CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL LESSONS

A course of study designed for the purpose of training the mind in habits of spiritual thought.

THE SILENCE

Series 1
Lesson 1

UNITY SCHOOL OF CHRISTIANITY
917 Tracy
Kansas City, Mo.
Be Still

Be still, 
My human will, 
Be still,
That Christ may speak 
When I am weak, 
Keep me from wrong 
And make me strong. 
Be still.

Be still, 
O weary mind, 
Be still, 
And let me rest 
Upon the breast 
That shields from harms 
And all alarms. 
Be still.

Be still, 
O restless heart, 
Be still; 
The living Light 
Puts fear to flight, 
And joy shall reign 
Where once was pain. 
Be still.

—Elizabeth Hawkins.

DIRECTIONS TO STUDENTS

The teaching given by this school is called Practical Christianity, and Jesus Christ is the head and only leader. The Spirit of truth is recognized by the school as the one authority. “When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth.” The Scriptures are studied for their spiritual meaning. “The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”

Truth may be gained in two ways: in intellectual understanding and in spiritual understanding. The intellect gets its knowledge from without, from books, from teachers. It merely stores up facts as a child in school learns history. But spiritual understanding comes from within; Spirit quickens the intellect and illuminates the whole consciousness with an inner knowing.

The object of these lessons is to quicken the spiritual understanding, and those who study them in prayer and in spiritual medi-
tation will find the light within. This thought should be held daily: "The Spirit of truth quickens my understanding and leads me into all Truth."

Only one lesson will be sent at a time. When you have studied it carefully and feel that you are ready to be tested on it, answer the test questions and return the answers to us for grading. When the work is done satisfactorily, the second lesson will be sent. The original lessons are to be kept by the student.

All work is to be done either with pen and ink or with typewriter. Write on only one side of the paper. Most students use sheets of paper that measure 8½ inches by 11 inches. Do not use heavy paper. Write the question first, then the answer; express the answers in your own language. Answers are to be made from the standpoint of the teachings brought out in the lesson, and should be free from personal doubts or arguments adverse to Truth. Place your name and address at the top of the first page.

Students should not hurry through the lessons. A hurried state of mind hinders the work of Spirit.

Address all communications that pertain to the lessons to Unity School of Christianity, Correspondence School Department, 917 Tracy, Kansas City, Mo. One of your first duties as a student is to familiarize yourself with the work of the various departments at Unity and to see that your correspondence is always addressed to the proper department. Requests for the healing ministry of Silent Unity and orders to the publishing department should be addressed to those departments. Your love offerings for tuition in the correspondence school lessons should be sent direct to the Correspondence School department.

After you have prepared your first answers, go over these instructions and see whether you have complied with these directions.

We are glad to have you study with us and daily shall be declaring the Truth for your illumination and your inspiration.
Let Spirit Speak

Be still, and let the Spirit speak,
Forego the worldly strain;
Your closet enter, shut the door,
Let silence in you reign.

The center of your being find,
From it turn not away;
Wait on your Lord, give ear to Him
In all He has to say.

The great I am in you will speak,
And you will wisdom find,
With seers who in the ages past
The hearing ear inclined.

The Spirit unto you will give
The knowledge that you need,
And daily you will grow in grace,
As you the Spirit heed.

—Margaret A. Creyke.

THE SILENCE

The subject of prayer is of vital importance to every human heart, because the hopes and the destinies of mankind depend so largely upon what men believe concerning the willingness and the power of God to answer prayer. That He does hear and answer those who call upon Him, millions have believed and have proved. "All things are possible to him that believeth." Knowing that we are able to learn to pray with understanding and always get an answer, we can come to the study of prayer with whole-hearted interest.

Jesus promised, "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." He gave some clear, definite instructions about how to pray, and He gave the Lord's Prayer as a model. These instructions and this prayer furnish all necessary information to one who would pray the fervent, effectual prayer that avails much.

First, Jesus warned against praying for the purpose of being seen and heard by
men; then He taught the true way: “When thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.”

