going to bed, the student should review the happenings of the day (preferably in reverse order) and draw any lessons from them. If he feels he has acted wrongly during some incident, or perhaps uttered some unkind words, he should decide NOT to repeat the mistake again. He should imagine himself in the same situation again, but doing the right thing by his consciousness this time. He may also recall incidents during the day when he acted correctly and determined to continue to do so.

The practices outlined may seem to the newcomer somewhat removed from what he have imagined meditation to be, but they all form part of the “training of man’s higher bodies”, which is the sole purpose of meditation.

One of the most important aspects of the practice of meditation is its *regularity*. If any measure of success is to be achieved, it is essential that the student should meditate and do his evening recollection *every day*. To do it irregularly can at times have less desirable effects.

If headaches or other harmful effects should occur during or after meditation, the student should cease meditating for a week. If they continue, he should stop all practices for a longer period and advise his Mentor or somebody who has experience in the art of meditation. Remember, it is like trying to train an untrained horse. It must be done in stages and with patience.

As the course proceeds, further aspects of meditation (in a wider sense) will be elucidated. Half-yearly or quarterly letters will be issued for the purpose. The student will also be issued with calendars containing the Intents of the various Sundays in the Church’s year.

+STEN

## MEDITATION IS NATURAL

By Clara M. Codd

Many people think that meditation is a very difficult practice, only suited to those whose temperament is devotional. This is not true, for meditation is a process that can be engaged in by all, and is not restricted to one temperament or type. Indeed, we all do “meditate” quite naturally whenever we want to think anything out and our interest is aroused. Such moments of concentration may be so intense that the cogitator becomes oblivious of what is happening around him. He has not left his body, but his consciousness is withdrawn from its usual diffused outward-turned condition, and turned in very vividly upon an interior problem or idea.

What makes our minds do that, and thus remain for perhaps a considerable time? Intense interest. Instead of saying “practice concentration”, we might put it in a better way by saying “practice being interested”. A man can always concentrate on a subject which interests him. These subjects are mainly three types. He wants to understand something, he loves something, he wants to map out a plan of action. If we look inside we shall see that our thoughts very readily run in one of those three directions, that is, in their positive creative aspect. They will also very readily run in a negative direction, towards worries, failures, and anxieties. But these are unproductive of higher good, and if they have established too great a hold over the mind will act as a bar to real meditation.

What happens when we try to understand, when we dream of a beloved object, when we plan a course of action? We see that wonderful quality of the mind, which we call the imagination, literally the “image-making” faculty. Some people say “only imagination”, but it is the greatest creative, transforming force we possess. Consciously or subconsciously we are continually being made anew by it. For every interior image impresses itself upon the plastic, subtler matter of our mental bodies, and as we contemplate an idea or an ideal we become for a moment the very thing we see. Thus a man is always finally the product of his thought. This is the rationale of all meditative processes. In Scriptural words we “are changed into the same image from glory to glory”. Regularly employed, even for only a few minutes, the gradually transforming power of sustained thought pointed towards a high ideal can work miracles of change.

It can give us an understanding, for understanding is always the result of silent thought, and an attitude of heart that will wait for illumination. And by the glowing powers of the heart it can make us one with that which we love and worship, for to think or anything in the universe is to touch it in consciousness; to love anything purely is to become one with it. But we live such busy scrambling lives we have not time to ponder and dream. That is where we risk failure and spiritual bankruptcy or character, for life is lovely, purposeful, and creative, in proportion to our powers of understanding and perception.

## ON CONCENTRATION

By the Rt. Rev. C. W. Leadbeater

For the beginner in meditation, it is useful that he should pull himself up and ask: "What am I thinking about and why? Let me follow back the thoughts that led up to this." Sometimes, you would not be able to follow up the thoughts that led to it, but if you did, you would be surprised to find what a curious and inconsequent train of thought had been running in the mind. It is the old habit of many thousands of years, and so it needs rather careful attention. The mind needs to be controlled, and the mind is more elusive than the emotions.

