

Lessons in Truth *for the 21st Century*

an updated version of H. Emilie Cady's classic

edited & with an introduction

by

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INTRODUCTION

In the early 1800s, a young clockmaker became interested in what was then called "mesmerism." Phineas Parkhurst Quimby was a scientist by nature and, over the years, he experimented with various forms of "mind cure" until he hit upon a method that was virtually infallible. He called it "the Science of Christ." Quimby practiced throughout New England until the late 1860s, and is documented as healing thousands of people of hundreds of conditions—both in person and at a distance—using only words and thought.

Among his successes was Mary Baker Patterson, later to marry and take the name of Eddy. As part of her cure, she studied with Quimby and also with Ralph Waldo Emerson, who introduced her to the concept of Oversoul. Eddy went on to write *The Science of Health with Key to the Scriptures* and to found the Church of Christ, Scientist, now known as the Christian Scientists.

One of Mrs. Eddy's students, Emma Curtis Hopkins, became her assistant and edited the *Christian Science Journal*. She was a great reader, however, and began to have her own revelation experiences, which was contrary to Christian Science doctrine (which stated that Mrs. Eddy's was the final revelation of Truth and *Science and Health* was the only source to use).

It wasn't long before Mrs. Hopkins was out on her own, teaching the principles and practice of Christian Science as an independent teacher, in Chicago. Her students paid the (then) phenomenal price of \$50 for a seminar. It was worth it to them, though, for many experienced healings and prosperity as a result, and quite a few went on to found their own churches.

Among Mrs. Hopkins' students were Myrtle and Charles Fillmore, the founders of the Unity School of Practical Christianity, which operates Silent Unity and the Association of Unity Churches, and publishes *Daily Word*. Melinda Cramer was another, and went on to found, with Nona Brooks, the Church and College of Divine Science. Then, much later, Ernest Holmes, the founder of the Church of Religious Science (Science of Mind) studied with this "teacher of teachers." Each of these people experienced their own healing and went on to teach thousands of others, and the organizations they built have touched millions of lives.

Another of Mrs. Hopkins' students was a former schoolteacher-turned-physician, Dr. Emilie Cady of New York City. After her studies, she had published a little booklet called *Finding the Christ in Ourselves*, which the Fillmores encountered. They asked her to write a series of clear, simple lessons for their *Unity* magazine, and, after some reluctance, she did. Going back over her notes from Mrs. Hopkins' seminars, she drafted twelve straightforward lessons that could take the reader from total ignorance of spirituality to effectiveness as a practitioner. The response to the series was overwhelming. The Fillmores published the lessons in a series of pamphlets for some time, and then, finally, combined them into one book, called *Lessons in Truth*.

Since then, the *Lessons* have become the one, central text for all Unity teachers, churches, and organizations. Over a million copies have been distributed since 1923.

Unfortunately, however, many modern readers have a difficult time with Dr. Cady's Victorian English. After all, American culture has changed a lot since 1894, when the *Lessons* were first written.

This book, then, is an attempt to edit Dr. Cady's material into modern language. Very little has been added and virtually nothing has been deleted, except the flourishes and redundancies that were common to the writing style of the time. Every effort has been made to remain true to the spirit, as well as the letter, of her message, while making the language more readable.*

May you, too, find the power of the Truth that she has shown so many.

* Except for one or two explanations taken out of the text, most footnotes are the editor's additions and comments. *rlm*

LESSON ONE:

SLAVERY OR FREEDOM—WHICH?

As you begin this course, please put aside all your previous ideas, beliefs or notions. By “suspending disbelief” you’ll find it easier to take in what is being offered—you won’t be, as Luke said, putting “new wine into old wineskins” (Luke 5:37).^{*} If you find, as we go along, something you don’t understand or agree with, just let it go until you’ve finished the entire course. Many things that disturb you at first will be made clear later on. Of course, after you’ve finished, you’re free to return to your old ways of living and believing. But for the time being, remember what the Master Jesus said: “except ye . . . become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:3). Also, when you find things repeated, please remember that these are lessons, not lectures.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things. (Phil. 4:8)

Of Human Bondage

Each and every one of us believes that we are ruled by our bodies and the material world around us—and all our suffering is the result of this belief. If we look at the Old Testament, though, we can read—in the story of Israel coming out of Egypt—the story of human consciousness growing up out of bondage in the physical, and on into the spiritual.

And Jehovah said (speaking to Moses) I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt, and have heard their cries by reason of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large land, unto a land flowing with milk and honey (Exod. 3:7,8).

These words express exactly how the Creator feels toward mankind, today.

Today, and everyday, God has been saying to us, His (Her) children: “I have surely seen the affliction of you who are in Egypt [the darkness of ignorance], and have heard your cry by reason of your taskmasters [sickness, sorrow, and poverty]; and I am [not *I will*,

but *I am now*] come down to deliver you out of all this suffering, and to bring you up out of that land unto a good land and a large land, unto a land flowing with milk and honey [a life of joy and comfort].”

Coming into Freedom

Sometime, somewhere, every one of us must come to our true Self. Like the Prodigal Son, having tired of eating cornhusks, each of us will “arise and go to my Father” (Luke 15:18). And we will do so in all humility and praise, as it is written, “Saith the Lord, to me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess to God” (Rom (14:11)).

This doesn’t mean that God is a stern autocrat who compels us to bow to Him. Rather, it’s a description of the order, the law, of the universe: the law of all love, all good. Humanity, at first living in our physical, selfish, animal nature, will grow up, stage by stage, to the spiritual understanding that we are one with the creative force of the universe.

At that point we are free of all suffering, because we realize that we have conscious dominion over all things. And somewhere on this journey, our consciousness comes to a place where our hearts are full of joy and wonder. Then, gladly, we bow before the greatness of the Spirit working through us and around us. From that point on, with joyful freedom, our hearts cry out “Alleluia” and “Jehovah reigneth” (Psal 93:1). Everyone must sooner or later come to this experience.

You and I, dear Reader, have begun to wake up. We have become aware of the bondage of our past ignorance and have set out from “Egypt” to the land of our liberty—and now we couldn’t turn back if we wanted to. Yes, there may be times on our journey when we come into a deep wilderness or against a Red Sea, and our courage may fail us. Yet, as Moses said to the trembling Israelites, “Fear ye not; stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah, which he will work for you today” (Exod. 14:13).

An Inside Job

Each of us must sooner or later stand alone with our god; nothing else works. Nothing else will ever make you master of your own destiny. Your own indwelling Spirit provides all the life and health, all the strength and peace and joy, all the wisdom and support that you can ever need or desire. No one can give to you as can this indwelling Presence. It is the spring of all joy and comfort and power.

We’ve believed we were helped and comforted by others, that we received our joy from circumstances outside of us, but that’s not so. *All joy and strength and good come from inside*, and if we only knew this truth, we would know that *nothing outside of us can take away our joy or our good*.

Heirs to the Kingdom

Most of us have believed ourselves to be slaves (or victims) of circumstances. Some have said that, at best, we are servants of the Most High. Neither belief is true.

It's time for us to wake up fully, to know that we are not slaves, not servants, but sons and daughters; "and if children, then heirs" (Rom 8:17). Heirs to what? Heirs to all wisdom, so we need never make mistakes; heirs to all love, so we need never feel fear, envy, or jealousy; heirs to all strength, all power, all life, all good.

We're so used to the sound of the words we heard in childhood that we often forget to look for the meaning in them. Have you ever considered what it means to be "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom 8:17)? It means, as Emerson said, that "every[one] is the inlet, and may become the outlet, for all that is in God." It means that all that God is and has is truly ours, the rightful heirs, if we can only claim our inheritance.

So in this course, we will be learning how to claim the inheritance that God wants us to have in our daily life.

Paul said,

So long as the heir is a child, he differeth nothing from a bondservant though he is lord of all; but is under guardians and stewards until the day appointed by the father. So we also, when we were children [in understanding] were held in bondage under the rudiments of the world: but when the fullness of the time came, . . . And because ye are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying *Abba*, Father. So that thou art no longer a bondservant but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God" (Gal 4:1-7).

The "Spirit of his Son" is the risen Christ that dwells in each of us. And it is through that indwelling Christ that we are to receive all that God has and is—as much or little as we can (or dare to!) claim.

No matter what you thought started you on this journey, it was really because it was God's "fullness of time" (Gal 4:4) for you to claim your inheritance. You could no longer be satisfied with, or in slavery to, the material world. God's "fullness of time" for you is now. It's time for you to be free, to have dominion over the material world, to be no longer a servant, but a first-born, in full possession of your inheritance!

The Inner Life

Yet even as we take in that wonderful truth, we realize that we're no longer to be looking for rewards, or for a belief to follow. We're not on this journey to get something, or to follow someone, but to find a new way to live life. And in the course of these Lessons, we'll take the first steps toward a new life—of freedom, perfect love, and all good.

As we begin the walk, we discover that every right thought we think, every unselfish word or action, must—by unchanging laws—lead to good results for us. But on our way, we must learn not to focus on these results. Instead, we must learn to *be* the Truth, consciously. We must learn to be, *consciously* the love, the wisdom, the life that we always truly are, though unconsciously—and let the results take care of themselves.

We bring these qualities to our consciousness by taking daily time alone, focusing on the divine Presence within us. *In daily meditation lies the secret of power.* No one can grow in spiritual knowledge or power without it. No one would ever dream of becoming, say, a master musician without daily practice! You need to practice the presence of God just as you would practice music.

You may be so busy working and even helping others that it seems there's no time to go off by yourself. But the invitation is clear: "Come ye yourselves apart . . . and rest a while" (Mark 6:31). And that's the only way to gain the definite knowledge, true wisdom, steady purpose, or the power to meet the unknowns of daily life, that sets us free.

The thing to remember is that *doing* is secondary to *being*: when we are consciously the Truth, it radiates from us and does the works without our running around looking busy. So if you have no time for this quiet meditation, make time; take time. If you look carefully, you'll find some things better left undone. You may spend time chatting with friends or neighbors that, rather than diffusing your energy, could be spent "refueling" in the silence. Even some unselfish act may not be so important that you should neglect your regular, daily meditation.

And when you do withdraw from the world into the silence, don't think about yourself or your failures, but focus on God. *Let all your thoughts center on your relation to the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.* Let all the old fears and trouble go for awhile; work at turning your thoughts away from them to some line from a hymn, a Psalm, or statement of Truth.

Unless you've tried it, you'll never know how this simple practice quiets the nerves, reduces fears, and dissolves the stresses of the day into nothing. So never let your minutes or hours apart be a time of effort or concern, but always a time of peace: just calm, quiet waiting—alone with the Presence within.

Once you've tried it, you may be tempted to make the mistake of withdrawing from the world, and spending all your time in meditation. This is asceticism, and is rarely wise or profitable. Jesus, our Way-shower, helps us to see this: each day he went off by himself, and each day he returned to share, renewed in Spirit and in power. In the same way we, too, go into the stillness each day, so we can come back into everyday life with new inspiration and new courage and power.

And don't let concerns about others stop you. Wherever anyone practices this daily presence of God, peace and harmony flow through to fill the surroundings. We go apart to get still, to receive new life, new inspiration, new power, new supply from the overflowing fountain within, and then we return to the world around us to share that life

and power in love. When we do this, peace and harmony result in our home and workplace—in all the world around us, wherever we are.

Being Peace

Yet in our newfound clarity and power it's important, again, to remember Jesus, and live in the understanding that "Thy gentleness hath made me great" (II Sam. 22:36). No one is so grand, so godlike, as one who, knowing the Truth of Being, can stand meekly* and unperturbed before the false accusations of the human mind. As Jesus stood meekly, saying nothing, before the false accusations of Pilate, we need to live that quality of love and acceptance in our daily life.

We must also forgive as we would be forgiven. To forgive doesn't mean simply being indifferent to those who injure us; to forgive is to *give for*—to give some actual, definite good in return for the distress incurred. Like most people, you may think "I've got no one to forgive!" Yet if we consider all the people we feel negatively toward, or that we think "served him right," then we find we have much to forgive. Any pain that you suffer, any failure of some expected good, may be the result of a spirit of unforgiveness you're holding—toward someone in particular or the world in general.

We must let go of past beliefs about our circumstances or environment. No matter how evil circumstances may appear, or how much it may seem that someone else is the cause of your sorrow or trouble, God, good—and good alone—is really there, when you call the Law into expression. Joseph, speaking of his brothers' selling him into slavery, said "As for you, ye meant evil against me; but God meant it for good" (Gen. 50:20). If we have the courage to see only God in it all, even "the wrath of man" (Psalms 76:10) is turned to our advantage. Situations that seemed heartbreaking turn to joy before our very eyes, if we steadfastly refuse to see anything but God in them.

Finally, while it is perfectly natural for the human mind to seek to escape from its troubles by running away from a situation or planning to make some physical change, such methods of escape are foolish. *There is no real or permanent physical way to escape from circumstances or feelings*; all our help must come from within. The real inner consciousness that "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want"* will supply all needs more surely (and more liberally!) than any human hand. The felt understanding that "God is my defense and deliverance," achieved by holding the words in the silence until they become part of our inner being, will free anyone from the arguments of the smartest lawyer in the world.