The key word in this text is “Father.” The first and most important point in the study of prayer is to understand the true character of Him to whom we pray. Hardly less important is it that we understand our relation to Him. Jesus called Him “Father,” and taught us to approach God as children would an earthly parent. “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father.”

Jesus understood how to reach the people of his time by the word “Father.” Had He referred to God as Principle or as Mind, the word would not have conveyed to the people the same understanding that “Father” conveyed. It was customary for them to refer to “Father Abraham,” “Father Jacob,” and others, and to like to claim their relationship, to like to think that they had proceeded from these “fathers” and were possessed of the same characteristics. By this word, “Father,” Jesus tried to show them their divine origin, and have them really understand that they truly possessed the same qualities as God, the source from which they came. In using the word “our,” He was claiming this same relationship for all, thus welding humanity into a universal brotherhood, all originating from the one Cause.

This relationship suggests love. “God is love.” To bring this close to us the Scriptures give these comparisons: “Like as a father pitieth his children, so Jehovah pitieth them that fear Him” (Those who fear Jehovah are those who stand in holy awe and reverence before Him). “What man is there of you, who, if his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone?” “If ye . . . know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”

Have you prayed, yet failed to receive? Perhaps you fail to receive because you do not go to God as to a Father, believing in His loving readiness to give you good things. (Just here it would be well to lay aside the lesson and give yourself to a few moments of meditation upon this
point. It would help, also, to consider that God is wisdom as well as love.)

The better our understanding of the character of “our Father,” the greater will be our faith, and the more certainly shall we receive. Great light is thrown upon the true nature of God by the statement of Jesus, “God is Spirit; and those worshiping Him must worship in Spirit and Truth” (Emphatic Diaglott.) This does away with the idea that God is a man and far removed from us. Spirit is infinite Mind, always and everywhere present. Paul thus describes this omnipresent One and our relation to Him: “In Him we live, and move, and have our being.” (Again lay aside this lesson and think what it means to live, move, and have your being in God, who is love, wisdom, life, power, and strength.)

A meditation on this order will be helpful: God is the all-surrounding, all-penetrating Spirit-Mind, out of which all come. I live; that is, I am animated and inspired by and through infinite Mind. I breathe into my lungs that which is necessary for the life of my physical body, and my mind is inspired with divine ideas, ideas of good which are in this Mind. I am ever in the presence of this almighty One, and am being the qualities, or attributes, of God to the extent that I know them. I am God-life, God-intelligence, God-substance, to the degree of my understanding. A fish lives in the water, its natural element, and moves and has its being there. An animal lives and moves and has its being in the air, its natural element, that which is necessary for its well-being. Spiritually, I am an idea in God-Mind, and I live and move and am the expression of God-Mind. I am sustained and eternally supplied with Its substance through right thinking and by not misapplying or misusing any of Its ideas. I must learn to do this consciously; through choice I am to keep my thoughts on the good that is in and around all. In this way I consciously live and move and have my being in God.

God is everywhere present, but it is within man that conscious union with God is made. Jesus refers to this inner place of union as “thine inner chamber,” and the Psalmist calls it the “secret place of the Most High.” One Bible translation refers to it as “thy closet.”

“Enter into thine inner chamber”—that
is, turn your attention from the without to the within. “And having shut thy door, pray.” To close the door is to still the five senses that connect one directly with the outer world. They will keep calling the attention without, if they are allowed to do so. Closing the eyes helps very much in closing the door to the outer world. Then “pray to thy Father who is in secret.” This inner closet of prayer is the secret meeting place between God and man. It is a place of stillness, of silence, so we speak of entering it as “going into the silence.”

It is no cause for discouragement if one is not able at first to enter this secret place or to close the door on the outer world. The senses are habitually active in the exterior consciousness; this habit is not overcome all at once, but by daily practice. It is well to have a regular time for the silence, but the mind should also be trained to “pray without ceasing”; that is, the ability to turn within at all times in conscious communion with God should be sought by a continuous realization of God as ever present, “over all, and through all, and in all,” and waiting always in the secret place when one turns the attention there to meet Him.

