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THE ROOTS OF FAITH

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Because I believe in God, I believe also in prayer. I do not see how a man can have one belief without the other.

A tree does not live very long if it cannot put out roots. These roots enable it to gain sustenance from the soil. Prayers are the roots of religious faith. Faith without prayer soon withers like a tree that has been severed from its roots. Prayer is the means by which we maintain communication with the Creator and derive spiritual sustenance.

One of my favorite verses in the Bible is Mark 9:23:
"All things are possible to him that believeth."

I suggest, however, that this verse of Scripture implies that the believer must be one who prays, praying being an essential part of believing. Through prayer, the believer learns that while "all things are possible," all things are not desirable in the sight of God.

One may pray for a specific objective, and the prayer, no matter how earnest, may be denied. The supplicator does not get everything he wants, but he achieves something that is infinitely more important. He finds out what God wants.

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In the Congress of the United States, regular prayer meetings are held, with one active prayer group on the House side and another in the Senate. Our Senate group meets every Wednesday morning for alternate periods of prayer and meditation. The leader's spiritual message is often followed by a general discussion of the importance of divine guidance for the country's lawmakers. Prayers are then offered for the legislative day, for colleagues, and for the country. I understand that twelve such prayer groups, their members coming from various branches and agencies of the government, meet in Washington.

While this is not the sort of thing that can be set down in the law books, I maintain that the practice of prayer is an important part of the legislative process. Truly, "all things are possible" when men of good-will share their great responsibilities with the Almighty!

Prayer takes many forms. I would not presume to advocate one form to the exclusion of others. For my own part, however, I find special solace in the kind of silent prayer that goes by the name of meditation. For prayer is not only beseeching, it is also listening, and quiet meditation a way of listening to God.

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." And prayer can invest faith with increasing substance, and bring new evidence from our God.