Those of us who were born in England have had the training from our childhood up to repress emotions. That is the one thing that is very much impressed upon the masculine portion of the nation from boyhood. If we are hurt, we must not show it; we must on no account show emotion. That leads to a curious reserved character, which has its good side, but is often misunderstood. It is a little bit of training through which everyone passes, which goes some way to preparing us to control other things, but the control of the mind is rather a different matter. We can all do it absolutely, if the reason for doing it is strong enough.

You remember the story they tell you in India of a king who wanted to impress the importance of concentration upon his people. To each of his courtiers he gave a vessel of some sort filled with water to the very brim, and said: "Now you shall carry those vessels around the city and bring them back to me without a drop being spilt, and if a drop is spilt, you will be beheaded." They carried those vessels through the city and brought them safely back.

Then the king congratulated them and said: "Well, what did you observe as you went through the city?" Not one of them had seen anything; the whole time they were concentrated on that one task only, so afraid were they lest they should spill a single drop of water. It afterwards transpired that they had passed a magnificent pageant, which the King had arranged; they had passed an army going through various manoeuvres, but not one of them had seen it.

So it is possible for quite ordinary people to concentrate closely when the necessity is great enough. We all do it when we are preparing for an examination. There is an immense advantage in daily meditation, and it is that that keeps the bodies at their best if it is properly and regularly done. It is like constant gymnastics for them of a higher sort, which is very useful. Unless we have reasonable control of these higher vehicles we can hardly hope to reach up to still higher realms.

We must have done well in the small things before we come to the great. You remember the parable of the man with the talents. "You have been faithful in a few things," said the Master, "I will make you ruler over many things". And then He said: "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord". Very few people think what that is. What is the joy of the Lord? The joy of the Lord is activity; the joy of the Lord is the work of the world. If you do well in a small thing, then you have the opportunity of more work in a rather bigger thing. That rule is so invariable that I think you may depend upon it that if you are successful in any piece of work you will have the opportunity of more work and better work.

## DEVOTION IN CEREMONIAL AND IN MEDITATION

By the Rev. I.J. Van der Leeuw, LL.D.

There is no religion without devotion. Even in the most primitive religion, devotion is always the giving of something in the service of the Divine, the offering of ourselves; it is an attitude of mind in which we see the Divine as the wider Life and ourselves as a part of it; in which we strive to return to the life whence we came, to merge with it, to give to it all that is dearest to us.

Thus, then, there is no religion without devotion. Devotion is the very heart of all religious worship, but devotion may be expressed in many ways. There are so many forms of devotion – as many as there are types of human beings. We may express our devotion in collective worship and in ceremonial as we are doing in our Church. On the other hand, we may express our devotion in silence, in meditation and in contemplation. We can try to reach the Divine in so many ways, and it is well that we should understand that devotion can manifest itself in different ways and that all ways are necessary and valuable.

There are still many who look upon ceremonial as a waste of time, who do not see what use it is that man should engage in ritual worship. In ceremonial we invoke powers from on high, we use set phrases, incantations, music, all the outer aids of language, colour and movement to bring about certain effects. And surely, if we cannot see the inner side of ceremonial, if we cannot understand intuitively that there is something deeper, some spiritual aspect to it, it must seem only a waste of time. Thus people say, “Why does not this man go out into the world and help his fellow-men instead of going to church and there performing ceremonial? But, remember, this physical world, which to most of us is the only world of reality, is but one of many worlds; we live also in a world of feeling, in a world of thought, in a world of spiritual realisation, and these worlds become increasingly real to us as we ourselves evolve, as we grow spiritually. This physical world is a world of results. Our world is determined by worlds within. Similarly all our actions are determined by our thoughts and feelings; we have never performed any action without first having thought it. We may not understand these functions of our consciousness, for they take place with such rapidity that we do not notice them, but they are there. We must first think and will before we can act. Our life in the physical world is always determined from within, and the more we realise that this world within is the world of reality, the more we can determine our lives from within and the more we begin to see all things differently. Then we begin to realise that that which makes men what they are in this world of matter is not their actions but their thoughts, their ideals, their aspirations. Then we can understand that a great religious teacher, a poet, a painter, a musician can fire an entire nation, and even generations to come with an enthusiasm they could not have reached without him.