What we shall say in the secret place is a secondary matter. The first and most important affair is to be still and know God. “Be still and know that I am God.” Paul, in speaking of the innate desire for God in all men, says that God “made of one every nation of men . . . that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him, though he is not far from each one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being.”

In the silence we feel after God, and great is the blessing when we get so still that we feel His presence filling and thrilling us with His life and love. We then care little for the things of the world. They lose their seeming importance and we know what is meant by the promise, “Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

The familiar Lord’s Prayer will be a new one to us when prayed in the silence. This prayer is filled with the life and the substance and the power of Jesus’ realization of Truth, and it will open with a
new meaning as it is prayed to the Father in the “secret place.”

“Our Father.” The simplicity and the majesty of this term are impressed upon one when he thus addresses God in the inner closet and meditates upon His character.

“Who art in heaven.” This has been taken to mean “who art in the skies,” but such an interpretation is misleading. Jesus says, “The kingdom of God is within you.” Having learned the true nature of the Father, we can no longer think Him separated from us. Heaven is the kingdom of God, and is an omnipresent spiritual presence. We find it within when we find God. It is the realm of perfection and order and life and love and peace and wisdom.

“Hallowed be thy name.” Hallowed comes from a word that means wholeness. God’s name is wholeness and perfection. It should be so realized by us. “To hallow” is to make whole, sacred, pure, holy, perfect. You are His character, His being, His expression. Are you seeking to bring forth that perfection, or are you profaning His name by not making real your spiritual character? Stop and ask yourself these questions: “Am I, the expression of God, hallowing His name? Am I being that which God is? Am I bringing forth in thought, word, and deed—in mind, body, and affairs—the perfection which I really am?”

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.” We have learned that the kingdom of God is always, everywhere present. This is a prayer that it may come into expression and be manifest in the earth, the outer, as it is in heaven, the inner. Thus it is that God’s will is done. It is very necessary in praying, “Thy will be done,” to remember that His will for us is always good. He is love; He wills not that His children shall suffer in any way, but that they shall come to the knowledge of Him and be blessed with His wholeness.

“Give us this day our daily bread.” Jesus said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” This petition, then, must have a larger meaning than is commonly believed. “Daily bread” means more than the food that is taken into the stomach. There is a substance in true words and no one truly lives unless he in
daily prayer and meditation feeds upon words of Truth.

"And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." There is a law involved here. According to this law we cannot be forgiven until we first forgive. This would be seen more clearly if the prayer were put in the affirmative form, thus: Thou dost forgive debts as we forgive our debtors.

"And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." Future lessons will bring out the truth that all things originate in mind, and that evil comes from wrong thinking. To be delivered from evil is to have the mind cleansed from all belief in evil by the Spirit in us, by prayer and meditation. In this way we are delivered from evil, delivered from the very last one of the thoughts of evil that may be in mind. So long as one remains our mind has not been purified so that it is the Christ Mind.

One of the secrets of the prayer of demonstration is revealed in this promise: "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." This is mysterious only until we see that it is the way of faith.

At the tomb of Lazarus, before Lazarus came forth, Jesus said: "Father, I thank thee that thou hearest me. And I knew that thou hearest me always." He knew that He had the answer, even before He saw it manifested. When He increased the loaves and the fishes, He gave thanks before He saw the demonstration. To claim the answer and to give thanks for it, unwaveringly believing in God as absolutely unfailing, even before you see the proof, is one of the greatest lessons that can be learned in connection with prayer. This is the prayer of faith. With God "can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning." All that He is, all that He does, all that He says, are exact law and can no more fail than following the rules in arithmetic can fail to produce the correct answer. This is the basis of our faith in prayer and this is why it is absolutely safe to claim the good He has promised and give thanks for it before we see it manifested.

This claiming of what is ours in Truth we call affirmation. Jesus was bold and fearless in making the highest claims for Himself. He affirmed, "I and the Father are one," and, "All things whatsoever the
Father hath are mine,” and so raised Himself above the prevailing thought of the world. In this way He demonstrated His sonship. He is our example; He came to lift us into the realization of our sonship. We can attain this realization by following in His steps, by doing as He did. He said, “Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment.” In the realm of the manifest world all about us, many things appear true that are not true in Spirit, and we are lifted out of the realm of appearances and established in the Truth of our being by the prayer of faith made in understanding.

