UNITY

CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL LESSONS

ANNOTATIONS

Series 1  Lesson 5

"OVERCOMING"

UNITY SCHOOL OF CHRISTIANITY

LEE'S SUMMIT, MISSOURI

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1. Why does man ever seek to exercise dominion?

1. In Genesis we are told that God created man in His own image and that the plan for him is perfection or manifestation of God's likeness. This Godlikeness includes dominion over the fishes, the birds, the cattle, over all the earth. Need for dominion arises in man because he finds himself beset with adverse conditions in body or in estate. The need gives rise to a desire to master these conditions. Since the attention of the "natural man"—I Corinthians 2:14, is centered in the outer, he tries to gain dominion over persons, animals, and the forces of nature and to bend them to his will. He is restless, unsatisfied, and dissatisfied until he turns his attention within his own being. Then he sees the beasts of the field as the appetites and passions of his own fleshly body; fishes as his desires and emotions; and birds as his higher, freer thoughts. He attains mastery only through self-discipline; he must achieve victory over his own lower nature.

Man is in reality a spiritual being. This means that in essence he pertains to the realm of cause. Mind is cause; body is effect. Cause has dominion over effect, and man will continue to seek dominion until he becomes conscious of his Divine Source and makes righteously active the spiritual principles that are the essence of his being. Knowledge and use of Truth will make him free.

2. Why does evil appear in the world?

2. Man is created in the image of God, and in order to be complete he is to make of himself the likeness of God. Specifications for making this likeness are given him through close companionship with Jehovah God, the law and order of his being. Designated as the "Christ Mind," the original principles of his Creator are within his soul as latent substance that contains all the ideas of God, Absolute Good. Man's business is to listen to Jehovah God's inspiration, learn the value, the proper co-ordination, and the right use of divine ideas and to make his body and his world accordingly.

Manifest man is not always conscious of the power of thought, Jehovah God as I AM, and does not understand its use. His attention is largely absorbed in appearances, in effects. Not understanding that his thoughts produce according to their character and experiencing results that are sometimes painful and sometimes pleasurable, he has concluded that there are two powers outside of himself and that these powers work either to increase or decrease his well-being. Pleasurable sensation he calls "good" and painful sensation he calls "evil." The wrong use of his freedom of thought is his undoing, as he becomes absorbed in effects, looks upon them as causes, and so increases evil in his life.

Failure to know that "the kingdom of God is within"—Luke 17:21, him; failure to understand that "as he (man) thinketh in his heart, so is he"—Proverbs 23:7 (A.V.); failure to live up to the command "Thou shalt have no other gods before me"—Exodus 20:3; and finally the ignorant use of ideas in wrong relation has produced all the seeming evil in the world.

3. What is the subconscious phase of mind?
3. The subconscious phase of mind in each person is the feeling nature as well as the storehouse in which is kept whatever he has made out of the portion of substance that has been given him. Of this substance he forms his body and his world. In the storehouse he keeps patterns of the results that have accrued from the experiences through which his body has passed on the path of life, from single cell to complex organism. Each cell has a capacity for instinctive knowing that is based on the sensations experienced by the fleshly body. The subconsciousness is the seat of various feelings, the feelings of pleasure and pain as responses made to the sensation. The pleasure causes a desire to bring about conditions that enable a person to repeat the sensation. Feelings that are responses consciously or subconsciously to sensations make up his emotional nature.

As a storehouse has its goods arranged, so the subconscious stores of Instinct and feeling are organized into habits, opinions, beliefs, memories. These give rise to moods, temperaments, and attitudes of mind from which man acts spontaneously. The subconscious phase of mind has no power of choice; it works deductively, handing out its supplies as they are requisitioned by its master, the conscious phase of mind. From the standpoint of time, the subconsciousness is each one's past (minus what he has eliminated by conscious or unconscious denial), active in the present, projecting into the future. It is the total personal mind (consciousness) of each human being as well as the accumulated race mind (consciousness).