Following the Way

Our ultimate goal must be to come into full awareness of the indwelling God, and then, in all circumstances, to affirm our support and deliverance through and by this One. We don't need to run around, helping the Divine, but simply to hold a calm, restful, unwavering trust that the All-Wisdom and All-Power within us is able to bring about whatever is needed. When that victory is won—in the silence of our own being—then we need do nothing outwardly to relieve any situation. The Psalmist said:

I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains [to the Highest One]:
from whence cometh my help? My help cometh from Jehovah, Who
made heaven and earth. Jehovah [your indwelling Spirit] will keep
thee from all evil . . . From this time forth and forevermore” (Psalms
121:1,2,7,8)

If only we could realize that this mighty power to save and to protect, to deliver and to make alive, lives forever *within* us, and stop, forever, looking to others!

There's only one way to fully realize this—the way of the Christ Spirit. Speaking through the Master, Jesus, that Spirit told us: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). Holding onto the words “Christ is the way” when you are confused and perplexed and see no way out, will always open the way to complete freedom.

LESSON TWO:

GOD, MAN, AND BEING

When Jesus was talking with the Samaritan woman at the well, He said to her, “God is spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24) *

Webster’s, in their dictionary definition of spirit, says: “life or consciousness viewed as an independent type of existence. One manifestation of the divine nature; the Holy Spirit.” We can’t see spirit with our physical eyes, but when we look with our “sixth sense,” our intuitive eyes, then spirit is visible and we recognize it. You don’t see the living, thinking “me” when you look with your eyes at my body; you see only the form I am manifesting at this time.

God, then, is not, as many of us have been taught to believe, “the big man in the sky,” some gray-bearded person who lives in some beautiful region above the earth called “heaven,” where people go where** they die. Nor is God a stern, angry judge, waiting for the chance to punish people who failed to live a perfect life here on earth.

God is not a person *having* life, intelligence, power, or love. God *is* that invisible, intangible, but very real something we *call* life. God is perfect love and infinite power. God is *the total* of these, the total of all good, both manifested and unexpressed.

God is Spirit, the invisible life and intelligence underlying all physical things, the creative energy that is the cause of all visible reality. *There is only one God in the universe, only one source of all the different forms of life or intelligence that we see:* animals, plants, human beings, microorganisms, water, and even rocks. As Plato put it, there could be no body, no visible reality, unless there is first Spirit as creative cause.

God is love. We cannot see love, nor even comprehend what love is, except as love in action. All the love in the universe is God. The love between husband and wife, or between parents and children, is just the smallest bit of God, as made manifest in visible form. A mother’s true love, so infinitely tender, so unfailing, is God’s love, manifested a little through the mother.

God is wisdom and intelligence. All the wisdom and intelligence that we see in the universe is God—wisdom projected through a visible form. Up to now, we’ve looked for knowledge and help outside ourselves, not knowing that the source of all knowledge, the very Spirit of truth and wisdom, is waiting within each and every one of us. To educate (from *educare*, to lead forth) therefore means *not* to force knowledge in from the outside, but always *to draw out from* the student something that already exists there. God as

infinite wisdom lies within every human being, only waiting to be led forth into physical manifestation. Understanding and working with this awareness is true education.

God is power. Not simply God *has* power, but God *is* all the power that can do anything in this universe. God, as the creative energy that causes all visible reality, is the power that sustains and evolves this reality.

God is not a being having qualities, but God is the good itself. God, the source of our existence in every moment, is not only omnipotent (all-powerful); God is omnipotence (all power). God is not merely omniscient (all-knowing), God is omniscience (all knowledge), itself. God is not merely omnipresent (always and everywhere present), God is more—omnipresence. Everything you can think of, in its absolute perfect form, is God.

The Nature of Substance

God then, is the substance (from the Latin *sub*, under, and *stare*, to stand), or the real thing standing under every visible form of life, love, intelligence, or power. Each rock, tree, or animal—every visible thing—is a manifestation of the one Spirit, God, varying only in degree. And *each one* of the infinite forms of manifestation, however insignificant, *contains the whole*. One drop of water taken from the ocean is just as perfect ocean water as is the whole: the molecules are the same, combined in exactly the same way, whether we consider a drop, a pail-full, a keg-full, or the entire ocean. Each is complete in itself; they differ only in quantity. Each contains the whole, yet nobody would make the mistake of confusing a drop with the entire ocean!

So we say that each individual form, or manifestation of God, contains the whole. We don't for a moment mean that each individual is God in the entirety, but that each is God taking form in some degree or quantity.

God is not only the creative cause of every visible form at its beginning, but at every moment that form exists. God lives within every created thing as the life, the ever-renewing, re-creating, ever-evolving, cause of it. *God never is and never can be separated from any created form—not for a moment*. Then how can even a sparrow fall to the ground without God's knowledge? And “ye are of more value than many sparrows” (Matt. 10:31).

The Nature of Mankind

God is. Mankind exists (from the Latin, *ex*, out of, and *sistere*, to stand forth). *Humanity stands forth out of God*. As such, humanity is the fullest and most complete expression of God on the planet. “In the image and likeness of God He created them” (Gen 1:27). To mankind, therefore, is given dominion over all other manifestations.

Each of us is a threefold being, made up of Spirit, body, and soul. Spirit, our innermost, real being, is the absolute part of us, the *I* of us, and has never changed—though our thoughts and circumstances may have changed thousands of times. This part of us is God standing forth into visibility. It is what Jesus called “the Father” in us. At this central part of our being each of us can say “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30), and be speaking absolute Truth.

Our Relation to God

Jesus said “one is your Father, even He who is in heaven” (Matt 23:9). He also said “and all ye are brethren” (Matt. 23:8), because all of us are manifestations of one and the same Spirit. As soon as we recognize this truth of our relationship to all humanity, we at once slip out of our narrow personal loves, out of “me” and “mine,” into universal love, taking in all the world. Then, with Jesus, we joyfully exclaim: “Who is my mother? And who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples and said, behold my mother and my brethren.” (Matt. 12:48).

God is the name we give to that unchanging principle at the source of all existence. To the individual, God takes on personality as loving Father-Mother, a comforting Presence, but as the creative underlying cause of all things, God is principle, impersonal, infinite. For some, taught to think of God as a person, the statement that God is Principle is chilling. Terrified, they cry out “They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him!” (John 20:13). But broader and wiser minds find the thought of God as a person too small for their understanding, for a person is limited in place and time and God is the infinite within whom this finite universe takes form.

All that we can ever need or desire is available to us through the infinite reservoir of good, God, that we experience as the loving Mother-Father Presence. We all have direct access through the central “I” of our being, the Father-Mother within, to the infinite life, love, wisdom, and power which is God. This Source is the living fountain of all good, the Giver of all good gifts. This Source and you are connected, every moment of your existence. You can draw on this Source for all the good that you are, or ever will be, capable of desiring. There is no limit to God’s willingness to manifest more of God’s self through us, when we are willing to align our self with God.

Till now in our lives, we’ve focused on the world outside us to satisfy our desires—and we’ve been sorely disappointed. *Our hunger for satisfaction is not about visible experience; it’s really the cry of the homesick child-soul for its Mother-Father God.* It’s the Spirit’s desire in us to come into our consciousness as more and more perfection—until we become fully aware of our oneness with All-perfection. Mankind has never been and never could be satisfied with anything less.

What we want to know now is how to receive more from the fountainhead within, and how to experience more and more of God (all good) in our daily life.

LESSON THREE:

THINKING

We learned in the second lesson that all things are one and the same Spirit manifesting in different ways; that the reality standing under everything is the substance of God; that all the various forms of life are one Life coming out in different forms; that all the intelligence and wisdom of the world are God manifesting in different ways; that all the love people feel and express toward each other is a “bit” of God as love made visible in human action.

When we say that there is only one Mind in the entire universe, and that this Mind is God, some people will see the connection with Lesson Two immediately. Some, though, will say: “if all the mind there is, is God, then how can I think wrong thoughts, or have any other than God thoughts?”

The connection between universal Mind and our own individual minds is difficult, but can be understood.

Understanding Mind

There is in reality only one Mind, Spirit, which is life, intelligence, power, etc. in and through the universe. Yet human beings are, in a sense, individuals, with free wills, and not puppets.

We are made up of Spirit, soul, and body. Spirit is the unchanging “I” of us, the part that has never changed and, through all eternity, never will change. Soul is the clothing, if you will, of the Spirit, and body the clothing of the soul. Spirit is inner—one with God, unchanging—and mind, the intellect, is constantly changing and evolving, gathering its information from the world around, through the five senses. Humanity originally lived consciously in the Spirit, but became more and more attached to the material, sensual, part of the self. So our souls now include the “mind of the flesh” and the “mind of the Spirit.” Paul says “The mind of the flesh is death [sorrow, trouble, sickness]; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace” (Rom. 8:6).

The Spirit within you is Divine Mind, the real mind. Without it, the human mind would disappear, just as a shadow disappears when the object that cast it is removed.*

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath [not will] prepared for them that love Him. But God has revealed them unto us by his Spirit . . . For who among

men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man, which is in him?
Even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God” (I Cor
2:11).

Each of us has direct access to all there is in God, if we can be “as little children” and try a few, plain, simple rules that Jesus taught—rules by which we can find the Divine within ourselves, and can work out our salvation from all troubles.

Experiencing Truth

If you want to make rapid progress in spiritual understanding, stop reading so many books. They only give you someone’s opinion about Truth, or a sort of history of the author’s experience in seeking Truth. What you want is a revelation of Truth in your own soul, and that will never come through the reading of books.

Seek light from the Spirit of truth within you. Go alone. Think alone. Seek light alone, and if it doesn’t come at once, don’t be discouraged and run off to someone else to get the light; for, as we’ve suggested, you’ll get only someone’s opinion, and may then be further away from the Truth you’re seeking than ever before.

The Spirit of truth is at your call. “The anointing which ye received of him abideth in you” (I John 2:27). Seek it. Wait patiently for it to “guide you into all the truth” (John 16:13) about all things. “Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). This is the universal Mind, which makes no mistakes. Shut down the intellect for the time being, and let the universal Mind speak to you—and when it speaks, though it may be only “a still, small voice” (I Kings 19:12), you will know that what it says is Truth.

How will you know? You will know just as you know you’re alive. All the argument in the world to convince you against Truth that comes to you as direct revelation will fall flat and harmless at your side. And the Truth that you *know*, not simply believe, you can use to help others. That which comes forth through Spirit in you will reach the soul of those to whom you speak.

What comes in from the outside, from the five senses or intellect, reaches only the intellect of those you wish to serve. And the intellect loves to argue.

Intellect argues; Spirit reveals. One *may* be true; the other *always* is true. Spirit does not give opinions about Truth; it is Truth, and it reveals itself.

Someone has said that the smallest child, who has learned from the depths of her being to say “Our Father,” is infinitely greater than the most intellectual man who has not yet learned it. The apostle Paul was a man of gigantic intellect, educated in all the Hebrew law—a Pharisee among Pharisees—but after he was spiritually enlightened he wrote: “the foolishness of God is wiser than men” (I Cor. 1:25).

The Power of Thought

What we think about God, about ourselves, and about others makes a great difference in our daily lives. Till now, not understanding who we really are or the results of our thinking, we've let our thoughts flow in a random "stream of consciousness." Our minds have been turned outwardly and we've taken almost all information in through our senses. Because of that information we have thought incorrectly, and *all our troubles and sorrows are the result of that incorrect thought.*

"But," says someone, "I can't see how my thinking incorrect thoughts about God, or about anyone else, can make me sick or lose my job." Well, we won't try just now to explain all the steps by which bad results follow from wrong thinking; for now, just try thinking right thoughts awhile, and see what happens.

Take the thought "God loves me." Think these words over and over continually for a few days, trying to realize that they are true, and see what the effects are on your body and situation. For most people, something like the following happens. First, you get a new enthusiasm; then quicker, better circulation, with a pleasantly warm sensation, followed by better digestion. Later, as Truth flows out through your being into your surroundings, everybody will show more love for you without your knowing why; and finally, circumstances around you will begin to change, coming into harmony with your desires, instead of against them.

Everyone has heard how intense thoughts of grief or fear have turned peoples' hair white in a few hours. We've all experienced how fear makes the heart beat so rapidly as to seem about to "jump out of the body"—even if we only imagined it! In the same way, intense negative thoughts can cause painful disease* Carrying emotional burdens makes more stooped shoulders than carrying heavy physical loads. Believing that God regards us as "miserable sinners" and is constantly watching our activities with disapproval, discourages and half-paralyzes some people, leading to failure in all they try.

Free Will

It may be difficult for some to understand why, if God lives in us all the time, we can be ignorant and drift into these wrong thoughts and the troubles that go with them. The answer is, simply, that we are not automatons. Your child would never learn to walk if you always do her walking. Because you realize that the only way for a child to be strong and self-reliant in all things is to let her try things on her own, you let her try and fail. You aren't willing to make a puppet out of your child by taking all the steps, even though you know she'll fall down many times, learning how.

We, too, are in the process of growing up. We're developing into the highest of spiritual beings. We get many falls and bumps along the way, but it is only through the process that our growth can proceed. Father and mother, no matter how deep their love for their

children can't grow for them; nor can God, who is Omnipotence at the center of our being, grow spiritually for us without making us automatons instead of individuals.

Focusing Thought

If you keep your thoughts turned toward the external of yourself, or of others, you will see only the things which are not real, and which pass away. All the faults, the failures, or the lacks in people or circumstances will seem very real to you, and you will be unhappy or sick.

By contrast, if you turn your thoughts away from the outer appearance and toward the spiritual, dwelling on the good in yourself and others, all the apparent evil will first drop out of your thoughts and then out of your life. Paul understood this when he wrote to the Philippian church:

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things. (Phil. 4:8)

We can all learn how to turn our awareness, or conscious mind, to the universal Mind, or Spirit, within us. We can, through practice, learn how to make this everyday, topsy-turvy "mind of the flesh" be still, and let the mind that is God (all-wisdom, all-love) think in us and through us.

