

UNITY  
HERITAGE ROOM

## CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL LESSONS

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

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### OVERCOMING

Series 1

Lesson 5



UNITY SCHOOL OF CHRISTIANITY  
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## The Overcomer

I will start anew this morning with a  
higher, fairer creed;

I will cease to stand complaining of my  
ruthless neighbor's greed;

I will cease to sit repining while my duty's  
call is clear;

I will waste no moment whining, and my  
heart shall know no fear.

I will look sometimes about me for the  
things that merit praise;

I will search for hidden beauties that elude  
the grumbler's gaze.

I will try to find contentment in the paths  
that I must tread;

I will cease to have resentment when an-  
other moves ahead.

I will not be swayed by envy when my  
rival's strength is shown;

I will not deny his merit, but I'll strive to  
prove my own;

I will try to see the beauty spread before  
me, rain or shine;

I will cease to preach your duty, and be  
more concerned with mine.

—Selected.

## OVERCOMING

The idea that dominion was given to man in the beginning is so firmly implanted within every human being that each person is continually endeavoring to express it. He tries to surmount conditions and to gain mastery over them. He struggles with sorrow, disease, poverty, death, and all other adverse conditions because he feels, through his memory of past experience, that he ought to be master of conditions and ought to be able to order his life in harmony, health, and success. Spiritual understanding shows that such overcoming is possible, and it points the way.

Past failures of the human family to demonstrate mastery over adverse conditions have come from ignorance. Jesus Christ is the way out of this ignorance because He is the truth, and the truth makes men free from all the conditions produced by ignorance. Christ came, took on "the likeness of sinful flesh" with its failings, and demonstrated that He could overcome everything that seems to burden mankind.

He revealed to men that they could overcome as He did; He taught them how to do this and promised to help them along the way.

From Jesus' teaching we learn that there are three reasons why so-called evil conditions are in the world. The first reason is: Man has not known and claimed his dominion. He has had a faint recollection of it, sufficient to keep him struggling, but he has not had the full understanding and realization of spiritual mastery. The second reason is: All things have their origin in mind, and outward appearances are the result of thought. The outer, therefore, has no permanency or reality in itself. As it is produced by thought, it can be changed by thought. Ignorant thinking, or the ignorant use of ideas, makes all the evil that appears. The third reason is: Man, not being in spiritual understanding, has not seen the relation between cause and effect. No ill effect was ever righted except by correction of the cause, and the cause is always an idea. Ideas are the builders of the manifest world and must be used in right relation with God's law,

Because some persons have experienced effects for which there seemed to be no corresponding creative thoughts, these persons have doubted that the effects originated in mind. They looked only in the conscious realm. There is a realm of mind called the subconscious. Every thought that has ever been held in the conscious mind sinks into memory and remains, although it may no longer be held in the conscious mind. Past thoughts gather about some central idea (like attracting like) and form states of mind. The character of these states of mind is determined by the character of the dominant thought.

The formed states of mind make up what is called the subconscious mind and, in a certain sense, work independent of the conscious mind. Once established by our acceptance and belief, they continue to work according to their character. For instance, in sleep the established states of consciousness carry on breathing, digestion, and circulation. These functions are carried on harmoniously or inharmoniously, according to the past thinking that has become habitual.

Besides being the storehouse of memory, the seat of habits, the controller of the vital physical functions, the subconscious mind is also the mind of instinctive desire. It is not confined to the brain but is existent in every cell of the body. It is the total of each individual's own thoughts as well as the whole of the inherited race thoughts and beliefs. The subconscious mind works subjectively; it has no power of choice. It reaches conclusions from premises given it, but it is not capable of testing the validity of these conclusions. It never sleeps, never rests, never tires; it is the secondary cause, the recreative mind in the individual. It is constantly bringing forth according to what has been stored in it, and is building man's body and his environment.

It is clear that the character of the subconscious mind depends upon the past and the present thoughts. Controlled, constructive thinking in the conscious mind builds right states in the subconscious mind; uncontrolled, random, and erroneous thinking in the conscious mind builds untrue states in the subconscious mind. Untrue states having been built into the

subconscious mind, it has no choice but to act according to these established states. This is the reason why we sometimes spontaneously think, speak, and act adversely.

Paul called the total of all error in the mind "the mind of the flesh," "the natural man," or "the old man." By some persons this error thought is called mortal mind; others name it sense consciousness, personality, personal consciousness, or carnal mind. The consciousness of Truth, established by thinking Truth, is called the Christ consciousness; in the Bible it is named "the new man."