4. Why is it important for the overcomer to understand the functioning of the subconscious phase of mind?

4. First, he must understand the functioning of the subconscious phase of mind so that he will not let any more untrue and imperfect concepts become stored there to become habits of mind. He must watch his conscious thinking and so train and direct it that the subconsciousness will not have any more wrong impressions to work out and bring forth as unpleasant experiences in his life. Everything should be consciously judged according to the Truth of Being.

Secondly, he must watch his emotional responses and so avoid mental disturbances. If a matter now annoying is not going to be annoying five years from now, why become emotionally disquieted about it at any time? The effect of Truth's working in consciousness is to give each event its rightful place and importance in life. The individual should call his reason to the rescue and form true judgments; then he will be undisturbed whatever his experience may be.

Thirdly, an understanding of the activities of the subconsciousness helps us to know why we spontaneously feel, think, speak, and act adversely. We know that the conscious phase of mind thinks or acts and the subconscious phase of mind reacts.

Fourthly, all moods, habits, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes of mind now entrenched in the subconscious phase of mind and not measuring up to the standard of Truth must be redeemed through conscious effort.

5. What is the carnal mind? What other names are given to it?
5. The word carnal means "fleshly". The carnal mind then is the error consciousness, the state of mind that sees life from the standpoint of effect rather than cause. It regards the physical body—the flesh—as the seat of power, and it unthinkingly gratifies the bodily desires. Man comes to regard himself as a child of the flesh; sees his ancestral lineage as flesh; sees himself as a limited, human being, helpless to control circumstances; sees God as something different and wholly apart from himself; sees the visible world as the real power and the spiritual world as a deep mystery; sees death as the end of all living things.

These wrong beliefs and concepts weaken man's consciousness of dominion, because he is centering his thought and attention in external things, instead of in spiritual realities. But his real power comes from knowing and proving his birthright as a Son of God.


6. What is the Christ consciousness?

6. The Christ consciousness is the Son of God consciousness in man, the state of consciousness in which the soul and the body are in harmony with Divine Mind, the Father, and all ideas and all faculties are in orderly adjustment and expressing in right relationship. It is man's supreme awareness of the pattern of perfection, I AM, the Christ, the Image, the Son of God. The Christ consciousness is God consciousness expressed in, by, and through manifest spiritual man, His Son. The Christ consciousness is God's ideal for man. The Christ consciousness in the individual is the Church of Christ, or the Lord's Body, the body or aggregation of Christed ideas.

It is the Truth-filled consciousness that sees things from their beginning in cause; it therefore sees only one Being, sees only Absolute Good. Spirit creates by self-contemplation; sees only Itself. This idea of the oneness of Being is the Logos, the active agent in creation, identified in man as I AM, the Christ. The Christ consciousness is man's knowing within his own being that he is a Son of God; that "I and the Father are one."—John 10:30. This consciousness man establishes by recognizing God as the presence and power of creation. Jesus knew Himself as the Son of God, with all that this tremendous conception implies. By recognizing God and only God His Sonship became the dominating factor of His life. When man understands this so that he uses the Christ power, ordering his life and modes of thought by it, he is going toward the Christ consciousness. When under the many forms and varied manifestations of the world he recognizes the one life vibrant in every atom, recognizes the hidden love infolding all in oneness, he comes into conscious touch with this hidden life and love. Then he feels himself to be one with all life; then he touches the Christ consciousness. No longer does he seek to fight "forms" with which he does not feel in harmony. Instead he seeks contact with the life behind the form, and as a result the outer becomes "attuned" or ceases to touch him.
7. What is overcoming?

Overcoming is a "coming over" into the Christ consciousness or a starting on the return journey to the Father's house: spiritual consciousness. It is in reality the growing consciousness of one's power to master any condition or situation, mentally, morally, physically, or environmentally through one's faculties, supervised by the Christ. To exercise this power in training the lower desires and emotions and in assigning the body to its rightful place in the three-fold being of man is to practice godliness, by which one becomes consciously the likeness of God.