Radiating Fountains

Imagine, if you will, a huge reservoir, out of which lead many small streams and rivulets. At the far end, each stream opens out into a small fountain. Each one of these fountains is not only continually filled and replenished from the reservoir, it is itself a radiating center, giving out in all directions the water that flows through it, so all who come near are refreshed and blessed.

This is our relation to God: each of us is a radiating center. Each of us, no matter how small or ignorant, is a little fountain at the end of the stream, receiving God from the reservoir.

The fountain represents the individuality, as separate from the reservoir—God. Still, the fountain is one with God, in that we are constantly renewed and fed from the great reservoir, and without it we are nothing.

Each of us, no matter how insignificant we are in the world, may receive from God unlimited good, of whatever kind we desire, and radiate it to all about us. But remember, we must radiate if we would receive more. Stagnation is death.

Only We Block the Flow

The very wisdom of God—the love, the life, and the power of God—are ready and waiting with longing impulse to flow out through us without limit! When it flows through the intellect of some people, everyone says “what a wonderful mind!” When it flows through the hearts of others, we see love that melts all bitterness, envy, selfishness, and jealousy before it. When it flows through a body, as life, no disease can compete with it.

We don't have to beg and plead and bargain with God, any more than we must beg the sun to shine! The sun shines because it's the law of its being to shine, and it can't help it. No more can God help pouring into us unlimited wisdom, life, power—all good—because it is the law of God's being to do so.

Nothing can hinder God's flowing except our own lack of understanding. The sun may shine ever so brightly, but if we have, through willfulness or ignorance, placed ourselves (or been placed by our ancestors) in the deepest corner of a dark cellar, we get neither joy nor comfort from its shining: to those in the cellar the sun never shines.

So, up to now, we haven't known how to get ourselves out of the cellar of ignorance, doubt and despair. To most of us, therefore, it's seemed that God has held back from us the life, wisdom, and power we wanted so much. All our searching seemed in vain.

But the sun doesn't radiate life and warmth one day and darkness and chill the next. Nor does God radiate love at one time and anger or displeasure at another. “Doth the fountain send forth from the same opening sweet water and bitter? Can a fig tree, my brethren, yield olives, or a vine figs?” (James 3:11).

God is always good, always love. God never changes, no matter what we do or may have done. God is always trying to pour more out of God's infinite self through us into visibility so as to make us grander, fuller, and freer individuals. While the soul-child cries to Mother-Father God, the Mother-Father is yearning with infinite tenderness to satisfy the child.

Summary

1. There is but one Mind in the universe.
2. Human mind, the intellect, makes mistakes because it gathers its information from the outside world through the senses.
3. Universal Mind sees and speaks from within; it is all Truth.
4. Our ways of thinking make our happiness or unhappiness, our success or lack of success; we can, with effort, change our ways of thinking.
5. God is at all times, regardless of our action or inaction, trying to pour more good into our lives to make them richer, fuller, and more successful.

LESSON FOUR:

DENYING THE POWER OF ILLUSIONS

Every religion through all the ages has had some sort of denial as one of its foundations. The idea of denial has been so powerful that devout seekers have even tortured their bodies in various ways, believing that they were making themselves more spiritual, or at least were placating some angry god. These are misunderstandings of God's intention for us, and among Christians, they come from a misinterpretation of the Scripture:

Then Jesus said to his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me (Matt. 16:24).

Many people think this means that if anyone wants to please God they must give up all their enjoyment and comfort, all the things they like and want, and take up the heavy cross of constantly doing things that they'd rather not (which is why many younger people decide to put off "being a Christian" until they're "old").

There could be nothing further from Jesus' meaning than this.

False Beliefs & Consequences

In our ignorance of God's true nature, we've believed that all our enjoyment must come from external sources—usually from something we don't yet have. The poor see enjoyment only in having lots of money. The rich, often experiencing "too much of a good thing," complain that life holds no happiness. The sick are convinced that if they were well, they would be happy. The healthy but hard-working person seeks rest and recreation for enjoyment. And so forth.

Our minds tend always to seek changes in our outward conditions to achieve enjoyment. So, in old age, when people have tried everything, getting first this and then that, and have too often been sadly disappointed, then they turn to God and try to find some comfort in the belief that sometime, somewhere, they'll get what they want and be happy. They become patient and submissive, but never truly happy.

Jesus, the Master teacher of Truth, understood this. He spent nearly three years teaching the people—the common, everyday people like us, who wanted, just as we do, food and rent and clothing, money, friends, and love. He taught them to love their enemies and do good to those who persecuted them, to avoid resisting evil but to give *double* to anyone who tried to take anything from them, and to stop worrying about clothing or shelter because "your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things" (Matt. 6:32).

Then one day He said, “these things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full” (John 15:11). And then He said “whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it to you” (John 15:16). “I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father himself loveth you.” (John 16:24-26).

These don’t sound like the words of someone who intended for us to go without the comforts of life—or in any way deprive or torture ourselves!

In this course, so far, we’ve seen that there is a human self, a “fleshly mind” in each of us that is not to be relied on fully. *This* is the self of which Jesus spoke when He said “let him deny himself.” This intellect, carnal mind, ego, or whatever you choose to call it, is envious and jealous and fretful and sick because it is selfish. This human, or small, self seeks its own gratification at any cost—even its own death. We have believed all that this mind has told us; we’ve accepted its false beliefs about ourselves and God; and so we’ve experienced all kinds of suffering and lack.

Our real self, however, is never sick, never afraid, never selfish. It is the part of us that “seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil” (I Cor. 13:5). Our real self is always seeking to give to others, while the human self, believing wrongly, is seeking to own and control.

Changing Our Beliefs

There are people who have learned how to change beliefs, and so change the conditions of our life. One of the methods they’ve found will get rid of disturbing conditions every time: by denying them, absolutely. First, we deny that such things could have power to make us unhappy. Second, we deny that these conditions exist at all.

According to Webster, the word “deny” has two definitions. In one sense, to deny is to withhold from, as to deny bread to the hungry. In another sense (which is most likely how Jesus used it), to deny is to declare to be not true, to repudiate as utterly false. To deny one’s self then, is not to withhold comfort or happiness, much less torture our bodies, but to deny the reality of the human mind or self, with its wrong, or error, beliefs; to declare its claims to be untrue.

If you’ve done something incorrectly, the first step toward getting it right is to undo what’s been done wrong and begin again from that point. We have been believing falsehoods. We have believed that God was angry with us and that we were sinners who ought to be afraid of Him. We have believed that pain and sickness and poverty and other troubles are evil things put here by this same God to torture us in some way into loving and serving Him. We have believed that we pleased God most when we were so subdued by our troubles as to become patiently submissive to all, not even trying to overcome them.

All this is false! Entirely false! And *the first step toward freeing ourselves from our troubles is to get rid of these erroneous beliefs about God and about ourselves.*

Some may doubt that wrong belief can affect our bodies or our situation. If so, consider the child who is so afraid of the “bugaboo” under the bed that he has convulsions. Or imagine, if you received, today, a message that your husband or wife or child, who is absent from you, has been killed, your emotional, physical, perhaps even financial, suffering would be just as great, even if the message was proven over the next few days to be untrue. In the same way, our imaginary “bugaboos” of divine wrath and false messages declaring our own weakness overcome us.

Denial is the first practical step toward wiping out of our minds the mistaken beliefs of a lifetime. We declare not to be true a thing that seems to be true, and *all negative appearances are directly opposed to the teachings of Truth*. Jesus said “Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous [right] judgement” (John 7:24).

Suppose you grew up believing that the sun moved around the earth, and someone now showed you that the opposite is true. You would accept the demonstrated truth, but still, at every sunrise or sunset, the old idea would come up, seeming almost too real to be disputed. The only way to cleanse your mind of the old impression would be by repeatedly denying the old beliefs. You would say over and over to yourself, whenever the subject came up in your mind, “This is not true. The sun does not move around the earth; the earth moves around the sun.” Eventually, the sun would only seem to be moving.

Similarly, it appears that our bodies and circumstances control our thoughts, but the opposite is true. Our thoughts control our bodies and our circumstances. So, *if you repeatedly deny a false or unhappy condition, it loses its power to make you unhappy*.

What everyone desires is to have only good in our lives and surroundings. We all want to live lives full of love, to be perfectly healthy, to know all things, to have great power and much joy, and this is just exactly what God wants us to have. All good, of whatever kind, is God made visible. When we crave more of any good thing, we are in reality craving more of God to come forth into our lives so we can realize it with our senses.

Having more of God doesn’t take out of our lives the good things—it only puts more of them in.

Now, we may be able to see the possibility of our own God-being, which never changes, but what we need is to realize our oneness with the Creator at all times. And in order to realize it, we must deny, in ourselves and others, any appearances that seem contrary to this. We deny their reality. We declare that they are not true.

Denials for Error Thoughts

There are four common error thoughts that most people grant power to. People who have grown out of trouble and sickness through daily practice have found it useful to deny these thoughts in order to cleanse themselves of the distressing effects of having believed in them. They can be denied like this:

1. *There is no evil.*
2. *There is no absence of life, substance, or intelligence, anywhere.*
3. *Pain, sickness, poverty, old age, and death are illusions and cannot master me.*
4. *There is nothing in all the universe for me to fear, for greater is the One in me than anyone in the world.*

There is no evil. There is one and only one power in the universe, and that is God: good. God is good and God is omnipresent. Apparent evils are not entities or things of themselves. They are simply apparent absence of the good, just as darkness is an absence of light. But God, all good, is omnipresent, so the apparent absence of good must be unreal. It is only an illusion, like the moving sun.

There is no absence of life, substance, or intelligence anywhere. We have seen that the true reality is spiritual. “The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (II Cor. 4:18). By using this denial you’ll soon break your bonds to matter and material conditions.* You will know that you are free.

Pain, sickness, poverty, old age, and death are illusions and cannot master me. God is all life, eternal. God is all substance, everywhere present. God lives in and through you and is the truth of you. The “I” of you, therefore, experiences eternal wellbeing and can never be touched by these material illusions.

There is nothing in all the universe for me to fear, for greater is the One in me than anyone in the world. The “I” of you is the infinite omnipotence of all that is!

You need not wait to discuss this matter of evil, or of illusion, or even to understand fully why you deny them. Simply begin to practice the denials in an unprejudiced way and see how wonderfully they will, after a while, deliver you from some of the so-called evils of your daily life. Repeat these four denials silently several times a day, not with effort or anxiety, but calmly realizing the meaning of the words spoken:

1. *There is no evil.*
2. *There is no absence of life, substance, or intelligence, anywhere.*
3. *Pain, sickness, poverty, old age, and death are illusions and cannot master me.*
4. *There is nothing in all the universe for me to fear, for greater is the One in me than anyone in the world.*

Denying Negative Experience

Denial of negative experiences brings freedom from bondage to the world around us, and happiness comes when we can effectively deny the power of anything to touch or trouble us.

Almost hourly, little issues and fears come up in your life. Meet each one with a denial. Calmly and coolly say to yourself: *“that’s nothing at all; it can’t hurt me or make me unhappy.”* Don’t fight it. Let your denial be the denial of any possible superiority over you, just as you would deny the power of ants in their hill disturbing you where you stand across the road.

If you feel anger, stand still and silently deny its power. Say that you are not subject to anger; you are Spirit, love made manifest, and cannot be made angry, and the anger will leave you.

If someone is mean or tries to hurt you, remember that the One in you is greater than anyone outside of you and silently deny anyone’s power to hurt you or make you unhappy.

If you feel jealousy or envy, deny their power over you. Declare that you are really Spirit, love made manifest, and that negative feelings have no power over you. There is, after all, really no reason for jealousy or envy, for all people are one and the same Spirit. Shall the foot be jealous of the hand, or the ear envy the eye? Remember that in reality, you, however insignificant you may appear, are absolutely necessary for God to make the perfect whole.

If you find yourself dreading to meet someone or afraid to step out and do what you want or have promised to do, immediately begin to deny the power of fear. Say “It’s not true. I am Spirit, and no one—nothing—in all the universe can hurt me; I have nothing to fear.” Soon you’ll find that all the fear has disappeared; all the anxiety is gone.

Creating Our Circumstances

Chances are, you’ve been living in negative thinking for years, denying your ability to succeed, denying your health, denying your Godhood, denying your power to accomplish anything. That pattern of denial has paralyzed you and weakened your power. When, in the next lesson, you learn the use of affirmations, the opposite of denial, you’ll discover how to lift yourself out of the realm of distress into the realm of success.

For now, remember: no person or thing in the universe, no chain of circumstances, can in any way come between you and all joy, all good. You may think something stands between you and your heart’s desire, and so live with that desire unfulfilled, but it’s simply not true. This “think” is the bugaboo under the bed that has no reality. Deny it. Deny it and you will realize that this appearance was false. Deny it and you will find yourself free. Then you will see the good flowing toward you and into you, and you will understand clearly that nothing can come between you and your own.

Denials are for us alone. Speak them silently or aloud, but not in a way to create antagonism or invite discussion. This is your work, and its results will be felt around you when you have fully realized the truth of the words you speak.

To some, this sort of mechanical approach may seem a strange way into a more spiritual life. But our thoughts determine our experience and changing our thoughts is an essential first step toward experiencing Spirit in and around us, every moment of every day. Practicing these steps wholeheartedly, without prejudice, is the very best thing we can do for growth in divine knowledge and fullness of joy in everything we undertake.