When rightly understood, all overcoming is seen to be an inner realization of victory over sense consciousness. One may be very good outwardly without having true inner goodness. In such a case his conscious thought may give him no hint of the overcoming which he needs to do in his subconscious mind, but when Spirit begins to quicken and transform him it will reveal the need of a new state of mind in the whole man.

One may find himself in the midst of inharmonious experiences in body or in affairs. When these experiences come

they show man what he has to overcome; he may feel that he is a great sinner and may begin to condemn himself. But condemnation too must be overcome, because it makes heavier the burden of sin.

The seeming injustice of including all the race in Adam's sin is cleared away when the laws of mind and the power of thought are understood. "All men are created equal"; the same law that makes all men sinners in Adam makes all men righteous in Christ. "As through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous." Sin is overcome by the attaining of a consciousness of Truth. The whole message of the Gospel is that as the race went down into sin and death in the Adam consciousness, so shall it be lifted in righteousness and life in the Christ consciousness. A cause set into operation always produces a like effect.

The result of overcoming is salvation, freedom from sin and the effects of sinning, freedom from all consciousness of evil, and the removal of evil thoughts from both the conscious and the subcon-

scious realms of mind. Every man must work out his own salvation; that is, he must take hold of the saving Truth with his mind, and by the power of his thought build states of consciousness that are enduring, even to eternal life.

The whole of salvation is summed up in the consciousness of the Christ mind. The perfection of man as the offspring of God is an eternal truth, but this truth must come into consciousness. It is man's individual entrance into the Christ consciousness that gives him salvation. Jesus "brought life and immortality to light," but man gets the benefit of the light only as he incorporates it into his consciousness through his daily thought.

"As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." That is, as in the Adam consciousness all men die, even so in the Christ consciousness all men shall be made alive. Adam represents the consciousness of both good and evil. The Adam consciousness is sometimes called the race thought. The race thought is the thought, concept, or belief that is common to the greater part of humanity, whether it be good or ill. Among the

error thoughts held by the race are the ideas of sin, poverty, disease, death—the belief that these appearances are inevitable in human experience. Another race thought is the belief in materiality. In the blindness of ignorance, the natural man does not see Spirit manifest everywhere. He thinks God to be separate from His creation; he believes that the world and his body are lacking the eternal life and light of Spirit.

These and other adverse thoughts of the race work in the minds of men and produce all inharmonious conditions. Every one who would overcome must have the understanding of Truth, that he may deal with causes intelligently and produce the effects that he desires. If he sits down and says, "I don't see what I ever did, that I should suffer," or, "My friend is so good; it cannot be that her thinking causes her troubles," he is betraying his ignorance of the law of mind action. The race thoughts are working in the subconsciousness of all persons who have not fully established themselves in the Christ consciousness. Every overcomer finds that he must deal with these

race thoughts, put them out of his mind, and in their place put thoughts of Truth.

The dominant race beliefs get into the subconsciousness of men partly through what is called flesh heredity. They are carried on from generation to generation, forming what is termed experience, until they are accepted and made a part of everyday belief. Some one becomes quickened by Spirit and wakes to the knowledge that he is not the offspring of man, but of God. This realization connects his mind with Divine Mind and he begins to express its perfection.

When man was connected with the Adam consciousness by his belief in the flesh as his source, he manifested the limitations and imperfections of that state of consciousness. Fleshly inheritance is the result of expressing beliefs that have been learned from human ancestors from whom one believes he has descended. When man learns that he is by nature divine, is in reality Spirit descended into physical form, his thoughts begin a new creation and he then manifests spiritual qualities, his inheritance from God. The charac-

ter of thoughts held depends upon the character of their source.

The booklet, "Directions for Beginners," should be studied with this lesson, and the suggestions therein given should be followed faithfully. Some of the race beliefs are treated in a specific way and the overcomer is shown just how to put out of his consciousness the errors that make discord in his life.

There are two definite steps that one must take in the process of overcoming. The first is to place oneself by faith in the Christ consciousness and hold oneself there. This step is taken by the conscious mind; one must consciously open his mind to Christ thoughts and must consciously refuse to recognize anything but good. Thus the change from the mortal consciousness to the spiritual consciousness is accomplished in one movement. The complete transformation, however, comes as the result of a second step, taken by the subconscious mind. The thoughts of good are taken into the storehouse of the subconscious mind and produce states of mind that eventually appear in the outer. This working of Truth from the inner to

the outer, from the consciousness into the body and the affairs, is working out one's own salvation. "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." Holding oneself in the Christ consciousness by faith connects one with the truth of Being. Truth quickens the mind and renews it, and the renewed mind transforms the whole man.

