

SERIES TWO · Vol. 2

Foundations of Unity

Series II Vol. 2

This volume is written around chapters 4, 5, 6, 8, and 10 of the book Lessons in Truth, by H. Emilie Cady. The material found in the commentary comes from the original Correspondence School Course, which was originated at Unity School in 1909 and has subsequently gone through many revisions and enlargements.

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"I am the WAY, and the truth, and the life." John 14:6

Lesson I

Faith

Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass; he shall have it.—Mark 11:23.

Science was faith once.-Lowell.

- 1. The word faith is one that has generally been thought to denote a simple form of belief based mostly on ignorance and superstition. It is a word that has drawn forth something akin to scorn from so-called "thinking people"—the people who have believed that intellectual attainment is the highest form of knowledge to be reached. "Blind faith" they have disdainfully chosen to call it—fit only for ministers, women, and children, but not a practical thing on which to establish the everyday business affairs of life.
- 2. Some have prided themselves on having outgrown the swaddling clothes of this blind, un-

reasoning faith, and having grown to the point, as they say, where they have faith only in that which can be seen, or intellectually explained.

- 3. The writer of The Epistle to the Hebrews, obviously a most intellectual man, and a learned theologian, before writing at length on the nature of faith and the marvelous results attending it, tried to put into a few words a condensed definition of faith:
- 4. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11: 1 A.V.).
- 5. In other words, faith takes right hold of the substance of the things desired, and brings into the world of evidence the things that before were not seen. Further speaking of faith, the writer said, "Things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb. 11:3 A.V.); that is, things that are seen are not made out of visible things, but out of the invisible. In some way, then, we understand that whatever we want is in this surrounding invisible substance, and faith is the power that can bring it out into actuality to us.
- 6. After having cited innumerable instances of marvelous things brought to pass in the lives of men, not by their work or efforts, but by faith, the Epistle says,
- 7. And what shall I more 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, from weakness were made strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of aliens. Women received their dead by a

resurrection (Heb. 11:32-35).

- 8. Do you want any more power or any greater thing than is here mentioned—power to subdue kingdoms, to stop the mouths of lions, quench fire, turn to flight whole armies, raise the dead to life again? Even if your desires exceed this, you need not despair or hesitate to claim their fulfillment, for One greater than you, One who knew whereof He spoke, said: "All things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23).
- 9. Until very recently, whenever anyone has spoken of faith as the one power that can move mountains, we have always felt a sort of hopeless discouragement. While we have believed that God holds all good things in His hand, and is willing to be prevailed upon to dole them out according to our faith, yet how could we, even by straining every nerve of our being toward faith, be sure that we had sufficient to please Him? For does it not say, "Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him" (Heb. 11:6)?
- 10. From the moment we began to ask, we began to question our ability to reach God's standard of faith on which hung our fate. We also began to question whether, after all, there is any such power in faith to prevail with the Giver of "every good gift" so as to draw out of Him something that He had never let us have before.
- 11. Viewing faith in this light, there is not much wonder that logical minds have looked on it as a sort of will-o'-the-wisp, good enough for women and children to hang their hopes on, but not a thing from which any real, definite results could ever be obtained—not a thing that the business world could rest upon.

- 12. There is a blind faith, to be sure. (Someone has truthfully said that blind faith is better than none at all; for, if held to, it will get its eyes open after a time.) But there is also an understanding faith. Blind faith is an instinctive trust in a power higher than ourselves. Understanding faith is based on immutable principle.
- 13. Faith does not depend on physical facts, or on the evidence of the senses, because it is born of intuition, or the Spirit of truth ever living at the center of our being. Its action is infinitely higher than that of intellectual conclusions; it is founded on Truth.
- 14. Intuition is the open end, within one's own being, of the invisible channel ever connecting each individual with God. Faith is, as it were, a ray of light shot out from the central sun—God—one end of which ray comes into your being and mine through the open door of intuition. With our consciousness we perceive the ray of light, and though intellect cannot grasp it, or give the why or wherefore thereof, yet we instinctively feel that the other end of the ray opens out into all there is of God (good). This is "blind" faith. It is based on Truth, but a Truth of which everyone is not at the time conscious. Even this kind of faith will, if persisted in, bring results.
- 15. What is understanding faith? There are some things that God has so indissolubly joined together that it is impossible for even Him to put them asunder. They are bound together by fixed, immutable laws; if we have one of them, we must have the other.
- 16. This is illustrated by the laws of geometry. For instance, the sum of the angles of a triangle is