8. What is it that man is to overcome?

The aspiration to become Christ conscious, to know the truth of one's self, causes one to become sensitive to Spirit. In projecting affirmations of Truth into his consciousness man stirs up the entire subconsciousness, the relative good and the relative evil. He may find himself in the midst of experiences that are not harmonious. By noticing his reactions to the conditions and happenings of daily life he will be shown his field of overcoming. If he is overwhelmed by difficulties, jarred by discords, disheartened by failures, out of sympathy with others, he will by asking Spirit learn what mountains of error must be removed to make straight the way of the Lord. As he studies the principles of Truth and grows in understanding he gains a high standard of living. His ear must be trained to hear the inner voice so that he may note the subtle discriminations of Truth. When so trained, whatever is contrary to Spirit will strike a false note to his ears; therefore he should ever be alert to his ideals. Man is to overcome all that is unlike God, Good, in his consciousness, body, and world of affairs—all thoughts, fears, feelings, concepts, beliefs, actions, and appearances that do not measure up to the standard of the Christ perfection and order. Spirit will not only reveal to him what he has to overcome but will also show him how to overcome through the forgiving love of Jesus Christ, which is able to redeem the errors of his mind and make him Christlike.

9. Explain the teaching that all men are sinners in Adam and righteous in Christ.

All men are manifestations of God consciousness, the one eternal movement of God-Mind. Mankind is the universal man, one man, the type. There is an outer department of mind that sees personality only as man. It does not think for itself but bases its conclusions on what others say. It believes in birth, sin, sickness, poverty, and other calamitous occurrences, all culminating in death. This mode of belief may be called the Adam consciousness, in which all men are sinners since they are missing the mark of their high calling as Sons of God. To be righteous in Christ every element of the Adam nature must be changed, transmuted into the Christ nature. All men are righteous in Christ as they are conscious only of the perfect creation in all people and in all things. In this consciousness they use their powers wisely and lovingly to make Christ become manifest in themselves and in others, to cause the human to become consciously a divine being.
10. Show the justice of the statement, "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."—I Corinthians 15:22.

10. Adam represents the personal consciousness or outer mind of mankind that forms judgments from appearances. The Adam consciousness is the race consciousness, the race mind at work. When a man appropriates in his mind the impressions resulting from his personal experiences, as when Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he aligns himself with that which destroys his peace of mind. He places himself under the mental law of cause and effect, where each thought gives rise to a corresponding effect. Cause is always within the individual, and his disobedience to the law of Being produces double vision. Instead of seeing with the single eye of faith in God he is confused; he sees many images, among which are the forms of Adam and death.

Christ represents God consciousness, the inner mind and feeling of man at one with God and at peace within and without, with itself and with the whole universe.

The justice of the statement lies in the fact that all men are created equal. Man is free, just as free as God is free. Therefore he may choose the kind of thoughts and feelings that he will entertain in his mind and heart. If he chooses the Adam variety, he will die. If he chooses the Christ Mind, it will keep him eternally alive in spirit, mind, body, and soul.

11. What is meant by "work out your own salvation"?

11. In the Old Testament the words translated "salvation" have in common the meaning of a broad or wide place, an enlargement. In the spiritual life "enlargement" comes from righteousness, from dwelling under spiritual conditions. Salvation is deliverance and freedom from the narrow, limited consciousness in which man has placed himself by believing in the error desires, feelings, thoughts, words, and wrong acts of personality. Man is partly saved when he removes these mental patterns from both his conscious and his subconscious being, his mind and his heart, so that they will no longer produce more of their kind. He must replace them with perfect ideas or mental patterns. Working out his own salvation is the greatest work he has to do. He is to make of himself a replica or likeness of his Creator. The "working out" requires him definitely to concentrate on the ideal, to hold ever before him God's ideal. At first he forms his own idea of life and its requirements, but later he unceasingly tries to discover God's ideal for him.

Truth is established only when it is "experienced," therefore he must bring the God ideas or powers of his being into manifestation by doing all things to the glory of God. It is a just provision that each person must work out his own salvation. No one else can do it for him; there is no vicarious atonement. Each one must make in his own mind and heart the changes that cause him to be safe and free in all ways.