It is sometimes taken for granted that if a man does the best he can, no more should be expected of him. However, persons all over the world are doing the best they can, yet they are not being saved from sin, sickness, poverty, and death; it is evident that they should do more than they are doing, more than they have thought that they could do. The difference between those who are merely doing the best they can and a real overcomer is that the overcomer, by faith, lays hold of a power that enables him to do what he of himself could not do. That power is the indwelling Christ. "I can of myself do nothing." "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me." One's success as an overcomer depends upon the hold that one has upon the Prin-



ciple within; prayer gives man that hold.

All movements of mind are toward certain standards; therefore every man's growth is governed by the ideals or standards that he has in his mind. The difference in standards marks the difference between the man who ignorantly does the best he can and the man who makes use of the understanding and knowledge of the Christ, the true standard. The first man has only the ideas and interests of his mortal consciousness with which to form his standards; these have no uplifting power and he goes along in a treadmill, making no progress toward spiritual things. The other man has ideals and standards that are ever higher and higher, and as he grows in understanding they draw him upward. Jesus said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself."

Merely to dwell in the contemplation of high and lofty ideals without being able to reduce them to useful demonstrations is nothing more than idealistic thinking, and this alone does not help one to progress toward spiritual realities. The highest aim that any soul can have is to

bring God into manifestation. Let the Christ be exalted in your mind as the supreme good toward which all your being is drawn, and His overcoming, uplifting power will be manifest in your life.

The children of Israel were a type of the body or church of Christ. Their wanderings and all their experiences portray the experiences of the members of the Christ body in their overcoming. The Israelites were forbidden to mix in any way with the nations about them, lest they adopt heathen standards and forsake the Lord, their God. So the church of Christ is a people holy unto God, separate from the ideas and standards of the world. This is not self-righteousness, but a requirement of the law of spiritual growth. A mixed state of mind cannot produce perfection. Jesus said, in His prayer for those who believed in Him, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them from the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil *one*." Though living in the world, followers of Jesus Christ are separate from it in ideas, standards, and manners of living.

Every one grows to be like that with

which he identifies himself. The overcomer must then be wise in the matter of identification and must unify himself only with Truth. Many persons have a habit of identifying themselves with disease by using such an expression as "my rheumatism," thus claiming and holding fast to the very appearance that they wish to overcome. The question of what one shall or shall not identify himself with is a very important one to the overcomer. He knows a great secret of help and deliverance when he is wise in this respect.

Those who drift with the race thought and follow the popular standards of thinking and living do not qualify as members of the body of Christ and receive the blessings of the overcomer. The overcomers are those who place themselves in the truth of Being and think the thoughts of God after Him. These overcomers will make a new world, "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Mankind, through Truth, is to be lifted into conscious unity with God.

The world is waiting for the manifestation of these sons of God who have the understanding, the faith, the courage, and

the fearlessness to think and express ideas that will establish an entirely new order of things in the earth, even the kingdom of heaven. The leaven is at work and it will leaven the whole race. Great is the motive power back of one who knows that his overcoming is not for his personal comfort and benefit, but for the uplift of the human family.

When the overcomer knows the power of thought he can readily understand that thought expressed in spoken or in written words is also powerful, and he will learn to consider carefully the words that he uses. His conversation will no longer center about himself. He will not speak of conditions that he does not wish to see manifest, but he will speak of life and health. He will not complain, but will praise and bless All-good for "the abundance of all things." The Israelites brought great afflictions on themselves by murmuring; by the same law, similar results follow complaint and faultfinding.

The overcomer does not wait for appearances to testify to the goodness of God, but looks back of appearances. He knows that God is unchangeable and ever-

lasting good, and so he gives thanks with faith and understanding. If sin seems powerful in his life he overcomes it by acknowledging and giving thanks that he is the sinless offspring of the perfect Father. If the effects of sin appear, he erases their appearance by knowing that sin has been wiped out of his consciousness by the knowledge of Truth, and that its effects can no longer manifest in his life. Thoughts and words are the tools that God has given him to use in the building of his soul consciousness and in bringing to manifestation his perfect body.

## QUESTIONS

1. Why does man ever seek to exercise dominion?
2. Why does evil appear in the world?
3. What is the subconscious realm of mind?
4. Why is it important for the overcomer to understand the functioning of the subconscious mind?
5. What is the carnal mind? What other names are given to it?
6. What is the Christ consciousness?
7. What is overcoming?
8. How does man find out what he has to overcome?
9. Explain the teaching that all men are sinners in Adam and righteous in Christ.
10. Show the justice of the statement, "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."
11. What is meant by "work out your own salvation"?
12. What is the meaning of "race thought"?

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

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

15. What two mental steps are taken in overcoming?

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

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

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

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

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