LESSON FIVE:

AFFIRMATIONS: TOOLS FOR LIVING

Most people start out on a spiritual journey because they're dissatisfied with their present life. The human mind is convinced that somewhere, somehow, it ought to be able to bring to itself whatever it desires and would satisfy it. This thought is simply foreshadowing the reality.

The hunger that we feel is the prompting of the Divine within us, which longs with an infinite longing to fill us. It is one side of the spiritual law of supply and demand, with the other side being unchangeably and unfailingly the promise: "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24).

We can all reach a state where we can stop our doing because we realize that Spirit is the fulfillment of all our desires. We simply become still and know that all the things we desire are ours already. This knowing, or recognition, has the power to bring the invisible good (God)—the innermost substance of things—into precisely the visible good we have desired.

But to get to that state, we must take the first steps, faithfully, earnestly, and trustingly, even though they may seem at first glance as useless and empty as the ancient ceremonies and rituals of the high church.

Understanding Affirmations

Those who have carefully studied spiritual laws find that, besides being freed from apparent evil by denying its reality or power, they also can bring any desired good into their lives by persistently affirming that it's already here.

To affirm anything is to assert positively that it is so—even in the face of all evidence to the contrary. We may not be able to see how, by our simply affirming a thing to be true we can make it happen—especially a thing that to all human reasoning or sight doesn't seem true at all. But we *can* compel our minds to stop quibbling and go to work to prove the rule, each in our own life.

Spiritual laws can't always be expressed verbally, but they are nonetheless infallible and immutable laws that work with precision and certainty. The beautiful Presence within us and around us is the substance of every good that we can possibly desire—even more than we can desire, for "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (I Cor. 2:9). So, in

some way, difficult to say in words, there's power in our word of faith that brings all good things right into our daily life.

Practicing Affirmations

We speak the word. We confidently affirm. But we have nothing to do with bringing it to pass. "Thou shalt also decree a thing and it shall be established unto thee" (Job 22:28). So as we decree, or affirm, unwaveringly and steadfastly, we hold God by His own unchanging laws to do the establishing or fulfilling.

In the first instructions given to students, this set of denials and affirmations take a major place. Later, the students' own experience and inner guidance lead them to an understanding of divine law that makes it easy for them to follow simple rules that at first seemed difficult.

Saying over and over any denial or affirmation is a re-training of a mind that has lived so long in error and false belief that it needs this constant repetition of the Truth to function in the new way.

Useful Affirmations

As with the denials, so with the affirmations. There are a few sweeping affirmations of Truth that cover many smaller ones, and which are wonderfully effective in bringing good to our own experience and to others:

1. *God is life, love, intelligence, substance, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence;*
2. *I am God's manifestation, so God's life, love, wisdom and power flow into and through me in every moment; I am one with God and governed by divine Law;*
3. *I am Spirit: perfect, holy, harmonious; nothing can hurt me or make me sick or afraid, for Spirit is God and God cannot be hurt or sick or afraid; I manifest my real self through this body now;*
4. *God works in me to will and do whatsoever good God wishes me to do and God cannot fail.*

First, *God is life, love, intelligence, substance, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence.* These are ideas we learned in the second lesson. As you repeat the affirmation, please remember that every particle of life, love, intelligence, power, or real substance in the universe is simply a quantity or degree of God made manifest or visible through a form.

Try to think of what it means to say that God is omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent. God is everywhere present (omnipresent) and God is good. Then why fear? God is all-powerful (omnipotent). Then what other power could prevail? Since God is all-powerful and everywhere present, we must forever put aside the traditional notion of the Devil as an adverse power that might at any moment bring someone harm. *There is and can only be one power, one presence, and that is God, the good.*

If faced with the appearance of evil, stand true and unwavering in the knowledge that God, the good, is omnipresent. By so doing, you shall see the seeming evil melt away as the darkness before the light, and good will come to take its place.

Second, *I am God's manifestation, so God's life, love, wisdom and power flow into and through me in every moment; I am one with God and governed by divine Law.* Remember while repeating this affirmation that nothing—no situation, no person, no group of people—can in any way stand between you and the Source of your life, wisdom, or power. It is all “hid with Christ [the innermost Spirit of your being] in God” (Col. 3:3). Nothing but your own ignorance of how to receive, or your own willfulness, can hinder your having unlimited supply.

No matter how weak or sick or inefficient you seem to be, take your eyes and thoughts off the appearance and turn them within to the central fountain there. As you do so, say calmly, quietly, but with absolute assurance: “*This appearance is false; God, manifest as life, wisdom, and power, is now flowing into my entire being and out through me into the world around me.*” You’ll soon see a marvelous change in your self as a result of the realization that this spoken word brings to you.

Third, *I am Spirit: perfect, holy, harmonious; nothing can hurt me or make me sick or afraid, for Spirit is God and God cannot be hurt or sick or afraid; I manifest my real self through this body now.* You do not change God’s attitude one little bit by either begging or affirming. You only change your attitude toward God. By saying these words you put yourself in harmony with divine law, which is always working toward your good—never toward harm or punishment. Your real self, the “I” of you, knows this and lives this, always.

Fourth, *God works in me to will and do whatsoever good God wishes me to do and God cannot fail.* Our affirming God’s mind working both to will and to do makes us will only the good. And since God, the Father in us, does the works, there can be no failure. Whatsoever we fully commit to the Father within to do, and affirm is done, we shall see accomplished.

These, then, are the four comprehensive affirmations; memorize them so you can repeat them in the silence of your own mind at any place and any time.

Wonderfully, they will act to deliver you out of the greatest external distresses—places where no human help avails. It’s as though the moment we assert emphatically our oneness with God the Father, all the power of omnipotent love is instantly set into motion to rush to our rescue. And when that power has begun to work for you, you can stop doing things, boldly claiming “*It is done; I have the desires of my heart.*”

The Power at Work

“Thou openest thy hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing” (Psalms 145:16). In reality, God is always moving within us to manifest All-Good more fully through us. Our affirming, backed by faith, is the link connecting our conscious human needs and desires with God’s power and supply.

Those who have claimed their inheritance by calmly affirming their oneness with God, know how free they can be from human effort and planning. This power has healed the sick, brought joy in place of mourning, literally opened prison doors and bid the prisoner go free, without ever a request for human assistance.

You need to understand that it's not necessarily these particular words that have done the job. It's denying apparent evil and, in spite of all evidence to the contrary, affirming good to be all there is, and our oneness with God's omnipotent power to accomplish, even when there are no visible signs of God's presence, that has accomplished the feat. In one case, just simply claiming "*God is your defense and deliverance*" opened all the doors to restore a man to his family within a month—after five years of failed efforts by lawyers to return him from exile.

Guidelines

No definite rules can be provided as to what will be most effective. Some people get better results from repeating denials. Others do better by using denials less frequently and affirmations more. A few hints, however, may be helpful.

Denials tend to erase or dissolve. Affirmations build up, and give strength or power. People who remember vividly, and are inclined to dwell on past pains or sorrows need to repeat denials frequently, for denials cleanse the mind and blot out of memory all seeming evil and unhappiness, so they feel more like a dream. Denials are particularly effective for people who are intolerant, judgmental, or aggressively immoral, and for those who have become overconfident, thinking the human is sufficient in itself for all things. Denials are important also for the selfish and any who find it easy to harm others.

Affirmations are most powerful for the timid and those who feel inefficient or incompetent, those who are afraid of others or "give in" easily, and those who are anxious or doubtful. Affirmations help those in positions of responsibility, as well.

People who are self-negating or passive need to use affirmations more, and people who are self-confident or unforgiving need denials more.

Deny the appearance of evil or harm; affirm good. Deny weakness; affirm strength. Deny any undesirable condition and affirm the good that you desire. This is what Jesus meant when He said "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe [claim and affirm] that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24). This is what is meant by the promise that "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon [that you stand squarely or firmly on]^{*}, to you have I given it" (Josh. 1:13).

Practice these denials and affirmations silently in the street, in the car, when you are awake at night—anywhere, everywhere, and you'll begin to experience a wonderful new mastery over external things and over yourself.

^{*}

If there comes a time when you're confused about what to do or say, stand still and affirm "*God in me is infinite wisdom; I know just what to do.*" Then act on whatever comes to mind in the stillness that follows. "For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to withstand or gainsay" (Luke 21:15). Don't worry, but depend fully on the principle, and you'll be surprised at the sudden inspiration that comes to you.

This principle—of denying and affirming—always works. It can be used to solve any of life's problems, regardless of the nature of the problem. This principle frees us, God's heirs, from all undesirable conditions. It always brings good into peoples' lives. All we need to do is use these simple rules and practice them faithfully, until they lead us into such complete realization of our own Godhood that we no longer need to depend on them.

LESSON SIX:

FAITH: THE MASTER KEY

The word faith is typically thought to mean a simple form of belief based mostly on ignorance and superstition. It has drawn scorn from “thinking people”—those who have believed that intellectual attainment is the highest form of knowledge. “Blind faith” they disdainfully refer to it—fit only for ministers, women, and children, but not a practical thing to build a life on.

Some people pride themselves in having outgrown their childish, blind, unreasoning faith. They say they have reached the more mature state—believing only the things they have seen or can explain rationally.

Paul, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews was obviously a highly intellectual man, a scholar among the Jewish people and the Greeks. He defined faith as follows: “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). He goes on to say “Things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Heb. 11:3). So our faith as substance brings into the world of evidence the things we hope for that were not seen. This means that *whatever we desire is in the invisible substance surrounding us and takes form according to our faith.*

Paul then describes many incidents of marvelous things brought to pass, not by anyone’s efforts, but by faith. He summarizes with:

And what more shall I say? For the time will fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah; of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of aliens. Women received their dead by a resurrection . . . (Heb. 11:32-35).

Do you want any more power or any greater thing than is listed here? More than power to subdue kingdoms, stop the mouths of lions, quench fire, turn whole armies to flight, raise the dead to life again? Even if you *do* want more than this, you need not despair, nor even hesitate to claim them, for One who knew what He was talking about said “All things are possible to him who believes” (Mark 9:23).

Most of us, whenever anyone has spoken of faith “as to move mountains” have felt a sort of hopeless despair. Even if we believed God holds all good things in His hand, and is willing to dole them out according to our faith, we’ve wondered, how could we hope to please Him? We have questioned our ability to reach a high enough standard of faith.

And we've questioned whether, in fact, there is any such power to draw from God what we've not been given before.

With such the case, it's no small wonder that logical minds have looked on faith as a wispy thing, good enough for the weak to hang their hopes on, but not something from which real, definite results could ever be obtained.

Blind Faith; Understanding Faith

There is, indeed, blind faith (and some have said it's better than no faith, for it will open its eyes in time!). Blind faith is the instinctive trust in a power greater than ourselves. And it is, for many, the first step toward a full life.

But there is also an understanding faith. Understanding faith is based on a realization of unchanging principle. Its action is intellectually understood, but is infinitely higher than intellectual conclusions. Faith goes beyond the intellect because it doesn't depend on physical facts, nor on the evidence of the senses. Faith is born of the Spirit of Truth at the center of our being. We call the voice of that Spirit, intuition.

Intuition is the open end, within our own being, of the invisible stream connecting us with that infinite reservoir, God. Faith is a ray of light shot out from the central sun—God—that enters into our being through the open window of intuition. With “blind” faith, we perceive the ray of light, and though intellect may not comprehend, we feel the other end of it opening out to all there is of God. This faith is “blind” because, though based in Truth, we are not conscious of the Truth at the time.

Understanding faith knows positively the nature of the laws under which we are operating. These laws are like the laws of geometry. For example, the sum of the angles of a triangle always equals two right angles. No matter how small or how large the triangle, whether it is on top of a mountain or under the ocean, this law holds. It is certain. And even before the triangle is actually drawn, we can know that it will be so.

The laws of Spirit are like the laws of arithmetic: the sum of the integers one and one always equals two. You cannot put these two together without getting the same result.* And whether we believe it or not does not affect its truth.

Spiritual or mental laws are just as real and unchanging as the laws that govern the material world. *If we have certain conditions in the mind, we must have certain results*—not because we believe some wise person's testimony, or even because our intuition tells us it is so, but because it is based on a law that can neither fail nor be broken. And just as with nature's laws, we can know positively beforehand precisely what results follow from certain mental states.

Supply & Demand

Two statements of Truth are the whole secret of understanding faith.

One of the unerring truths of our universe (spiritual and material) is that there's already great abundance to supply every human want: *there's a supply of good for every demand.* God, the creative cause of all things, is Spirit. God is the sum total of all good. There is no good that you can desire in your life that is not God. God is the substance—the real essence—within every visible form of good. God, the invisible substance out of which all things are formed is all around us waiting to come forth into manifestation. God is unlimited; therefore this good substance all around us is unlimited, and is the supply of every need that exists in the visible, material world.

Another truth is that *the demand must be made before the good can come forth* to fulfill it.

What most people call the promises of God are certain, eternal truths that are true whether we read them in the Bible or in the almanac. They are unvarying statements that cannot be changed. A promise, according to Webster, is a something sent beforehand to indicate that something unseen is on its way. It is a declaration giving the person who receives it the right to expect and claim the performance of the act.

Jesus said, "Ask and ye shall receive" (John 16:24). He was simply stating an absolute truth. He knew that the instant we desire, or express our desire by asking, we touch an infinite stream that starts on its way toward us the good we are seeking. He knew there need be no begging or pleading about it; that our asking is simply complying with an un failing law that *must* work—there is no escape from it. Asking and receiving are two ends of the same thing, just as adding one and one is the same thing as two.