equal to two right angles. No matter how large or small the triangle, no matter whether it is made on the mountaintop or leagues under the sea, if we are asked the sum of its angles we can unhesitatingly answer, without waiting an instant to count or reckon this particular triangle, that it is just two right angles. This is absolutely certain. It is certain, even before the triangle is drawn by visible lines; we can know it beforehand, because it is based on unchangeable laws, on the truth or reality of the thing. It was true just as much before anyone recognized it as it is today. Our knowing it or not knowing it does not change the truth. Only in proportion as we come to know it as an eternal truth, can we be benefited by it.

- 17. It is also a simple truth that one plus one equals two; it is an eternal truth. You cannot put one and one together without two resulting. You may believe it or not; that does not alter the truth. But unless you do put the one and one together you do not produce the two, for each is eternally dependent on the other.
- 18. The mental and spiritual world or realms are governed by laws that are just as real and unfailing as the laws that govern the natural world. Certain conditions of mind are so connected with certain results that the two are inseparable. If we have the one, we must have the other, as surely as the night follows the day—not because we believe some wise person's testimony that such is the case, not even because the voice of intuition tells us that it is so, but because the whole matter is based on laws that can neither fail nor be broken.
- 19. When we know something of these laws, we can know positively beforehand just what results

will follow certain mental states.

- 20. God, the one creative cause of all things, is Spirit, and visible to spiritual consciousness, as we have learned. God is the sum total of all good. There is no good that you can desire in your life which, at its center, is not God. God is the substance of all things—the real thing within every visible form of good.
- 21. God, the invisible substance out of which all visible things are formed, is all around us waiting to come forth into manifestation.
- 22. This good substance all about us is unlimited, and is itself the supply of every demand that can be made; of every need that exists in the visible or natural world.
- 23. One of the unerring truths in the universe (by "universe" I mean the spiritual and natural worlds combined) is that there is already provided a lavish abundance for every human want. In other words, the supply of every good always awaits the demand. Another truth is that the demand must be made before the supply can come forth to fill it. To recognize these two statements of Truth and to affirm them are the whole secret of understanding faith—faith based on principle.
- 24. Let us square this by the definition of faith, given earlier in the lesson: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). Faith takes hold of the substance of the thing hoped for, and brings into evidence, or visibility, the things not seen.
- 25. What are usually called the promises of God are certain eternal, unchangeable truths that are true whether they are found in the Bible or in the almanac. They are unvarying statements of truth

that cannot be altered. A promise, according to Webster, is a something sent beforehand to indicate that something unseen is at hand. It is a declaration that gives the person to whom it is made the right to expect and claim the performance of the act.

26. The Nazarene recognized the unchangeable truth that, in the unseen, the supply of every want awaits demand. When He said, "Ask, and ye shall receive" (John 16:24), He was simply stating an unalterable truth. He knew that the instant we ask or desire (for asking is desire expressed) we touch a secret spring which starts on its way toward us the good we want. He knew that there need not be any coaxing or pleading about it; that our asking is simply our complying with an unfailing law which is bound to work; there is no escape from it. Asking and receiving are the two ends of the same thing. There is a very close connection between them.

27. Asking springs from desire to possess some good. What is desire? Desire in the heart is always God tapping at the door of your consciousness with His infinite supply—a supply that is forever useless unless there be demand for it. "Before they call, I will answer" (Isa. 65:24). Before ever you are conscious of any lack, of any desire for more happiness, for fullness of joy, the great Father-Mother heart has desired them for you. It is He in you desiring them that you feel, and think it is only yourself (separate from Him) desiring them. With God the desire to give, and giving, are one and the same thing. Someone has said, "Desire for anything is the thing itself in incipiency"; that is, the thing you desire is not only for you, but has already been started toward you out of the heart

of God; and it is the first approach of the thing itself striking you that makes you desire it, or even think of it at all.

28. The only way God has of letting us know of His infinite supply and His desire to make it ours is for Him to push gently on the divine spark living within each one of us. He wants you to be a strong, self-efficient man or woman, to have more power and dominion over all before you; so He quietly and silently pushes a little more of Himself, His desire, into the center of your being. He enlarges, so to speak, your real self, and at once you become conscious of new desire to be bigger, grander, stronger. If He had not pushed at the center of your being first, you would never have thought of new desires, but would have remained perfectly content as you were.