12. What is meant by "race consciousness"?

12. The "race consciousness" is the sum of past and present thoughts, beliefs, concepts, and ideas prevalent among mankind. It has been said that possibly the greater part of our thinking did not begin
at our cradle; that it is the sum of the thoughts of those born before us, producing the atmosphere we are born into and causing our thoughts to have the same general character as theirs. Of many persons it might be said that they are living dead men's lives, since they are thinking dead men's thoughts. The thoughts of those who have lived before us may be either helpful and up-lifting or depressing and limiting. As generations of self-centered, self-conscious men have succeeded each other it is the limiting thoughts principally that have been accepted and impressed on the succeeding generation. The stream of thought thus established, with its strong currents drawing all thought in their direction, is the race thought, or "race consciousness."

The thoughts and emotions of humanity in general must be dealt with as being below the level of man's divine inheritance and as having no power in and of themselves. Their seeming power is that which the individual gives them through his own process of thinking and feeling. This allows the imagination to form all sorts of "bogeys" and out of the suggestions that have been dropped into the subconsciousness during the history of mankind.

13. How do race beliefs become a part of the consciousness of the individual?

13. From the time a child is born into the world until he reaches the age of perception, usually considered as twelve years, he is open-minded and susceptible to the impressions of his senses. He readily accepts what is told him by those around him. He often fully believes what his schoolmates tell him. Only exceptionally is a child taught to think for himself. Accepting the point of view of those with whom he associates, he makes their beliefs a part of his subconsciousness. Then too the thoughts that people in general believe and express are in the air, and these enter his mind unless he has learned to be alert and to shut them out. When the current thoughts are accepted consciously or subconsciously, they lodge in the subconscious phase of mind and take root there like weed seeds in the garden or dandelions on the lawn.

14. What is flesh heredity? How is it overcome?

14. Flesh heredity is the belief that man has his origin in flesh, that he is created through the will of mortal man; that through his ancestral lineage he inherits disease, traits of character, good and evil qualities, as manifested by his fleshly ancestors.

There is no foundation for the belief that one inherits diseases or characteristics from the flesh. The flesh profits nothing; it has no life of itself, is not lastingly causative. Spirit, Divine Mind, through the action of the Christ idea, is the cause of all that is divinely perfect. Science teaches that the body with which we were born is not the body that we have at the age of seven years. The later body is an entirely new set of atoms in motion. By another kind of growth man gradually begins to see himself as Spirit. The composite idea of the Christ man holds together in one body the atoms of the
physical organism as well as all the ideas that inhere in the spiritual body, in order that the individual may be consciously a true instrument of expression and manifestation of Spirit. Seeing that he does not inherit his earthly father's mind—for his father still possesses his own mind—man begins to look for the source of his mind or consciousness and is forced to acknowledge an origin common to all. This is universal Mind, the ideas of which are for the use of the entire creation. He goes still further and sees himself as the composite idea of universal Mind, and he knows that as such he inherits divine ideas more powerful than any human concepts. At last he gets the vision of himself as a Son of God, the inheritor of the presence (mind substance), and the power (thought, words, or idea) of his Father, Divine Mind, the cause and creator of all that he is.

15. What two mental steps are taken in overcoming?

15. First, it is necessary to believe that it is possible to overcome our animal instincts and lower emotions such as fear, hatred, etc., as well as our error thoughts, wrong concepts, and false beliefs. The assurance of our victory is given us in the victory of Jesus, who overcame the world, the flesh, and the Devil. We must hold firmly to the belief that it is possible here and now to master our lower nature and to live the present life in the Christ consciousness. This work is not to be postponed. As a matter of fact we do not "live" but only exist before we are awakened to the Christ consciousness. Secondly, as the determination and the constant endeavor to live up to daily overcoming become more stable, they find expression in our mode of thought, feeling, and living. The idea grows in strength and clarity through constant attention, and it becomes in time the dominating factor of our lives. We are no longer affected by the thoughts of those with whom we come in contact. The Christ ideal has become established in our subconsciousness and we are so filled with Spirit that we radiate it spontaneously and effortlessly.