Heart's Desires↔God's Desires

Asking always springs from a desire to possess some good. What is desire? *Our heart's desire is always God tapping at the door of our consciousness with infinite supply—a supply that is useless without a demand for it.*

"Before they call, I will answer" (Isa. 65:24). Before you are even aware of any lack, any desire for more happiness or fullness of joy, the great Mother-Father Spirit dwelling in your heart has desired them for you. God in you desiring them is what you feel, even though you think it's only you, separate from God, desiring them. Someone has said, "desire for anything is the thing itself, incipient." In other words, it's the thing itself coming in your direction that sparked your awareness of it and called forth your desire.

The only way God has to let us know about the infinite supply available to us and His (Her) desire to make it ours is to push gently on the divine spark—the "I," that is the center of each of us. God wants you to be a strong, self-sufficient man or woman, to have more power and dominion over the world around you. So quietly, silently, God pushes a little more divine desire into the center of your being. God enlarges, so to

speaking, your real self, and at once you become aware of a new desire to be grander, stronger, more capable. Without God pushing at the center of your being, you would never have thought of new desires, but would have remained content as you were.

You think you want better health, more love, a brighter, more cheerful home all your very own: in short, you want more good in your life. This is only God pushing at the inner door of your being, as if saying: “My child, let me in; I want to give you all good, so you can be comfortable and happy.”

Remember this: *desire in the heart for anything is God’s sure promise sent beforehand that it is yours already in the realm of supply, and whatever you desire, you can have for the taking.*

Taking is simply the law of supply and demand. As Elijah did when he affirmed for rain when not even the smallest cloud could be seen, affirm that you have the good you desire. Have faith in it. You are working with a spiritual law as firm as the laws of geometry, and you cannot fail. Do not be argued out of your acceptance by anyone—and the heavens will fall before you fail to receive what you desire.

“All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them” (Mark 11:24).

Fulfilling Desires

We know the law of abundant supply, and the truth that supply always precedes the demand (demand simply being the call that makes the supply visible). We know that all desire in the heart for any good is really God’s desire in us and for us. Now the question becomes: how shall we obtain the fulfillment of our desires, quickly and effectively?

“Delight thyself also in Jehovah; and he will give thee the desires of thy heart.” (Psalms 37:4). Look into your heart and rejoice in God’s working in and around you. Thank God that you *have* (not *will have*) the desires of your heart, remembering always that the desire is the thing itself in incipiency. For, if the good you desire were not already yours, you could never, by any possibility, desire it. (If you’re not sure of this statement, think of all the good things in the world you *don’t* really want in your life.)

Some might ask “What if I desire my neighbor’s wife, or his property?”

You do not and cannot desire that which belongs to another; you want the equivalent: what your neighbor’s possession stands for in your mind. You don’t really desire your neighbor’s wife (or husband); you desire the love that seems to be represented in your neighbor’s wife (or husband). You desire to fill your heart’s craving for love. Affirm that there is a rightful and overflowing supply of love for you, and claim its manifestation. It will come, for sure, and your desire to possess another’s spouse will suddenly disappear.

There is, right now, an unlimited supply of all good, held in the unseen for every human being. In spite of any evidence to the contrary, *no one must have less so another may have more*. Your very own good is waiting for you, and your understanding faith is the power that brings it to you.

Emerson said that the man who knows this law “is sure that his welfare is dear to the heart of Being . . . He believes that he cannot escape from his good.” Knowing divine law and acting according to it, we can rest forever from all anxiety, all fear. For “Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing” (Psalms 145:16).

LESSON SEVEN:

PERSONALITY AND INDIVIDUALITY

One of the greatest beauties of the Sermon on the Mount is the simplicity of its language. Jesus always spoke simply—often in stories that even a child could understand. Yet He was the fullest, most complete manifestation of the One Mind that we know. More of the wisdom that is God came forth through Him into visibility than through anyone else.

In fact, the more anyone manifests true wisdom, the simpler are their ways of thinking and acting; the simpler, also, are the words they use to express their ideas. Emerson said, “Converse with a mind that is grandly simple, and all literature looks like word-catching.”

Most metaphysical literature is anything but simple. Most of it is very confusing for those who haven’t taken a series of courses on the subject. Two words, in particular, are often confusing in their usage: individuality and personality.

Defining Terms

Personality (the word comes from the Greek, *persona*, meaning “mask) applies to the human part of you—the person, the external. It’s governed by the intellect. When you say you dislike someone, you mean you dislike their personality: the changeable, exterior presentation of the person. *Personality is the outer, changeable person.*

Individuality comes from the Latin, *in+divida*, meaning undividable. *Individuality is Spirit, the unchanging, inner, real person.* It’s the undivided Self of God showing forth in us. The more God comes into visibility through someone, the more individualized that person becomes. Don’t be confused. “Coming through” does not refer to “being religious,” but instead to the visibility of the divine qualities of wisdom, intelligence, love, power, and so forth, in their words and action.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, whom we have quoted several times in this course*, was a man of great individuality, but retiring personality. He was grandly simple. He lived a quiet life as a writer, shrinking from public activity. But as much as his human side was willing to retire and be thought little of by his peers, the immortal God in him shone even more greatly.

John the Baptist exemplifies the illumined intellect, the highest development of human consciousness. We may think of him as representing personality, while Jesus typifies

individuality. John recognized the superiority of Jesus, saying, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30).

While our personality may become like that of the people with whom we associate, our individuality never changes. It is the God self. It is that which distinguishes one person from another—no matter how similar they may appear.

A pronounced personality may be aggressive, fighting its way through obstacles and accomplishing much. But a pronounced individuality never battles; it’s never puffed up with pride; it’s never governed by likes and dislikes, and never causes them in others. A pronounced individuality is God come forth in greater degree through someone, and all mere personality bows before it, recognizing its superiority.

Developing One or the Other

We develop our individuality by listening to the “still, small voice” (I Kings 19:12) deep within us, and boldly following it—even if it makes us different from others (which it definitely will!). We develop a personality by listening to the voices outside ourselves and operating from selfish motives—generating pride, fear of criticism, and all kinds of conceit. They are mutually exclusive: as we seek to cultivate individuality, personality decreases, and with it all our fears.

As we move through the world, encountering others, we can develop our own individuality by focusing on theirs: the Christ, or Spirit, dwelling in every human being we meet. We can honor that Spirit, seeing through the mask of the personality to the love, intelligence, power, wisdom that resides in the heart of everyone. We can serve that Spirit by treating others with honor and respect, regardless of their position in the world. As we do so, we build our own individuality and less and less of our personality masks the Spirit dwelling in us.

Dealing with Strong Personalities

Whenever you’re afraid of someone, or shrink back from them, it’s because their personality is stronger than yours and overwhelms yours. Many timid people go through life believing they are inefficient and that others are better than or wiser than they. They’re afraid to meet a positive, self-possessed person, and when they do, they feel flattened, like grass after a storm; they wish they could get lost and stay lost, forever.

All this happens, not because the other is wiser or better, but because his personality is stronger. A timid person never feels this way in the presence of a strong individuality. Individuality in another not only generates our admiration, but also, when we’re in their presence, gives us a new sense of our own possibilities, of exhilaration, comfort, and encouragement. This is because pronounced individuality has the power to call forth more of the same—God—in others.

To avoid being overcome by someone's personality, *always remember that personality is only human, while individuality is divine.* Silently affirm your own individuality, your oneness with God, and your superiority to personality. Can God fear anyone?

If you're inclined to be timid or shrinking, practice the following. As you walk down the street and see anyone coming toward you—even a stranger—silently repeat "*I am a part of God in visibility. I am one with the Father. This person has no power over me, for I am unaffected by all personality.*" Make it a habit to repeat words like these whenever you approach someone; you'll soon find that no personality, no matter how strong or aggressive, can throw you off balance. You will be self-possessed because you are God-possessed.

If you find yourself bound to another personality, perhaps no longer even controlling your own thoughts, repeating the above may make a difference but may not be sufficient. In our experience, declaring (silently), "*There is no such personality in the universe as this one,*" and affirming it again and again, over several days, leaves one feeling wondrously lifted, as if chains were dropping off. In time, the voice within may urge us to go even further, saying something like: "*There is no personality in the universe; there is nothing but God!*" After a short time repeating these words, every connection feels broken and one is free from that personality as if it never existed.

So, if at any time the lesser affirmations of Truth fail to free you from the influence of another personality, try the more sweeping one: "*There is no personality in the universe; there is nothing but God!*" and you are bound to be free.

And always remember that God needs you. You are needed to, in some special manner, manifest the Divine mind. However humble your place in life, however unknown to the world you may be, however small your capabilities may seem to be, you are just as necessary to God's effort to come into visibility as is the most brilliant intellect, the most beautiful, the most politically powerful person in the world. Remember this, always, and act from the "still small voice"—the highest within you—to honor the highest—God's Spirit—within those around you.

LESSON EIGHT:

SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING

Understanding is a spiritual birth: a revelation of God within the human heart. Jesus showed us this when, having asked his disciples a question that they answered confusedly, based on their perceptions, He asked another question, which Simon Peter answered clearly, based on intuition. Jesus then said, “Blessed art thou, Simon bar Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 16:17).

You can have an intellectual perception of Truth. You may easily grasp the statement that God is the giver of all good gifts—of life, of health, of love—just as people have for centuries grasped it. You may even go further, and intellectually see that God is not only the giver, but the gift—the life, health, and love—in us. But unless Truth is “revealed unto thee . . . by my Father who is in heaven,” it’s no use to you or anyone else.

This revelation of Truth to our awareness is spiritual understanding.

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, And the man that getteth understanding. For the gaining of it is better than the gaining of silver, And the profit thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: And none of the things thou canst desire Are to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; In her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, And all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: And happy is everyone that retaineth her. With all thy getting, get understanding. (Prov.3:13-18; 4:7)

Only this revealed Truth brings about your desired healing. You may say to yourself, or someone else may say to you, over and over again, that you are well and wise and happy. On the mental level, a certain “cure” is achieved, and for a while you do feel well and wise and happy. But this is simply a form of hypnotism, or mind cure, and is temporary.

Not until, down in the depths of your being, you feel your oneness with the Father, not until you know within yourself that the fountain of all joy, wisdom, and health is within your own being, ready to leap out the instant you need it, will you have spiritual understanding.

Jesus’ Teachings

All the teachings of Jesus were designed to lead us into this awareness of oneness with the Father within. He had to begin with the external (people then, as now, being caught

up with external things) and teach the people to love their enemies, do good to others, and so forth. These were external steps for them to take, like lopping off the ends of branches. But they were steps that led on to the state where desires are fulfilled, where finally Jesus said, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now” (John 16:12).

He told them of the Comforter that would be in them, and which would teach them all things, reveal the “deep things of God” (I Cor. 2:10), give them power over every form of sin, sickness, sorrow, and death itself, and show them things to come. He was telling them that they would find the kingdom of Heaven within themselves—the kingdom of love, of power, of life. The Comforter coming to their hearts and lives is what we mean by spiritual understanding.

The power that this consciousness of the indwelling Father gives is as much ours, today, as it was for the people Jesus was talking to. Perhaps more. For He said “He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do” (John 14:12).

The Point of Realization

All the lessons in this course so far have also been stepping-stones, leading up to the point where you may realize the ever-present inner working of the Most High Creator, God. “Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you?” (I Cor. 6:19).

No one can reveal God to you. You cannot reveal God to anyone else. If we’ve learned how, we may tell others how to seek and find God in themselves. But the new birth into the full awareness of our spiritual faculties and possibilities takes place in the silence, in the invisible—and in its own time. It’s like the wind that “bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit” (John 3:8).

Hundreds of people have tried this method and have not received what they earnestly but ignorantly sought. They have not received because they didn’t know how to take what God freely offered. Others have failed because they were looking for power. “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures [to serve selfish ends]” (James 4:3).

Spiritual understanding, or realization of the presence of God within us, is, as Peter said, “the gift of God” (John 4:10). It is a gift that comes to any and all who learn how to seek it correctly. Emerson said,

This energy does not descend into individual life on any other condition than entire possession. It comes to the lowly and simple; it comes to whomsoever will put off what is foreign and proud; it comes as insight; it comes as serenity and grandeur. When we see those whom it inhabits, we are apprised of new degrees of greatness. From that inspiration the man

comes back with changed tone. He does not talk with men with an eye to their opinion. He tries them . . . [T]he soul that ascends to worship the great God is plain and true; has no rose color, no fine friends . . . no adventures; does not want admiration; dwells in the hour that now is.

On that day when, more than riches and honor and power and selfish glory, you desire spiritual understanding, on that day will come to you the revelation of God within you, and you shall be conscious of the indwelling Father, who is life and strength and power and peace. “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart” (Jer. 29:13).

Partial Revelation and Full

It’s possible for someone to want a partial revelation of God—say, as health—with all one’s heart. And, if they’ve learned how to take the desired gift (by uncompromising affirmation that it’s theirs already), they *will* get realization (spiritual understanding) of God as health. The same holds true with any of God’s gifts.*

This is a step in the right direction. It’s learning how to take God by faith for whatever one desires. But the time will come to every one of us when we’ll hear the divine voice within saying, “Come up higher.” At that point each of us will let go of any selfish desires that are just for our own comfort. *Each of us will desire good just so we’ll have more to give out*, knowing that as good (God) flows through one person to others, it makes the “channel” it’s flowing through completely whole.

Every human being wishes—whether they know it or not—for this new birth into a higher life, this spiritual consciousness. Everyone wants more power, more good, more joy. And though unawakened minds may think they want more money or more goods, what we all truly crave is more of *good*—God—for all good is God.