29. You think that you want better health, more love, a brighter, more cheerful home all your very own; in short, you want less evil (or no evil) and more good in your life. This is only God pushing at the inner door of your being, as if He were saying: "My child, let Me in; I want to give you all good, that you may be more comfortable and happy." "Behold, my servants shall eat . . . behold, my servants shall drink . . . behold my servants shall rejoice . . . behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart . . . And they shall build houses, and inhabit them" (Isa. 65:13, 14, 21).

30. Remember this: Desire in the heart for anything is God's sure promise sent beforehand to indicate that it is yours already in the limitless realm of supply, and whatever you want you can have for the taking.

31. Taking is simply recognizing the law of

supply and demand (even if you cannot see a sign of the supply any more than Elijah did when he had affirmed for rain, and not a cloud even so big as a man's hand was for a long time to be seen). Affirm your possession of the good that you desire; have faith in it, because you are working with divine law and cannot fail; do not be argued off your basic principle by anyone; and sooner will the heavens fall than that you fail to get that which you desire.

- 32. "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24).
- 33. Knowing the law of abundant supply, and the truth that supply always precedes the demand, demand simply being the call that brings the supply into sight; knowing that all desire in the heart for any good is really God's desire in us and for us, how shall we obtain the fulfillment of our every desire, and that right speedily?
- 34. "Delight thyself also in Jehovah; And he will give thee the desires of thy heart" (Psalms 37:4). Take right hold of God with an unwavering faith. Begin and continue to rejoice, and thank Him that you have (not will have) the desires of your heart, never losing sight of the fact that the desire is the thing itself in incipiency. If the good were not already yours in the invisible realm of supply, you could not, by any possibility, desire it.
- 35. Someone asks: "Suppose I desire my neighbor's wife, or his property; is that desire born of God? And can I see it fulfilled by affirming that it is mine?"
- 36. You do not and cannot, by any possibility, desire that which belongs to another. You do not

desire your neighbor's wife. You desire the love that seems to you to be represented by your neighbor's wife. You desire something to fill your heart's craving for love. Affirm that there is for you a rightful and an overflowing supply, and claim its manifestation. It will surely come, and your so-called desire to possess your neighbor's wife will suddenly disappear.

37. So you do not in reality desire anything that belongs to your neighbor. You want the equivalent of that for which his possessions stand. You want your own. There is today an unlimited supply of all good provided in the unseen for every human being. No man must needs have less that another may have more. Your very own awaits you. Your understanding faith, or trust, is the power that will bring it to you.

38. Emerson said that the man who knows the law "is sure that his welfare is dear to the heart of being . . . He believes that he cannot escape from his good."

39. Knowing divine law and obeying it, we can forever rest from all anxiety, all fear, for "Thou openest thy hand, And satisfiest the desire of every living thing" (Psalms 145:16).

COMMENTARY ON "FAITH"

The Meaning of Faith

Faith is an idea or quality of Divine Mind, thus it is one of the ideas that constitute our divine inheritance. It is a spiritual power or principle that operates as a faculty of our mind. It embodies hope, belief, trust, and expectancy; thus it is one of man's twelve powers or twelve faculties of mind.

Faith is an integral part of our being. Through the ages mankind has sought to know God and it is faith that has been the directing power of this search, as well as our individual yearning and seeking for God. Faith is the divinely ordained, eternally established God quality of assurance inherent in each soul; an attitude of mind, a confidence of heart, a joyousness of spirit.

Charles Fillmore refers to faith as "the perceiving power of the mind" (Prosperity, p. 43). This "perceiving power," acting as a faculty in our consciousness, sees the possibility of a thing or result long before there is any evidence of it in the visible realm. Faith "sees" the good and perceives it to be worthy of our consideration. Faith prompts our mind to give attention to that which is good without letting any doubts creep in.

Faith produces a feeling of deep inner conviction, a state of being certain in our mind that a desire for something will be fulfilled in the outer at the right time. This feeling does not depend on the

five senses to report how or through what channel the fulfillment of the desire is to come. Faith is possessing in mind a picture of a thing desired before there is any sign of it as a form in the outer world.