One of the names of God is “I AM.” I AM is Being. When we enter the silence and speak the name, “I AM,” it brings our being into conscious union with Him in whom “we live, and move, and have our being.” There is in reality but one Being. “Oneness” means sameness. We are to become conscious that we are unified with God, are the same as God; this consciousness comes from knowing that “I AM.” As in the stillness of the soul we meditate on that which we know God is, we are to become conscious that “I AM THAT.” God is love. In the silence I am being that which God is—love; therefore I know, “I am love.” So with all the other qualities of God of which you may think. You are to be them through thinking, and feeling these qualities within you, and then you are to make them manifest. The separation of our being from God’s Being is only a part of the falsity that comes from the realm of appearances. We overcome this by claiming, affirming, praying in faith, “I and the Father are one.” The first step in entering the silence is to feel the presence of God; the second step is to realize oneness with Him. Upon these two fundamental steps all true prayer rests.

Students of Practical Christianity sometimes speak of “holding a thought.” This means that they take some statement of Truth into the silence, repeat it over and over, and meditate upon it until they realize its meaning, until it becomes spiritual understanding. This is the way to come into understanding.

It is natural for the man who is yet in ignorance of the great all-knowing One within him, to want to seek here and there, of some man or some book, for explanation of various texts of Scripture; but
the only way to come into the knowledge of Truth is to seek the kingdom within. Teachers and books are helpful only if they turn our attention within and help us to have faith in our indwelling Lord.

The power to "hold a thought" is the power to concentrate. Concentration, as used in its application to spiritual development, means the act of fixing the attention upon a central idea and drawing all the thoughts to that center. The thoughts of men require discipline. Thinking to a purpose must take the place of thinking at random. The silence gives thought discipline. Power to direct and control thought comes not from the personal will, but by centering within, in I AM. Thus poise and self-control are attained.

If our prayers seem not to be answered, let us not accuse God of failing us but let us examine ourselves to find whether we have truly prayed. Have we directed our prayers within, or without? Have we prayed to God as Father, or as the "unknown"? Have we known ourselves to be one with Him, or have we thought Him separate from us, perhaps a long way off? Have we entered the inner chamber of prayer? Have we closed the door? Have we asked believing that we have received? Have we prayed, desiring, above all, the kingdom of God; have "things" been first in our minds? Have we forgiven?

(Bible references used in this course of study are taken from the American Standard Version.)

Be Still and Know

Have faith in God! His love infolds;
No sparrow falls but He beholds;
No task too hard, no need too small
For Him whose love embraceth all.

Have faith in God! give Him your hand,
His heart of love will understand;
No lack too great for Him to fill;
O soul of man, be still, be still!

Have faith in God! He may not show
The how and why—He will bestow
The strength to meet all winds that blow;
O Child of God, be still and know!
—Henry Victor Morgan; The Master Christian.
QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between spiritual understanding and intellectual understanding?
2. What is God?
3. What is true prayer?
4. What is the “secret place of the Most High”?
5. What is meant by the phrases, “Enter into thine inner chamber,” and, “Shut thy door”?
6. What is the meaning of the expression, “Going into the silence”?
7. How may man bring his thoughts under his control?
8. What is the meaning of the statement, “In him we live, and move, and have our being”?
9. What benefit comes to us from praying to God as “our Father”?
10. What and where is heaven?
11. What is it to hallow the name of God?
12. What is God’s will for man?
13. What is “our daily bread”?

14. Explain why it is necessary to pray believing that we have received.
15. What is affirmation?
16. How are we helped by affirming Truth?
17. How do we get into conscious unity with God?
18. What is meant by “holding a thought” as used in connection with prayer?
19. Give three affirmations that help one to realize his unity with God.
20. Eight necessary conditions of true prayer are mentioned in a certain paragraph of this lesson. Please give them in your own language.