Seek ye First . . .

When Solomon became king over Israel, the divine Presence appeared to him in a dream, saying “Ask what I shall give thee” (Kings 3:5). Solomon said, “Give thy servant therefore an understanding heart” (I Kings 3:9).

And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said unto him, Because thou has asked this thing, and hast not asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies, but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern justice; Behold, I have done according to thy word: lo, I have given thee a wise and understanding heart; so that there hath been none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked,

both riches and honor, so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee, all thy days.” (I Kings 3:10-13).

So, by letting go of desire for all worldly goods, all merely selfish ends, and desiring only spiritual understanding, Solomon received all the other good things as well. “Seek ye first his kingdom [divine consciousness], and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33). “For . . . whosoever shall lose his life for my sake [is willing to let go of the externals of life for the Truth’s sake, choosing before all else the experience of God in his own soul] shall find it” (Matt. 16:25).

Stepping Stones

When you first consciously desire spiritual understanding, you will probably not attain it at once. You’ve been living in the external world of your being and have believed yourself cut off from God. Your first step, after coming to yourself, is to say, like the Prodigal Son did, “I will arise and go to my Father” (Luke 15:18). At that point you can turn your thoughts away from the external appearance toward the central and real; to know intellectually that you are not cut off from God and that the Divine always desires to manifest its Self within you as your freedom from all suffering.

Just as Jesus taught his followers, we begin our journey by lopping off those branches of selfishness. We try to love instead of hate. We begin to forgive instead of avenging ourselves, even when it takes great effort. We begin to deny envy, jealousy, anger, sickness, and every imperfection, and we affirm love, peace, and health.

Begin speaking the words of Truth that you have learned here, even though you may only grasp them intellectually. In the darkness of our world’s ignorance, you must be willing to use this first light, faithfully and earnestly, to help both yourself and others.

Sometimes you will be almost overcome by doubts and questions when you look for results that aren’t there. But you must work to pass this place of doubt. It’s part of the process, and, like the Israelites wandering in the wilderness, we all go through it.

And some day, in the fullness of God’s time, while you are using these words of Truth, they will suddenly become the living word within you—“the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world” (John 1:9). Then, you’ll no longer dwell in darkness, for the light will be within your own heart. And the word will be “made flesh” to you—you’ll be aware of a new, more divine life in your body, more love in your heart, and more power in your soul to accomplish your good.

This is spiritual understanding. This is a flash of the Most High within your being. “The old things are passed away, behold they are become new” (II Cor. 5:17). This will be the time when you will not “talk with men with an eye to their opinion.” This is when you will suddenly become plain and true, when you will cease to desire admiration, when all words of congratulation from others will fill you with an inexpressible humility, when all compliments will be “as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal” (I Cor 13:1).

You'll no longer run around looking for teachers or healers to rely on for guidance; you've simply let them help you reach the point where you know that the living word within you will "guide you into all the truth" (John 16:13). With spiritual understanding, the Scriptures have new meaning. The very Spirit of Truth, which has come to abide with you forever in your awareness, takes "the deep things of God" and reveals them to you.

Faithful service for others speeds up the process. Many people are aware that our inner hunger can't be satisfied with worldly goods, and earnestly seek spiritual understanding. They've been seeking with a great desire of unselfishness and a feeling that when they have truly found God, they will begin to help others. But while spiritual understanding is truly a "gift of God," it comes to us more or less quickly as we use the light we already have. The gifts of God are not a reward for faithful service, but *service is one of the steps that lead to the place where all the fullness of God awaits us.*

Is not this the fast* that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free? . . . Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him . . . Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy healing shall spring forth speedily . . . Then shall thou call, and Jehovah will answer . . . Here I am . . . And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in darkness, and thine obscurity be as noonday; And Jehovah will guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in dry places, and make strong thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (Isa. 58:6-11).

Too much of what people usually call "spiritual seeking" is really spiritual selfishness; it's detrimental, rather than helpful, to spiritual growth. Too much fasting becomes starvation, damaging the body and mind for lack of inflow of nutrients. Too much study or meditation overwhelms the mind. We are like a pool that can't be kept clean and sweet and renewed unless there is both an outlet and an inlet.

It's *our* business to keep both the inlet and the outlet open, and God's business to keep the stream flowing in and through us. Stagnation is death. Unless you use what God has already given to you in service to others, you will find it a long, weary road to spiritual understanding.

We grow by using for others the light and knowledge we have. Jesus said "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16:12). We expand as we go on, step by step in spiritual insight, until we can, indeed, bear the "many things"—and so receive the desire of our hearts: understanding.

Seek your own Lord, the divine Light and Love within you. Take the light as it is revealed to you and use it for others. Prove for yourself whether there is truth in Isaiah's prophecy that "thy healing shall spring forth speedily . . . then shall thy light rise in darkness and thine obscurity be as noonday" (Isa 58:8-10).

LESSON NINE:

THE SECRET PLACE OF THE MOST HIGH

There is nothing the human heart longs for as much as to know God.

People shift from one thing to another, always hoping to find rest and satisfaction in some anticipated accomplishment or possession. They think they want houses and lands, great knowledge or power. They pursue these things and gain them, only to find themselves restless again, still unsatisfied.

Deep in our hearts is a great and awful homesickness that never has been and never can be satisfied with anything less than a clear, vivid consciousness of the indwelling Presence, our Mother-Father God. In all ages, earnest men and women who have recognized this inner hunger as the heart's calling for God have left striving for things and have tried to enter into this consciousness by devoted worship and service to others. Few, however, have succeeded in reaching the place where their joy is full. Still others have gone back and forth, trying to "work out" their "own salvation" without realizing that there must be an inworking as well as an outworking.

By grace [a free gift] have ye been saved through faith; and that [gift is] not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory" (Eph.2:8-9).

You may study with human teachers and from man-made books until doomsday; you may get all the theology of the ages; you may understand intellectually all the statements of Truth and be able to spout healing formulas as glibly as oil flows. But until there is a definite inner revealing of the indwelling Christ Spirit through whom and by whom come all life, health, peace, power—in truth, *is* all these, and more—you have not yet found "the friendship of Jehovah" (Psalms 25:14) in "the secret place of the Most High" (Psalms 91).

When we are in that "secret place," we've been promised, we'll have immunity from the "deadly pestilence" and "the snare of the fowler," from "the terror by night," and "the arrow that flieth by day" (Psalms 91). We've even been promised freedom from the fear of those things!

Where is this place? Where can we find it? "The secret place of the Most High," where we are free from all fear or trouble, is the point of mystical union between our human soul and Spirit. There we no longer believe, but know, that God abides always at the center of our being as our perfect well-being, ready to come into manifestation at the

moment we claim it. We *feel* it. We know it. We feel our oneness with the Father, and we manifest this oneness.

Looking for The Place

In order to find this place, this understanding, this consciousness of God within themselves, many have been willing to spend all they possess. Paul, after twenty-five years of service and marvelous preaching, said “I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus” (Phil.3:8). Yet this understanding can’t be found through the intellect. It’s not to be found through thoughts *or* emotions.

If you have been—as most of us do—working only with your intellectual understanding, it’s now time to “become as little children” (Matt. 18:3) and allow the Mother-Father Presence to speak through your intuition. The light that you crave will come out of the deep silence and become manifest to you from within yourself, if you will but keep still and sit silently, “waiting on the Lord.”

For what will give us the secret that is the key to all power—who can give it to us—except the “Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father” (John 15:26)? God, the creator of our being, must whisper the secret to each one of us living, in the innermost center of our beings. And that which God would say to you is a secret that no other can know. The secret He tells me is not revealed to you, nor yours to me: it’s so secret that it can’t even be put into human language! So each human being must, when all’s said and done, deal directly with the Father through the Christ Spirit within.

What we seek is a direct revelation of God’s living Presence within us, of God’s power moving through us, creating good in our world. In these lessons, so far, we’ve been learning how to do the outworking that makes us ready, but we’ve now come to the place where we must learn how to set our inner awareness so we can experience the divine inner working.

It’s as the Scripture illustrates. Mary, who had loved and assisted the Master for years, talked with the risen Jesus when she came to the tomb, assuming she spoke to the gardener. Then, suddenly, as He spoke her name, she had a flash of intuition and recognized Him as her Teacher.

Similarly, Thomas Didymus had walked daily with Jesus for three years, had watched His life, eaten with Him, listened to Him and spoken with Him. He had all the metaphysical training you and I have had, and more. But his intellect wasn’t enough; it was an inner revealing that made him cry out “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28). There had come, in an instant, the consciousness of the Father in him, the divine self revealed to each and every one of us personally.

The revelation never comes *through* the intellect, but always through the intuition *to* the intellect. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them” (I Cor. 2:14).

Neither Books Nor Teachers

In our eagerness to experience our heart's desire, we've reached for every source we could find for the light we seek. Not knowing how to wait in the silence, we've run around trying to find it in others' teachings. But you must forget the notion that you can come to this place through any other human being. No outside person can either induct you or enter into it for you. No one can come into it from the outside. No teacher can find it for you.

Now, books and teachers and lectures are useful, up to a point. "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10:14).

But there comes a time when you must learn for yourself that the Christ Spirit lives in you; that God within you is your life and light and all good. When your intellect has grasped that, you cease looking to teachers outside of you to bring you spiritual insight. Teachers may talk about the light, but the light itself must flash in the darkness for you to see it.

Jesus knew that He had to leave his disciples if they were ever to come to their own realization. Had the Master remained with the apostles, it's doubtful they would ever have gone beyond hanging onto His words and trying to figure them out. He knew that His words and treatments for spiritual illumination would act as a seed thought in them, but He also knew that each of us must, on our own, wait upon God for the inner illumination that is lasting and real.

The experience of power was not to come by the spoken word, but from "on high" (Isa. 32:15). It was the "promise of the Father which . . . ye heard from me" (Acts 1:4). He could tell them about it, but even He could not give it to them.

This is the gift that Father-Mother God longs with an infinite longing to reveal to each of us. God's desire to show us the secret is the seed of our desire for the revelation.

More than Waiting

Now there are those who, in their desire to know God, are always seeking light for themselves, but neglect to use what they have in service for others. There must be an equal, conscious, receiving from Spirit and giving out to the world—a perfect equilibrium between the inflowing and the outflowing—to keep perfect harmony. *We each must learn how to wait upon God for the infilling, and then give out to every creature that which we've received*, as Spirit leads us to give—in preaching, in teaching, or silently living the Truth.

Transforming Effects

The light that fills us will radiate from us without effort right where we are. When you have learned how to abandon yourself to infinite Spirit, and do so daily, you'll be amazed at the change in you. Spirit will root out capabilities that you're barely conscious of, simply because they've been waiting there, silently, for this opportunity to be expressed. You'll become aware of light, life, love, and all good, perfectly filling all your lack while you just wait quietly and receive.

Paul, who had learned this way of faith, of being still and letting the I Am work into his conscious mind as the fulfillment of all his needs, was neither afraid nor ashamed to say:

I bow my knees unto the Father . . . that he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power . . . that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith . . . that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all saints. . . and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled unto all the fullness of God . . . according to the power that worketh in us (Eph 3:14-20).

And so it is.

LESSON TEN:

FINDING THE SECRET PLACE

How to seek the secret place—where to find it—how to abide in it—these are the questions that today, more than at any other time in history, are in our hearts. More than anything else, this knowledge, this *experience* is what we seek.

All the steps we've been taking in these lessons—in speaking the words of Truth and in striving to give out the light we have already received—are carrying us quickly to our goal. Each step moves us closer to the time when we'll have full consciousness of the Spirit of Christ working in us, with all the love and beauty and health and power that implies.

Our Desire is God's for Us

We don't need to be anxious or in a hurry for the experience. Let's not lose sight of the fact that our desire, great as it is, truly is God's desire for us. "No man can come to me except the Father that sent me draw him" (John 6:44). The Father-Mother Spirit in us must desire to reveal the secret of His (Her) Presence within us, or we wouldn't feel any hunger for that secret, or for Truth.

Whoever and wherever you are in life, remember that the Christ Spirit, speaking through Jesus, has said "Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go forth and bear fruit" (John 15:16). Whether you are preaching the gospel or simply seeking understanding and a sweeter, stronger life, *know that you are not seeking God; God is seeking you.* Your longing for greater manifestation is the eternal energy that holds the planets in their orbits moving in and through you to experience itself more fully. You need not worry. You need not strive. You only need to let it work. Learn how to let it.

Going to the Source

It's time to go right to Spirit, the fulfillment of all our desires, who waits to manifest more through us and to us. Think about it this way, if you wanted my love or anything that I am (not that I have) you wouldn't go to Tom or Dick or Mary to get it. They might tell you that I could and would give of myself, but you'd finally have to come to me, because only I am that.

Similarly, we must go to God, because God doesn't give us life or love as a thing. God *is* the light and the love. So all we really want is more of God in our awareness, no matter what name we give it.

We receive that light, that love, that power from "on high," from a higher region within ourselves, a higher vibration, than our normal, waking conscious minds. The Holy (whole, entire, complete) Spirit must descend into our minds; Spirit must lower its vibration from pure light to visible light. And we must raise our vibration to meet it. It's the only way we can experience the en-lighten-ment we seek, or tune in to receive the power to make good manifest in our lives.

Most of us have no idea how to "wait . . . in silence for God only" (Psalms 62:5). "Sitting in the silence" doesn't mean very much to people who only know how to listen to external voices. But sound and noise reflect the external world, not Spirit. God works in stillness, and we can be conscious of the still, inner working.