Faith goes beyond intellectual belief, although when faith first moves in our consciousness it starts its expression in us with intellectual belief. Faith is a positive agreement between the conscious phase of mind (the faculty of thinking or as it is often referred to, the intellect) and the subconscious phase of mind (the feeling nature, or what is often referred to as the heart) with regard to the desired good. Faith is the "single eye" of which Jesus spoke, for it keeps our attention focused on good, or God.

We may say that faith includes both the vision of good and the power to bring that vision into expression. It is the faculty of mind that gives divine ideas a firm place in our consciousness. Faith keeps ideas active in our mind while they are taking form to meet the specific need in our manifest world.

In its action, however, faith is not confined to religion or to things spiritual. It operates in varied degrees at all levels of consciousness:

"Faith is a faculty of the mind that finds its most perfect expression in the spiritual nature, but in order to bring out one's whole character it should be developed in all its phases" (Christian Healing p. 85).

Faith brings into actuality or manifestation whatever we have fixed our attention and our expectations on. We are always using the power of faith, but if this power is not directed according to spiritual law, we bring many things into our world that fall short of God's standard of good. Jesus tells us most explicitly where we are to place our faculty of faith, when He says, "Have faith in God" (Mark 11:22).

Faith, being an idea of God, can have no opposite. That which is called fear is not the opposite of faith, but rather a belief in evil. Faith in the omnipotence of God overpowers all belief in any opposing power and we finally arrive at the place in our unfoldment where we are conscious that there can be *nothing* in which to have faith except in the good, or God within.

With these explanations of faith we reach a clearer understanding of the definition found in Hebrews 11:1. The Authorized Version of this passage reads, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Every form of manifestation ("things hoped for") was at one time an intangible idea that had to be fostered, fed, and nourished by the "soil" of the mind. Faith is to an idea in our mind what soil is to the seedling; it is the very "substance" that promotes growth and maintains life.

We cannot see this "substance" referred to in this scriptural passage with our physical eyes, yet it does manifest as the form of everything we see in the visible universe. The very fact that we exercise faith in any given situation is itself the "evidence," or proof, that the outer form of the desired good is ready to manifest in our life.

The terms "blind faith" and "understanding faith":

Blind faith is a term that is often used to indi-

cate the use of the faculty of faith without complete understanding; it is an instinctive trust without conscious awareness of the principle of faith involved.

As a divine idea, or spiritual power, faith cannot be blind, but we can direct the power of this faculty in a blind manner without enlightenment as to its true nature and function.

So-called blind faith does reach beyond appearances with a feeling that there is something higher to be trusted, but what that higher "something" is has not been made clear to one in an unenlightened state of consciousness. One in this limited consciousness waits patiently for his good to come to him sometime, somewhere, but where, when, or why, he does not know, because he has not grasped the truth that there is a principle back of all life that can be understood and used.

Anything that is blind must grope its way because its action is not consciously based on a principle. We may, by so-called blind faith, stumble on the correct answer to a problem without knowing why or how. This may solve the problem at the time; however, because we do not know how, why, or from what source the solution came, we cannot duplicate the process in connection with another problem that arises. So we continue to feel a lack of assurance, of poise, of confidence, until we are able to go beyond blind faith; until we reach the state of consciousness that is acquired with the knowledge that understanding faith is based on unchanging law that always works for good when correctly applied.

"There is but one real faith; the avenue of expression determines the character and

power of faith" (Twelve Powers of Man, p. 29).

Understanding faith, on the other hand, is faith functioning according to principle, with a knowledge of God as the underlying plan of good. It is the perceiving of the principle of good, or God, at work in every situation of our life. It is the faith that understands the law of mind action ("like begets like"); such a faith understands the mental law of cause and effect because it has been experienced and proven by use.

Understanding faith does not depend on blind faith or an instinctive trust to accomplish results, for it knows that nothing is accidental. It knows that all good results are based on universal law, so both reasoning and feeling enter into its operation.

We have only an intellectual concept of faith if we merely know about it. However, when we actually know and experience faith by feeling as well as thinking, then we have added understanding to our faith. The faith faculty "perceives" that which is good, but may not know the why or wherefore. When our consciousness is awakened through prayer and comes to understand that God is the Creator and Source of all good, we have added understanding to our perception, and thus we build a consciousness of understanding faith.

