

Q: Please talk to us about business.

A: And actually, business is one of the very, very simple things to bring under the jurisdiction of spiritual activity. It seems to me—unless I just have some special gift that way—but it seems to me that it has always been one of the simplest things for me, this subject of business. And the reason is that I do not see business as separate and apart from one's spiritual experience. In other words, to me, business is as spiritual as any form of living. It's as spiritual as going to church; it's as spiritual as prayer. That doesn't mean that all concepts of business fit into that, but business as it is and, as I understand it, is really a part of spiritual living.

I think I can best illustrate that with this experience. In the very first year of the depression, a man who had been a millionaire in the building business, not believing that the depression would last so long, lost his entire business and his entire fortune. And his wife had to go out to work, and he himself took menial work, something far below the dignity of day labor, and he was having a very difficult time with it. And that man came to me one day at my office and said that he wanted help, but owing to conditions, there was no way to get it.

However, a man owed him a large sum of money, so large that if he could collect it, he and his wife could live out the depression and wait for things to come back again and be in comfort, and could I help him collect that money through metaphysical means? And I said, "No, no. There is no provision in the spiritual world for collecting a debt. As a matter of fact, we are told not to live on yesterday's manna. We're told not to go to law to sue. We're told to forgive seventy times seven, to forgive our debtors as we would be forgiven." And so I said that there is no provision whatsoever for collecting a debt spiritually.

"But that should in no wise interfere with your supply or the amount of it, for the simple reason that God is omnipresence, and God is infinite. Therefore, supply must be infinite, and it must be omnipresent. It must be where you are, and the blessing is that it is not dependent on man, whose breath is in his nostrils. It is not dependent on any man's favors. Business is an activity of God and has nothing whatsoever to do with man, except that man is an instrument for the showing forth of God's business."

"Well then, what am I to do?"

"Well, the first step would be to forgive your debtor." And you can imagine the impression that made, considering the vast sum of money that he had looked upon as his last hope.

"No," I said, "the only thing I can see, according to the spiritual text, is to forgive that debt. You need not tell the man you've forgiven it. Forgive it within yourself, within your heart. If the time comes when he wishes to pay it or can pay it, that will be his demonstration. But your demonstration is to forgive it, and then not looking on yesterday's manna, let us

see what happens with God today."

And that very night, he received a call from a real estate man saying that a piece of property could be sold if some way could be found to fit a factory onto it in the peculiar shape that it was, and would he look at it and give them some advice? He went down the next morning, looked at it, gave them advice, and received a check that not only paid up his back debts—his own personal back debts—but gave enough to live on for quite a few more weeks. But the following week, he received a call from a church asking if he had anything to do with plans that had been drawn ten years before to build this church.

"Yes."

"Well, we're ready, so come down now."

But that is not really enough. This is really pressed down. The next day, he received a call from the government, from Washington, together with a check for expenses to come down to New York, where he had to go for this other job and to consult on the building of a housing community. And I'd like you to know that within two years, that man was admitted to partnership in the firm that was doing the building of these community projects, government projects.

Now, was it business, or was it religion? Was it business, or was it ordinary spiritual living, obeying the spiritual laws of Scripture in your life and then watching it develop into business? Well now, the same thing I have witnessed ever since in every type of business activity, whether it was marketing a product, or whether it was in relationships between corporations and labor. In whatever way these principles have been called upon, they have been proven to be effective—but not by having anything to do with business, but by introducing spiritual principles into the business world. And part of that you will find in those same two chapters on human relationships: "Love Thy Neighbor" in *Practicing the Presence* and "The Relationship of Oneness" in *The Art of Spiritual Healing*.

When you begin to perceive that God is the one Self, the one Being, and you begin to realize that you are the same individual that I am, because "I and my Father are one" is just as true of you as it is of me, and when I begin to behold that, then we begin to dwell in harmony. There again, as long as there are contracts in the business world, in the material world, I suppose we'll go through the form of making contracts. But actually, there should be no necessity for those things, and in work like ours, there need be none for this reason: Just as you are learning that the only bond between us is a spiritual one, just as you are learning that we don't have to depend on memberships to have you come to lectures or classes, we don't have to depend on memberships to support the activity of The Infinite Way, we don't have to ask you to contribute weekly, or monthly, or yearly, in fact we don't have to ask you, period, because the spiritual law is the law of supply, and it's not dependent on man whose breath is in his nostrils. It's not even dependent on princes. It is dependent only on the presence and activity of Christ,

spiritual Presence in individual consciousness.

Now, once you begin to realize that He that is within me is greater than he that is in the world, that He performeth that which is given me to do, He perfecteth that which concerneth me, and you get an actual consciousness that there is a "He" within you, then this "He" it is, this Presence, this Invisible, that goes before you to make the crooked places straight. It is that which goes before you to be the cement of relationships.

This just came into my thought, an experience that I had on the road as a salesman. There was one man in Kansas City whom I never could sell. He was just determined that he wasn't going to buy from me, and for many, many years, he didn't. And on this particular trip, I thought, well, it's foolish just to waste time going over there to hear him say no. So I'll go to a practitioner first and see what happens afterward. So before I went to that store, I looked up a practitioner in the town and found a man in his office, told him my story, and he said, "Well, it isn't a question of whether that man buys from you or not, it is only a question that human will and human domination have no place in the spiritual life. As a spiritual being, he can only be subject to the same spiritual power that you are. And so the whole thing comes down to whether or not you believe that there can be another power handling any man." So he threw the treatment right back at me and not at the man.

Then, when I went in the store that morning and the man said no, I— no reason—I just said, "Well, it seems surprising to me that a man as successful as you are could, for so many years, refuse to look at the line of a man who is as successful as I am. I have a reputation for styles, for qualities, for everything, and you don't even know what that reputation is made up of." He said, "You're right. When can I have an appointment?"

Now again, that wasn't business, you see. That was spiritual living. I had been violating spiritual living. I was seeing that man as a man with a will of his own, with a mind of his own, and not even a pleasant one. And therefore, it was I who was doing the malpracticing. It wasn't he who was being mean, because the minute I released him from the belief that he was mean, he was a fine man.

So you see, to me, business isn't really business. Business is just spiritual living, or rather, it is one facet of spiritual living. And the same thing, whether it's business, or whether it's marriage, or whether it is spiritual teaching, or whether it is school teaching, or anything else, it really is just a matter of spiritual living. That's all it is.