A story by Edward Everett Hale tells of a little girl playing among the birds and butterflies in a country village. Frequently, she would run into the nearby chapel to pray, and after praying, would sit silently for a few minutes "waiting," she said, "to see if God wanted to say anything" to her. We can do the same.

Guidelines for Waiting

"Sitting in the silence" is not some sort of lazy drifting. It's a passive, but definite, waiting upon God. It's not begging or pleading or supplicating God for some favor or gift. It's knowing that the gift is on its way and expecting to receive it. And it's best begun alone, in an undisturbed time and place.

When you want to do this, take a time when you won't be disturbed: close the door, turn off the phone, shut the curtains if you must. Practice alone until you can enter the Stillness without being affected by what's going on around you.

Begin your silence by lifting up your heart in praise and thanksgiving to the all-loving, all-giving Mother-Father Source of our being. Connecting with God in this way helps center us in the higher Presence, and counteracts the tendency of the mind to run around in trivial thoughts and worries. Many people, wanting to experience the stillness, have found their minds taking off in all directions at once—the natural result of trying to "stop thinking." Nature abhors a vacuum, and if you try to make your mind a vacuum, natural processes will fill it right up again. So prevent this disturbance by filling your mind with higher thoughts—of the glories and wonders of God.

Sometimes, prayer works. Of course prayer doesn't change God's attitude toward us, but it's easier to take a few steps to a higher realization than one great leap. So, we can say "*Let thy will be done in me*" or "*Let Thy life flow through me*" if it is too much to accept that "*God's will is being done in me, now,*" or "*God flows through me, now, as all peace and power and life.*" While you're focusing in this way on God, in conversation with the Spirit within, no outside thoughts can possibly rush in; your mind is open only to God.

No set words are needed, but sometimes words we've heard or read elsewhere can get us started. The first few verses of the 103rd Psalm are often useful:

Thou forgivest all mine errors; Thou healest all my diseases; Thou
redeemest my life from destruction and crownest me with loving kindness,
now, now, while I wait upon Thee.

Or words to a familiar hymn, such as "*Oh God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come; our shelter from the stormy blast and our eternal home.*" Or from a glorious cantata, like Handel's Messiah: "*For He shall reign forever and ever; King of kings, Lord of lords, forever and ever.*"

Whatever words you choose, repeat them many times,* relaxing, not straining, not reaching out and up and away to an outside God. Let them become a quiet, caring, lifting up of the heart to a higher something within oneself, to "the Father in me" (John 14:11). Let them be said with the quietness and assurance of a child speaking to a loving parent or grandparent.

Some people work so hard to reach out and upward for God that you can see it in their faces. They haven't yet learned that they simply need to go into their own hearts to find what they seek. Don't reach out like that; it doesn't work. If a seed were planted in the earth and reached only for the sun above, there would be no root system to support it and give it nourishment. The seedling needs to send roots downward while it turns its face to the sun and lets itself be drawn upward.

Some people, working to raise up to reach God, make the mistake of climbing right out of their bodies. This abnormal stretching is not wise; leaving the body alone leaves it weak and negative, leading to cold feet and congested heads. We are not to reach out and away from our bodies, but instead to let the Son draw us upward as fast as we can bear it and be strong.

While waiting upon God, we need to relax, as much as possible, both mentally and physically. Let yourself be like a seabird drying itself on the sand, consciously absorbing all the light and warmth that is there.

So, first, withdraw, both physically and mentally, from the outside world. Each day, "enter into thine inner chamber [the closet of our being, the inner most part of ourselves], and . . . shut thy door" (Matt. 6:6). You can use words like:

Thou abidest within me; Thou art alive here now; Thou hast all power;
Thou art now the answer to all I desire; Thou dost now radiate Thyself
from the center of my being to the circumference, and out into the visible
world as the fullness of my desire.

Then, be still, absolutely still. Relax every part of your being, and believe that it is being done. Know that divine substance does flow in at the center and out into the visible world every minute that you wait; for it is an unchanging law that "every one that asketh,

receiveth” (Matt. 7:8). Know that substance *does* come forth in the form of your desire as you expect it to. “According to your faith be it done unto you” (Matt. 9:29).

If you find your mind wandering, bring it right back to center by saying something like “*It is being done; Thou art working in me; I am receiving all that I desire.*” Don’t look for signs and wonders; just be still and know that the very thing you seek is flowing in and will come forth into manifestation either at once or in a little while.

Now go beyond, and give thanks to this innermost Presence, that it has heard and answered, that it does now come forth into visibility. There’s something about the act of thanksgiving that moves the mind beyond all doubt and into the clarity of faith and trust, where “all things are possible” (Matt. 19:26).

Even if you’re not yet conscious of having received anything, don’t worry or stop giving thanks. Don’t think of going back and asking again, but continue to give thanks that while you waited you received, and that what you received is now manifest. You’ll soon be truly rejoicing in gratitude for the fulfillment of your desire.

A caveat: *don’t let waiting in the silence become a burden.* If you find yourself becoming strained, get up and do something else for a while. Or, if your mind insists on wandering, don’t insist on concentrating, for a rigid mindset shuts off the flow. There must be a sort of relaxed passivity, with at the same time an active “taking” by faith.

Letting Go of Limitations

In time, as we grow in spiritual understanding, we begin to want—more than anything else—to have the desires of infinite wisdom and love fulfilled in us. However,

My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts (Isa. 55:8).

Our desires always are God’s desires, but till now, in a limited way. As we see that more of God means more of good and joy and happiness, we soon throw aside those limitations and cry out in the silence, “Fulfill Thy highest thought in me, now!” At that moment, we make ourselves clay in the potter’s hands, willing to be re-shaped, re-molded, “transformed into the same image” (II Cor. 3:18), as the indwelling Christ Spirit. We say something like

Thou art now renewing me according to Thy highest thought for me; Thou art radiating Thy very self throughout my entire being, making me like to Thyself—for there is nothing else but Thee. Father, I thank Thee, I thank Thee!

Then, be still while Spirit works. “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts” (Zech.4:6).

While you're waiting, and as you let the Spirit work, marvelous changes will be made in you. You'll have a wonderful new consciousness of peace and quiet—serenity. You'll feel something has been done, that some new power to overcome has come to you. You'll be able to say, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30) with a new meaning—a new sense of reality, and awe that will make you feel very still.

One touch of the Oversoul makes all life seem different! All the hard things become easy; the troublesome things are no longer worth worrying over; the annoying people and events of the world no longer matter. Because for the time, we see things from the Christ within ourselves: we see as God sees.

We no longer have to deny evil; we know in that moment evil is nothing at all. We no longer affirm the good as a discipline, but because we can't help it. Faith has become reality. We wait upon and consciously receive from the Source the power and understanding that lets us "speak the word" and easily make perfection visible.

Don't be discouraged if you don't get immediate results. Every moment that you wait, Spirit is working to make you a new being in Christ—a being who consciously has divine qualities and powers. There may be several days of inner working before you see the change; but it will surely come.

And, as with anything else, with practice you'll get to the point where you can go into the silence—into conscious communion with God—at a moment's notice. Any time. Any place.

Waiting and Expecting

Clear revelation—God's word made alive as Truth in our consciousness—must come to every one who continues to wait upon God. But there are two conditions to be met for it to happen.

First, we are to abide, to *dwell* "in the secret place of the Most High" (Psalms 91:1)—not merely run in and out. Of course, this doesn't mean you're to spend all your time in meditation and silence, but that your mind is continually in an attitude of waiting upon God. Not in an attitude of clamoring for things, but of listening for the Father's voice, of expecting to feel the Presence. Our Master teacher, Jesus, spent many hours alone in communion with the Father, and His greatest works were done after these long sessions. So must we commune alone with Spirit if we would manifest the Christ in us.

But Jesus didn't spend all His time in receiving. He poured forth into the everyday lives of all around him all that He received. His knowledge of spiritual matters was used constantly to uplift and help people. And we must do likewise; for our new life and revelation flows in as fast as we give it out in service to others. Jesus said "Go, preach . . . Heal the sick . . . freely ye received, freely give" (Matt 10:7-8). We "wait upon the Lord" in the silence *and* in our service to others.

The second essential condition to finding and abiding in the secret place is expectation from God. “My soul, wait thou in silence for God only; for my expectation is from Him” (Psalms 62:5). “Truly in vain is the help that is looked for from the hills . . . truly in Jehovah our God is the salvation of Israel” (Jer. 3:23).

Is your expectation from God or from books, teachers, friends, a relationship, or meetings? “Jehovah thy God is in the midst of thee” (Zeph. 3:15). In the midst of *you*—at the center of your being at this very moment, while you read these words!

“Jehovah thy God is in the midst of thee, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will be quiet in his love; he will exult over thee with singing” (Zeph. 3:17).

You are God’s love. *You* are rejoiced over. As you turn away from other sources and toward the Spirit within you, God’s singing and joy will fill you so that your life will be a great thanksgiving.

Your Own Lord

And “Thy God” is yours alone. Your Lord is not my Lord. Your Lord is the Christ Spirit within your being; my Lord is that Spirit in my being. There is one Spirit, one Father, one Oversoul expressing and experiencing itself in and through all creation. But there are different manifestations, or aspects of that One: different individualities.

Your Lord is the Spirit that delivers you out of all your troubles. Your Lord has no other business but to manifest in and through you, and so make you whole with divine health; mighty with divine power; perfectly manifesting the perfection of the Christ. As Jesus experienced God as his own, dear “Daddy” (*abba*), you will experience your own loving Presence. Yours alone.

So let all your expectation be from your own Lord. Let all your communion be with your own loving Presence. Wait upon the indwelling Spirit just as often as you would wait on any visible teacher.

When you feel un-well, “wait thou in silence for God only” (Psalms 62:5), rather than upon healers.

When you seek wisdom in large or small matters “wait thou in silence for God only” and see what wonderful wisdom for action is yours.

When you desire to speak the word that will deliver someone from the bondage of sickness, sin, or sorrow, “wait thou in silence for God only” and exactly the right word will be given you—and power with it, for it will be alive with the power of Spirit.

LESSON ELEVEN:

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

It's natural for human beings to set out in search of Truth because of the material rewards ("loaves and fishes"). It may be that *most* people first turn to God because of some weakness, some failure, or some unbearable need in their lives. After trying everything else in vain, they turn in desperation to God.

Even the most depraved human being (though he wouldn't for the world admit it) instinctively feels that, somewhere, there is a power that can give him just what he wants; that if he could only reach that power, he could prevail upon it to grant the things he desired. This feeling is itself, God-given. It is the divine Self—a tiny spark at the center of his being—suggesting the true remedy for all his ills.

Everyone wants to be free—free as the birds of the air; free of all suffering; free from bondage; free from poverty; free from all forms of distress. And we have a right to be; it is a God-given desire, and a God-given right.

Many Gifts

In the early days of the practice of Truth, all teaching was limited to the manifestation of infinite love as healing. Sickness, seemingly incurable disease, and suffering were everywhere, and every sufferer wanted to be free. We didn't know that there was willingness and power—even intense desire—on the part of our Father to give us something more than sweet, patient submission to suffering.

When at first the truth was taught that the divine presence lives in humans as perfect life, and can be drawn on by our recognition and faith into full health and wellbeing, the teaching attracted widespread attention, as it should. Both teachers and students focused on this one outcome—and lost sight of the larger, fuller, more complete manifestation of the indwelling Father that is possible.

Time has shown us, though, that there are many more gifts, and a much greater truth to be experienced.

Why should we restrict the limitless One to one gift? Unless of course, we're so consumed with desire for that one that we're sure it's God's desire for us—in which case we won't have to try to heal: healing will flow from us wherever we are. Even in a crowd of people, without any effort on our part, the one who needs healing will "touch" us, as the woman in the multitude touched Jesus' cloak (Matt. 9:21).

Healing is truly a “branch” of the “vine” (John 15:4). But it’s not the only branch. There are many branches, all of which are essential for the perfect vine, which is seeking through you and me to bear much fruit. What God wants is for us to grow into such conscious oneness with Spirit, such realization that the Source and substance of all good really lives in us, that “ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (John 15:7).

Your Own Gifts

If you’re faithfully and sincerely living what Truth you know and still lack the healing power [or the capacity to create abundant supply],* call it good. Rest assured, no matter what anyone else says or thinks, this apparent lack simply means that you need to let go of the single gift and go for the whole set, which includes it. Don’t for a moment be afraid to let go of this one little branch! Choose instead to have the highest thoughts of infinite Mind, whatever they may be, fulfilled through you. We need to keep our hands off the branches and focus on the vine.

You are here for some particular purpose. If, when the time comes, you let loose, cheerfully, of the rigid grasp you’ve kept on one particular form of manifesting, and “desire earnestly the greater gifts” (I Cor. 12:31), whatever yours may be, you’ll do “works” through those gifts that will be marvelous to all who behold. More, these works will happen without effort on your part, because they’ll be Spirit—omnipotent, omniscient—manifesting through you in God’s own chosen direction.

Paul said,

Now, concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant . . . there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. . . . For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit; to another faith . . . to another gifts of healings . . . to another workings of miracles; and to another prophecy; and to another discerning of spirits; to another diverse tongues; and to another the interpretation of tongues (I Cor 12:1, 4, 8-10).

So he lists some of the free gifts of the Spirit available to those who will not limit manifestations of the Holy One, but yield to Spirit’s desire within them.