Faith combined with understanding may seem to come in a flash at times. In reality understanding faith is the culmination of a step-by-step unfoldment through study, observation, experience, prayer, and use. All of these have had a part in the preparation of our mind so that intuition, or the voice of God, might quicken and illumine our faith faculty. Blind faith gives us a hope that good

results will come forth; but with understanding faith we are always sure of the results because we conform our thinking, feeling, speaking, acting, and reacting to the laws of God: the law of love, the law of order, the law of peace, the law of health, the law of prosperity.

We may have a certain degree of faith that God is our life, but until we have understanding faith we are not fully aware of the manner in which we are to lay hold of this life. Through understanding faith our affirmations for health become more effective, and our body manifests wholeness, vitality, and strength, for we know the Principle of perfect life back of our healing words.

Our relations with other persons become harmonious, loving, happy, and satisfying through understanding faith. The perceiving power of faith linked with understanding not only reveals the Fatherhood of God but also the brotherhood of man. We see others unfolding their divine capacities and growing in ways that meet their particular needs.

Faith coupled with understanding gives us assurance that God is the Source of every good that we desire. Our affirmations for supply have deep conviction for they are based on understanding faith that God-substance is the Source of our supply. We are confident of success for we are assured that God's power is at work in our every endeavor.

Faith and Belief

In modern usage the words belief and faith differ chiefly in that belief suggests little more than intellectual assent. Faith goes beyond intellectual assent in that it involves a positive agreement between the mind and the heart, the thinking and

the feeling action of man's mind. One may believe with the intellect and vet not have effective faith. This intellectual assent is what is referred to in the story of the child whom Jesus healed of the evil spirits. When asked if he believed that the healing could be accomplished, the father replied, "I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24); that is, "Make my belief into an active, working faith." "Faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself" (James 2:17). One may believe intellectually yet be prey to doubts and fears. Faith is believing to the point of action. One may accept intellectually the truth that God is good and that good is all there is: vet if he thinks and talks of evil as if it were a reality and acts as if that were so, he is not using faith to its fullest.

"Simple belief in or assent to the truth of a proposition never gave understanding to anyone. There must be mental action; organic changes in the mind are necessary before the new state of consciousness takes up its abode in you" (Talks on Truth, pp. 143, 144).

Faith and the Meaning of Desire

Our true desire, whether we are aware of it or not, is to know God consciously, because desire has at its root the inner urge or impulse of God, the good, seeking expression through man.

The God-urge or impulse within is interpreted by us according to our understanding as a desire for something specific. For one person it may be the longing for more material good. To another it may be the desire for release from the burden of material possessions. One person may long for more power, while another may have the desire to channel his power in another direction than what he is now using. A very artistic person may have a longing that causes him to desire things that will satisfy his love of beauty. Another person, just as appreciative of beauty, may desire the simplicity of life that sees beauty in nature, in simple things, rather than having many beautiful objects around him.

"Desire is the onward impulse of the everevolving soul" (*Prosperity*, p. 27).

We really desire to know God as the wisdom of our intellect; the love of our heart; the life of our body; the harmony, peace, happiness of our relationships; the success and prosperity of our affairs.

All good results in our life come from seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness, whether we have realized it or not. However, all the desires we have ever had, have now, or will have in the future are part of the one desire—to truly know God, not merely to know about Him. Our desires may seem to be just for healing of the body, for food and clothing, for a home, for companionship, for prosperity and success, yet back of all these desires will be the one yearning of our soul—to know God!

"If you desire a thing, you set in motion the machinery of the universe to gain possession of it, but you must be zealous in the pursuit in order to attain the object of your desire" (The Twelve Powers of Man, p. 131).

Being "zealous in the pursuit" is made possible through our periods of prayer that put us in direct contact with the ideas back of our desires. We use the processes of denial and affirmation to prepare our consciousness to lay hold of the God ideas, then we follow through in the outer with actions based on this new state of consciousness.

We cannot, in reality, ever desire that which belongs to another, for we have learned that the cause of our desire is an idea of God seeking expression through us.

What we want is that which is essentially our own. We may view the outer form of someone else's good, thinking it will satisfy our need, but in reality our real desire is the idea that the form represents and its authentic expression.

We need to make conscious contact individually with the divine idea back of our desire, learn its nature, appreciate its value. When it comes forth into outer form, it will then be a product of our own consciousness, just as that which belongs to another is the product or result of the working of his consciousness.