And so from within, this world is ever recreated; from within ourselves we constantly create our own lives. When once we understand that, we can see how ceremonial acts. Each time we perform ceremonial we call upon the eternal creative forces of the universe and spread them abroad upon the world; by our collective devotion we call forth the Divine blessing, and through us as a channel, it is poured forth upon the world surrounding us. That is a sublime reality; that is a reality so great that if the world did not have the aid of ceremonial worship, it would be a very different world from what it is now.

We can liken ceremonial to divine sunshine pouring out upon the world. Just as the physical sun makes all things grow and live, makes all things healthy and vital, so the spiritual Sun, which we invoke in our ceremonial, the grace from above, the power and blessing of Life of the Christ

Himself is poured forth upon the world and its sunshine makes man's inner life to grow. Thus, though we may not see it physically, by the ceremonial work done in different religions, there is poured out upon the entire world this divine sunshine, helping men to live nobly and to aspire nobly. Many millions of noble actions are done daily, many millions of lofty thoughts and feelings are produced by the aid of this divine sunshine spread over the world by means of ceremonial and ritual.

Ceremonial, then, is one of the greatest helps given to the world, and if we can see with the spiritual vision, we realise that over the whole world there is a network of churches and temples spreading spiritual force, spiritual sunshine everywhere. Sunshine alone, however, is not sufficient. Without sunshine life would be impossible; but the man who would be strong must exert himself, must exercise his muscles. He must himself do the work that will make his body a useful instrument, which he can use in life. Imagine a human being who would have sunshine and nourishment, but who never moved his physical body. As time went on he would become incapable of movement, and all the sunshine and all the nourishment we gave that body would be insufficient to bring about the result, which the exercise of the body alone can produce. Only that can make us strong, and it is just the same in the exercise of our devotion.

Collective devotion in ceremonial is a magnificent work. When we invoke the divine grace it flows forth through us upon the world surrounding us. That is the divine Sunshine, which helps humanity to grow; that is the divine nourishment given to human beings, which is necessary for their spiritual well being, but it is not enough. However much it may help us, however strong we may feel our devotion in ceremonial, however much we may feel ourselves in the divine Presence, it is not sufficient. If we would be strong spiritually, we must exercise our spiritual muscles just as we must exercise our physical muscles if we would be strong physically. It is not enough to bask in spiritual sunshine and partake of spiritual food; we must do spiritual exercise and be able to move about spiritually, to investigate spiritually, and to know spiritually.

Now, it is curious that so many do not appreciate that fact. It is clear to us physically that nourishment and sunshine are not enough, but that we need movement also and that no strength can be gained without strenuous exercise. The athlete who would be strong, who would gain the prize, must learn to control his body, to control his muscles and he must give them regular exercise; without years of strenuous training he cannot become strong. Do you think it is otherwise in the spiritual life? Do you think that strength and knowledge can be gained by us without our own exertion? Do you think that there we can just bask in the sunshine and partake of nourishment and imagine that we can grow strong without moving a finger ourselves? It is not so; we must take spiritual exercise if we would become spiritually strong, if we would gain first-hand knowledge.

And thus devotion has a second outlet, not this time in collective worship, not this time in ceremonial, but in introspection, in what we call meditation. In meditation we do exactly the opposite from what we do in ceremonial; we do not act; we do not speak; we do not invoke; but we go within, and the power of our devotion instead of being turned outward is turned inwards; we try to discover ourselves.

It is well for all of us, even though we do not go so far as meditation or contemplation, to create periods of silence, moments of solitude on our lives. Our lives are always turned outwards; we are always busy, always speaking, always acting, always contemplating this world around us, always carried along on its ceaseless stream of activity. But, remember, strength comes not from that kind of life; strength is born of silence and of solitude.