16. What is the difference between an overcomer and one who merely does the best he can?

16. The one doing his best is simply using human effort to make his moral character presentable. Deep in his mind there is always the idea that circumstances are unalterable and conditions inevitable. When held to, this conception will in itself prevent complete success. In addition to this he endeavors to combat adverse conditions with his personal will, his human powers. While these may by themselves carry him far, they do not insure success. Disease, lack, and fear continue to possess his conscious phase of mind, and his subconsciousness, having no renewing and constructive thoughts given to cleanse it and to enlighten its structure, remains as it was before. Such a person is vainly trying to establish righteousness by mental law.

The overcomer daily grows into greater knowledge and understanding of Truth principles. He has learned through prayer and meditation to draw on the divine Source of limitless supply; he knows that the most untoward circumstances can be changed and harmonized by the idea of divine love, put into expression. When man through prayer, faith in God, and the spoken word is quickened
in mind and in heart, the Christ within gives itself wholly to the work of redeeming the human consciousness and regenerating the fleshly body. This restores the soul to its rightful heritage, a perfect body.

17. What have one's ideals and standards to do with his spiritual growth?

17. Human ideals and standards are limited, but one cannot at once conceive God's plan as stated by Jesus Christ, "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."--Matthew 5:48. So man must make a mental concept of what this perfection is, of what it consists. His ideal and standard must be higher than his present development indicates, so that he may be ever aspiring toward them and putting forth conscious effort to attain them.

Growth is a matter of vision. Biblical admonitions are to "seek" to "look up," to "behold." Substantial and earnest plodding with the mental law has its virtues, but until the plodder lifts his eyes and beholds the rich ideals of Spirit, until he seeks with great ardor to shake worldly mindedness from his life and glorify his thought with the Christ vision, he is still in the treadmill of the world. To accept the Christ as the pattern, the standard of living, means to subject the whole being to the presence and power that is greater than all human beliefs and standards, unlimited in its ability to accomplish the good.

18. Why is it important that an overcomer identify himself only with the highest?

18. To identify is to make to be the same. Each one becomes like that with which he identifies himself. Many sad experiences are the result of a mixed identification. It occasions moments of peace, joy, and power as well as moments of sorrow and disappointment. To have experiences only of the God nature means dominion and life abundant. Man can be transformed only by beholdng the pattern that from the beginning has been in the heavens of his mind; he must fix his vision and his aim upon the Christ ideal. He must have the "now are we the sons of God" vision. This vision will be the guiding light that assures dominion and freedom from adversity. It will transform his mind and transmute his body into a temple of the living God.

19. What work will each overcomer do for the world? How will he accomplish this work?

19. Each overcomer will help to establish the kingdom of heaven upon the earth. World thought has the attitude of the average moral level, the thought force, and the general enlightenment of mankind as a species. There is a great need today for the triumphant life of those who have developed the spiritual qualities of faith, fearlessness, and spiritual understanding, for these denote the conquering spirit. By holding the Christ consciousness, the consciousness of oneness of Being, the overcomer helps set up a new heaven (cause) and a new earth (effect) wherein dwells righteousness; helps impart a new attitude to
life and give a higher expression to it. He builds this first for himself, then more gradually for others; for before he has learned to build well for himself he cannot really help others. Yet he cannot travel onward alone, for heaven is reached only by the path of love and service. He accomplishes his work first by vision, which he seeks to establish outwardly; first he glimpses heaven, and then he seeks to re-form the earth or to make its conditions harmonious.

20. What changes take place in a man's conversation when he becomes an overcomer?

20. Man's conversation, like his thoughts, is established in heaven when he becomes an overcomer. "The kingdom of heaven is the orderly adjustment of divine ideas in man's mind and body."--Metaphysical Bible Dictionary, page 387. He does not desire to talk of limitation, negation, inharmony, disorder, imperfection, for he is interested in Principle and its working. His conversation will no longer feature criticism and adversity but praise and blessings; he will not dwell on aches and pains but on the joys of living. He is strong and reliant; his attitude toward the weak is heartening and toward all others inspiring. One who has learned that he makes his own conditions by his thoughts and words will not talk about anything that he does not want to see manifested. His conversation will be of the good he is seeking and expecting. Dwelling on the bright side of life, he will always strike a constructive, buoyant note.