Envy springs from lack of understanding of ourself as a spiritual being and of our inheritance of ideas from God. When envy takes over, we think we have to have that which another possesses. With the dawning of understanding we see that we must demonstrate our own good, but only by working with the mental processes in our own mind or consciousness.

When we become conscious of some outer good that we feel will make for better living, we must begin to work within our own consciousness and not try to possess what belongs to another. Those who do reach out for that which has not come to them in legitimate ways are operating contrary to the laws of our society, as well as divine laws. Countries and governments fall into the same error ways as individuals by thinking they can take from

others by force something that represents good to them, such as more land, more food, greater opportunities for expansion. Back of this desire for something that belongs to others is fear that there is not enough good to fulfill the needs of their people. Men and nations must come to see that back of their desires is the love of God seeking to express good. Only then will they turn in understanding faith and make conscious contact with the Presence of God within themselves. The Presence of God is the source of the ideas that will take form or come into manifestation as the desired good for men and nations. With this awakening there will be a greater sharing of ideas. Then people will come to recognize the brotherhood of man which is made possible through the Fatherhood of God. In other words, a greater spirit of cooperation will be expressed inevitably, not only among individuals but among leaders of the nations of the earth.

"Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven" (The Lord's Prayer).

How Desires Are Fulfilled

Faith plays a vital part in fulfilling our desires, because it sees all things as already fulfilled.

Faith perceives the good, directs us toward it, and is the power that keeps us on the path toward a definite goal. As the "perceiving power," faith calls forth other needed faculties or ideas required for any desired accomplishment.

"Faith working in spiritual substance accomplishes all things. This is the faith that cooperates with creative law. When faith is exercised

deep in spiritual consciousness...it brings results that are seemingly miraculous" (The Revealing Word, p. 68).

We can see that faith furnishes the motive power to go forward. It is the power that makes accomplishment possible, for it exists in some degree in every act of life. Without the inner assurance of faith that a thing is possible of accomplishment, it would never be started, let alone completed.

Faith keeps ambition active; it is the incentive that brings the joy of completion.

"Even so, faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself" (James 2:17).

We live by faith. Manifestations in our life are produced by our manner of thought, according to whether we center our faith in material things, in other persons, in external means, or in the life, love, intelligence, and substance of God.

Understanding faith increases our power to demonstrate good. The true knowing of any principle and an understanding of the laws that govern its operation inevitably open the way for demonstration.

The good that we desire is ours only when we lay hold of it by faith. "All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine" (John 16:15) is always true, but it must be brought into expression and manifestation through faith. If we are willing to accept Jesus' teaching on faith, we can get results even though we have not yet proved or gone through all the steps that lead to knowledge.

If a child will accept the statement that three times three are nine, he can go ahead and work arithmetical problems to a correct conclusion without its being necessary for him each time to prove that this is so. An untrained person can press the button connected with the electric current and get just as much light or power by so doing as can the skilled electrician. He does not know all the steps that lead up to the getting of light or power, but he can investigate that later; in the meantime he has the light or the power to use.

Faith measures our capacity to receive—"According to your faith be it done unto you" (Matt. 9:29)—and can be likened to a measuring cup that we hold out to be filled. Our demonstration of good can be no greater than the faith that we are presently exercising. As we build a conscious awareness of God and realize our ability, as His sons, to bring forth His good, we establish an understanding faith that increases our power to demonstrate good in our mind, body, and affairs.

Use is the law of increase. The more we learn how the law of mind action works, the greater is our ability to use this law according to Principle (God). In order to get right results, it is just as necessary to learn the right use of the laws of God (Principle) as it is to know and use the principles of music or mathematics.

As we recognize, accept, and begin to use the God-qualities, the spiritual powers, the divine ideas that are ours, our consciousness of faith grows. Our praise, our interest, and our attention, given to them, attract the substance that causes them to become active in us, because we are using the power that we have to bring them forth in abundant manifestation and measure.

As an example, we can think of what an athlete has to do to his muscles, in order for him to remain a fine, strong, capable athlete. In the same way, we have to use our faculty of faith positively and constructively, because it is in the constant use that our consciousness of faith grows and grows and grows.

All through the Bible we find records of the great things done by the men of God, and always we find that they used what they had at hand and thanked God for it, and it was increased. The Bible is full of God's promises, but there is always something for man to do in order to receive the blessings mentioned in the promises. God must work through man, man must develop the consciousness through which this work can be done—and he does this with his thinking and feeling, through prayer, affirmation and denial, meditation, and right living. Keeping his mind stayed on God, man uses the God-powers which are his divine heritage.