The same Spirit, always and forever the same—one Spirit, one God—but in different forms of manifestation. The gift of healing is no greater than the gift of prophecy; the gift of prophecy no greater than the gift of faith, for faith (when it’s God’s faith manifested through us)—“even as a grain of mustard seed” shall move mountains.

Fear Not

Why are so many so afraid to yield? Why are so many afraid to abandon themselves to the workings of infinite love and wisdom? Have we not seen God's works and called them good?

Then why should we fear to wait with a perfect willingness that the Spirit manifest itself through us and to us as it will? *We know that whatever the manifestation, it will be good—all good, to ourselves and to those around us!*

The courage to let go of our opinion and accept God's is rare, indeed. And, for some, acting on such courage might mean an apparent downward turning of whatever success may have been achieved in the past. But such a turning would only lead to a wonderful soaring upward, a resurrection of the Christ Spirit into visibility through you—in God's own chosen way, right here and now. The apparent failure in the moment would only mean a grand success, a little later on.

So don't fear failure, but call failure good, for it really is. Didn't Jesus stand as an utter failure, to all appearances, when He stood mute before Pilate? But if He hadn't seemed to fail right at that point, there couldn't have been the infinitely grander demonstration of His resurrection a little later on. "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit" (John 12:24).

Moving Beyond Limitations

Your greatest work will be done through your own God-appointed channel. If you will let Spirit possess your will completely, if you will to have the highest will done in you and through you continually, you will be quickly moved out of your present limitations. These limitations, indicated by your current partial successes, will fall away as a fuller and more perfect manifestation comes forth—as much fuller and more perfect as the new grain is compared to the old seed, which had to fall to the ground and die.

Old ways must die. Failure is only the death of the old that there may be the hundredfold increase. If, at any time, a gift you've been using no longer "works" for you, then allow someone else to work it for you, and know that, right here, there is something even better, waiting for you to call it forth.

Spirit, the Holy Spirit, which is God in movement, wants to open a bigger, brighter way to you. This apparent failure is God's call to you to stop what you've been doing and turn your attention inward. "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee" (Job 22:21).

Turn to the divine Presence within yourself. Seek the Spirit. Be still before your God. Wait upon your Lord quietly, sincerely, constantly, and trustingly—for days, and weeks, if necessary! Let the Spirit work in you, and sooner or later you will spring up into a resurrected life of newness and power that you've never dreamed of before.

If, when these transition periods come (in which through "failure," God would lead us higher), we become frightened or discouraged, we miss the lesson that Spirit seeks to

teach us—and postpone the day of receiving our own fullest, highest gift. In our ignorance and fear we would be hanging onto the old grain of wheat, not daring to fall to the ground, so there would be no resurrection, no fullness of life—nothing bigger and grander to come out of it.

The Way and the Life

So we must learn to no longer fear God. We must come to know the loving Presence within ourselves. We must stop focusing on results, and seek to live a life in partnership with the Spirit.* We must begin, truly, to embody the Christ Spirit that dwells within our being, to live the Truth, and teach others to do the same.

“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth [consciously] in me and I in him [his awareness], the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing . . . If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ask ye whatsoever ye will and it shall be done unto you” (John 15:5, 7).

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life” (John 14:6) says the Christ at the center of your being. Do you see that your first—your continual—thought must be to seek life in the Spirit, to seek knowing the Presence as a living reality, and not just as theory? After that, ask what you will, be it power to heal, to cast out demons, or even the “greater works” that Jesus promised we should do (John 14:2), and “it shall be done unto you” (John 15:7).

Do not be afraid; “for God gave us not a spirit of frightfulness, but of power and love and practice” (II Tim. 1:7).

It is all one and the same Spirit. To be the greatest success, you don’t want my gift, nor do I want yours; we each want our own, to fit our capacity and desires, as the highest in us chooses. Seek to be filled with Spirit if you want the reality of the greater things to be incarnate in your experience. Spirit will reveal to your understanding your own specific gift, which is God’s desired manifestation through you.

Let’s all focus on our own work, our own God, and our own gifts. And when our neighbors “fail,” let’s give thanks that they’re being granted the opportunity to accept an even higher gift, a more complete manifestation of the Christ through them.

Finally, “I . . . beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, . . . forbearing one another in love; with diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:1-3).

LESSON TWELVE:

UNITY OF THE SPIRIT

It would be easy to get discouraged in this world if we didn't know, as a living reality, that behind all the variety of human understandings is, forever, the master Mind. Behind all, the master Artist is, through human hands, putting a touch of color here and another there, seeing the end from the beginning.

It would be pitiful—if it weren't so utterly ridiculous—to see the human mind always trying to limit God to a personal understanding. The truth is that, however much we may know of God, there will always be unexplored fields to experience and express.

It's as if people were living on the dark side of a wall, with a few small openings, and each of them, looking through their own narrow slit were saying "I see the whole world!" Of course, one person would see fields and trees, and another would see houses and streets and another, rivers and hills, and all would be convinced the others were wrong. And all would be correct—partially. While we, with our larger view would pity them for so displaying their ignorance.

Break Down the Walls

From time immemorial there have been schisms and divisions among religious sects and denominations. And today, with all the knowledge we have of one God abiding in all humanity, many still cling to external differences.*

It's time to break down the seeming "middle wall of partition" (Eph 2:14), even as the living Christ breaks down all misunderstanding. It's time to see that *there is no real wall of difference between all the various sects of theology*, except those appearing because of one's limited view. It's time to understand that every time you try to limit God's manifestation of Spirit in anyone or through anyone in order to make that manifestation conform to your idea of Truth, you're only displaying your ignorance.

It's time to lose sight of all differences, all side issues, and seek for one thing only: the awareness of the Presence of the indwelling God, in you and all your life. And, just as there is less separation between the spokes of a wheel as they approach the hub, you'll find that the nearer you come to the perfect Center, the less difference you'll see between you and any other.

The happy person who will from his heart exclaim "Praise the Lord!" no matter what occurs to him, and who thereby finds that "to them that love God all things work together

in good” (Rom. 8:28), is actually saying the metaphysician’s “all is good.” The metaphysician—whether from Unity, Religious Science, Divine Science, or any other New Thought group—need not look down on the Pentecostal, for both, simply, “in all thy ways acknowledge him [God, good]” (Prov. 3:6). And this really is a magical wand, bringing sure deliverance out of any trouble to all who faithfully use it.

The teachings of Spirit are intrinsically the same, because Spirit is one.

A woman spoke in an orthodox prayer meeting, knowing no more of religious science than a baby knows Greek. Her face, however, was radiant with the light of the Christ manifest through her. She told how, five or six years before, she had been seeking to know more of God through prayer, and one day, in all earnestness, had asked that some special word of His will be given her as a sort of private message. The words flashed in her mind, “If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light . . . No man can serve two masters” (Matt. 6:22-24).

The woman had read these words many times before, but that day they were illumined by Spirit, and she saw that to have a “single” eye meant seeing but one power in her life; while she saw two powers (God and devil, good and evil) she was serving two masters. From that day forward, though she had passed through all sorts of difficulties—poverty, illness in the family, loss of a husband—she found always the most marvelous, full, and complete deliverance out of them all, by resolutely adhering to the “single” eye—seeing God only. She wouldn’t look even for a moment at the seeming evil to combat it or rid herself of it, because, as she put it “Lookin’ at God with one eye and this evil with the other is bein’ double-eyed, and God told me to keep my eye single.”

This woman, who had never heard of any science or metaphysical teaching, or laws of mind, was overcoming the tribulations of this world by positively refusing to have any but a single eye. She had been taught in a single moment by infinite Spirit the whole secret of how to banish every evil and have only good and joy. Isn’t it wonderfully simple?

At the center, all is one and the same God, forevermore. Even someone who worships the golden calf as his highest conception of the divine, worships God. His mind has not yet expanded to a state where he can grasp any idea of God beyond the physical form, something that he can see with human eyes and touch with human hands. But at heart he seeks something higher than his present conscious self to be his deliverance out of distress.

And you and I, with all our knowledge, are we doing anything different?

The Spirit at the center of the calf-worshipper, who is God’s child, is thus seeking, though blindly, its Mother-Father Source. Can anyone dare say it won’t find what it seeks? Won’t we say, instead, that following the immutable law, “he that seeketh findeth” (Matt. 7:8)?

You now know that, at the center of your being, God lives. From the nature of your relationship with God, and by God's own immutable laws, you may become conscious of that divine Presence, eternally abiding in Spirit and Spirit in you.

No Need to Convert Others

The moment anyone really comes to recognize this absolute Truth—that one Spirit, the Father-Mother, being made manifest in the Son, ever lives at the center of all human beings—they'll know they can stop being anxious about bringing others into the same form of teaching. If your friend, husband or wife, brother or sister, doesn't see Truth as you see it, don't try to convert them with arguments. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself" (John 12:32). What's needed is not that you, with the human intellect (so fond of arguing!) try to lift up your friends and family. The Holy Spirit within all of us declares "I . . . will draw all men unto myself." Instead, you can silently lift up this "I" of another's being, and it will draw them up—not unto your teaching, but unto the Christ within them.

Keep your own light lifted up by living the victorious life of Spirit. Then remember that your dear ones are an incarnation of that Spirit and keep them silently committed to the care of their own divine Spirit. You can't know what God wants to do in them; you never will know.

If you fully recognize that the God dwelling in you dwells in all human beings, you know that each one's own Lord, the Christ within each one, will make no mistake. The greatest help you can give anyone is to repeat silently, whenever you think of that person:

The Holy Spirit lives within you; God cares for you, is working in you that which the Spirit would have you do, and is manifesting through you, now.

Then let them alone. Be at perfect peace about them, and the result will be much better than anything you could have asked for.

If you want to help others who are not yet awakened to this knowledge, center your thoughts on this idea of them—that they are radiating fountains of the All-Perfect. Keep your eye "single" for others, as did the uneducated woman for herself, and Spirit will teach them more in a day than you could in years. Always keep in mind that each living person in all God's universe is a radiating center of the same perfect One, some radiating more or less, depending on their awakening. If you have become aware of this radiation within yourself, keep your thought centered right there, and the Spirit of the living God will radiate from you in all directions with mighty power, doing without noise or words, the great work of lifting others up.

God is Principle *and* Loving Parent

Throughout the ages, humanity has held to the idea of separateness instead of oneness. Humans have believed themselves separate from God and separate from each other. And even now, when we talk so much about oneness, most teachers of metaphysics are

managing, again, to separate God's children from their Mother-Father—by saying that while the child may suffer, infinite Mind knows no suffering, and is unaware of the child's suffering. They suggest that we, God's children, and forever a part of the One, are torn and lacerated while God, knowing nothing of this, goes on as serenely and indifferently as the full moon sails through the skies.

It's no wonder then, that many who experienced their first practical lessons in the gospel of the Christ as liberation and power, have, in times of heartache or failure, turned back to their old limited belief of the Fatherhood personality of God.

There's no real reason for us, having recognized God as infinite substance, to be deprived of the familiar loving presence that's so dear to the human heart. *There's no need for us to separate God as substance and God as loving Parent*, and every reason why we should have both in one: they are One. *God principle around us is unchanging law, God within us is tender, loving Father-Mother*, with compassion for our every sorrow.

Just because in our childhood some of us were forced into narrow puritanical limits that stood for religious belief doesn't mean we should now fancy ourselves so self-sufficient that we'll never again need the sweet communion between Parent and child. We, the created, who every moment live, move, and have our being in the Creator, need the conscious presence of that Creator, and can't be entirely happy knowing God only as cold, unsympathetic Principle. Why can't we accept both? Both are true, and both are essential to the whole.

The two were made to go together and cannot be separated.

God as underlying substance of all things, as principle, is unchanging and unmoved by the apparent changes of time and sense. God as principle feels no pain and is not moved by the cries of children or adults for help. It's a grand, wonderful thought that this power is unchanging law—as unchanging in the affairs of our lives as in the government of the stars and galaxies. We can feel our being expanding, just with the thought of it!

But there is gospel, also. And gospel fulfills the law. God is principle *and* individual. Principle becomes individualized the moment it comes to dwell as the human body. It does not change because of pity or sympathy, even “as a father pitieth his children” (Psalms 103:13). The loving Presence in us always moves into helpfulness when called on and trusted. (Remember, Jesus called God “daddy.”) It's as though infinite wisdom and power, which around us are Creator, Upholder, and Principle, become transformed into infinite love, with all the warmth and tender helpfulness that implies, when they become focalized within a human body.

Then, in some way, this indwelling One moves to lift the consciousness of His (Her) children up, placing it parallel with Principle and Law, so that the three—human consciousness, indwelling Spirit, and Principle—are made one.

Every metaphysician must come to the place in life when even the bravest hearts go down, for the moment, under the apparent burdens of life—times when the strongest intellect is shaken, the most self-sufficient mind feels a helplessness that cries for help.

At that place, God as cold principle will not suffice—any more than in the past, God as personality would suffice. At such times there's little comfort in the thought: "this suffering results from my wrong thinking, but God, divine Principle, is unaware." At such times, the motherhood of God, with its warm sympathy is what we must have—and do have. This doesn't make God as Principle less, but God as individual more.

The whole business of your Lord (the Presence in you) is to care for you, to love you with an everlasting love, to hear your slightest cry, and to carry you through life's difficult times.

If you ask, "Then why doesn't He do it?" Remember, you must recognize God's dwelling in you as Power, and resolutely affirm that God now manifests as your all-sufficiency, calling That forth into visibility. God *is* our present help in time of need. But there must be a recognition of the Presence, a turning away from human efforts, and an acknowledgement of God only (a single eye) before that Help becomes manifest.

Amen.

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