

## *Silence is a Door to God*

THERE is very great virtue in the cultivation of silence, and strength to be found in using it as a door to God. Such a door opens within. When I have quieted down, I must spend some time in self-examination in the Presence of God. This is no facile admission of guilt for wrongs done or a too quick labeling of attitudes in negative terms. But it does mean lifting up a part of one's self and turning it over and over, viewing it from many angles and then holding it still as one waits for the movement of God's spirit in judgment, in honesty and in understanding. To examine one's self in introspection and inner probing may become sheer morbidity, but to examine one's self in the climate and the mood of prayer, carries with it a kind of lift and positiveness that is at once the antidote to morbidity. Every period of prayer should provide for an experience of self-examination in the presence of God. Self-examination issues most often in a sense of sin, the acknowledgment of which is the first step in the forgiveness of God. It is at such a moment that a man sees that the wrongdoing of which he may be guilty is a wrongdoing against God. "Against Thee and Thee only have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight." Such is always the final testimony of the spirit in self-examination in the Presence of God. There may be, very directly following this phase of prayer, a time of thanksgiving. Thanksgiving in the Presence of God becomes more than perfunctory. Thanksgiving has implicit within the idea itself a sensitive appraisal. Suddenly, I may become aware that that which I thought was the sheer result of my own effort came my way despite my effort. In the Presence of God, His radiance picks up the magic in so much that I had taken for granted. Somehow in thanksgiving I see clearly, if but for a fleeting moment, that much, much has come my way as a normal part of my dependency, without my being aware of it. It is at such moments that I may become literally overwhelmed by a profound sense of the love and the grace of God. The very roots of my own pride lie exposed to the scrutiny of God, and if I can bear it over and over again, the very will to pride of that kind may be destroyed in me: ves.