It is only when we can be alone, in utter silence, that we gain true spiritual strength. Most people are afraid of silence, just as afraid as they are of being alone. Why? Because their own inner life is a closed book to them; because they do not know themselves. They are so used to living in this world of sensation, which is constantly changing, that the idea of stopping those sensations even for a moment, is to them tarrying. Yet we need those moments of solitude. The busier we are the more we need them. Create for yourselves times when you withdraw from your fellow-men, when you sit in silence, alone, when you rest your physical body, when you rest your feelings and your desires, your thoughts and your imagination. It is very difficult to do in the beginning, and at first it may even seem impossible. Your thoughts will run from the subject you are trying to concentrate upon, and you will find your mind creating images of different things that have happened to you during the day; you will think of your business and about your friends, but gradually you will learn how to dominate that thought-instrument and keep it utterly quiet. Then very gradually something within will begin to dawn upon you, and you will begin to know yourself. That is the last discovery man makes. First he discovers the stars; last of all he discovers his own inner life. And yet, what is nearer, what is simpler? No one can bar our entrance to this inner life; it is within us all the time. It is the only world worth gaining, the only reality worth knowing, yet most of us disdain it, most of us are so much absorbed in this outer world that the world within is practically nonexistent for us. And then we complain that we lack knowledge and strength. How could it be otherwise? It is only when the world outside can be silenced for a few minutes that something within us can speak. How can it speak when its silent voice is ever drowned in the many noises of the outer world? How can it speak when our attention is turned outwards so much that we do not know what takes place within? We need silence and solitude; we need to enter our own consciousness if we would gain strength and knowledge, and that too is a way of devotion. There, too, we must give ourselves utterly, entirely willing to merge into that greater life, the Divine Life, which we are. And only as we make that transition, from the bewildering variety of this outer world surrounding us to the silence and solitude of the Divine Life within, can we begin to gain spiritual strength. Then we become established on that Rock of Life, which nothing can shake; then we gain knowledge, which none can take from us.

No knowledge is really worth gaining except the knowledge we find within ourselves. The rest may be facts that we know, which we have read, but only that which we have realised within ourselves is true and living knowledge and worthy to be called wisdom. Wisdom comes only by realisation. It is never taught by any man to anyone else; it is found within ourselves, as part of our being. Realisation comes to us when we enter the kingdom within; there alone can we gain first-hand knowledge, knowledge which we do not accept on the authority of any man, knowledge which is true for us because it has the authority of the spirit within. But we can gain this realisation only by spiritual exercise. Do not think that in this world or the next something can be had for nothing. It is a dream many people have had; they believe they can somehow drift into these spiritual worlds by going to church and taking part in church-worship. It is a magnificent thing this ceremonial of the Church; it is necessary to humanity just as nourishment and sunshine are necessary for our physical well being, but it does not make us strong as meditation and contemplation do, as spiritual exercise alone can do. So we need that second way of devotion; we need to go within and enter the centre of our own being; we need to gain knowledge, true living wisdom, so that we can go out among our fellow-men with some teaching worth giving to them. So long as our knowledge is merely gained from books, so long as we have only heard it from our teachers and accept it because they say it and because it seems reasonable, we have no living knowledge. Everything we have heard, if true, must become inner reality, and it can only become inner reality when we go within and find it there. Do not think that by remaining in the valley you can reach the mountain top. We have to climb the mountain; we have to go through the exercise of climbing to the top and there alone can we gain the vision. No

one can do that climbing for us; men can tell us of their experiences and of how finally they saw the wider vision, which can only be seen from the mountain top. They can try to explain to us what they saw, try to make us share their feelings, but they cannot give us the Vision. Each soul must go alone in silence and in solitude on that journey within, where the vision of that mountain top can be gained. Then we have knowledge of our own; then we have strength that none can take from us, because it is strength from within.

Thus must devotion in ceremonial and devotion in meditation go hand in hand, the one giving spiritual sunshine and spiritual nourishment to human beings, the other being the exercise of each human being for himself, making him strong, strengthening his spiritual muscles, developing his spiritual body, so that he can gain that wisdom and strength in those worlds of the spirit, which are necessary to him as the benefits which he can gain from ceremonial.