One cannot gain a great consciousness of faith unless he begins to use the small faith that he seems to be expressing at the beginning of his awakening. We know that a grain of mustard seed is very small, but it is also very prolific, and it can bring forth abundantly when planted under right conditions in rich soil, because it has within it all 'the elements, the God-ideas, it needs for its fulfillment.

The Promises of God

The "promises of God" are declarations of eternal, unchanging laws, or truths. So far as we are concerned, the "promises of God" relating to us as His children are more in the nature of a contract, covenant, or agreement between us and God. Our part in the contract or agreement is to perceive through faith the reality of these "promises." Then

we claim the good that is ours through the use of affirmative prayer. We then follow our prayer with obedience to divine laws. God's part is to honor our request with His supply of good in the form of the divine ideas needed to manifest in our life.

"Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which Jehovah your God spake concerning you" (Josh. 23:14).

Every promise in the Bible points to a good result that will follow certain action on our part. However, many of the Bible promises, such as the following, have been interpreted as implying future time for fulfillment:

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matt. 7:7).

"Shall" as used here does not mean in the future, but rather indicates a certainty of the action of divine law. Our part is to do the asking, seeking, knocking, by use of affirmations, and by abiding in the consciousness of God as the Source of all good. Then automatically the promises will be fulfilled, for God's laws always work.

Faith and Asking

Asking plays a very important part in bringing about spiritual demonstration. Asking is an act of faith in God. It shows not only that we have a vision of the good desired, but it also puts in motion the power that will bring the manifestation of that good into our lives. Asking is desire in action.

The dictionary gives some of the root meanings of the word ask as: "to demand; to seek; to request; to claim." Asking is not a begging or a plead-

ing with God to give us something. It is using our freedom of choice with understanding faith through affirmation or affirmative prayer, in order to claim the blessings of God so abundantly prepared for us.

"Prayer is not supplication or begging but a simple asking for that which we know is waiting for us at the hands of our Father and an affirmation of its existence" (Jesus Christ Heals, p. 67).

As these lessons have emphasized, the ideas of Divine Mind are governed by the law of mind action, and our asking (affirmation) starts the law into action in us. The law is always active but we must take the initiative, that is, the action must start in and through us. If we want light from the electric lighting system, we press the button; if we want water from the reservoir, we turn on the faucet. So with the good of God: it is always available, awaiting our call (demand), when we ask for it and claim it.

While we are heirs to the ideas, or powers, of God, we need to learn their value and learn to use them in an understanding way. The supply is already provided, but we have to raise our consciousness to the truth that God's good is for us as His sons.

"Jesus advised asking for what we want and being persistent in our demands. People ignorant of the relation in which man stands to God wonder why we should ask and even importune a Father who has provided all things for us. This is explained when we perceive that God is a great mind reservoir that has to be tapped by man's mind and poured into visibility through man's thought or word. If the mind of man is clogged with doubt, lethargy, or fear, he must open the way by persistent knocking and asking" (Jesus Christ Heals, p. 68).

By asking we may receive as much as we are capable of consciously accepting in proportion to the development of our faith faculty, which has been called the "measuring cup."

Having Faith in God, Self, and Others.

To have faith in God is to have unshakable faith in the perfect outcome of every situation in life, faith in the ultimate good regardless of appearances. It is to have the faith of God, to know the loving Father by bringing His attributes into manifestation in the outer. If we would exercise our unlimited powers, we must have unwavering faith in the Presence and Power within us until the very substance of Spirit apears in consciousness as a living reality.

Man should have faith in himself because he is the offspring of God, and he is learning that he is the living expression of God, the Father. The very Spirit of God expresses through man as life, substance, and intelligence and all the other God qualities, attributes, powers, faculties, or ideas.

Without faith in himself man could never have accomplished the wonderful things that have already been brought into manifestation. Back of everything that has been done by man has been the assurance, the firm conviction, that he had the power and ability to do it. Man would not produce along any line of endeavor unless he had faith in himself.

The basis for man's faith in himself is his divine origin. Man is made in the image and after the likeness of God. God has placed His Spirit within man and given him dominion and the power and ability to express that dominion, in order that he might consciously be God's highest expression in all creation.

To have faith in others is to have faith in the spiritual self of each one. Every person at some time feels the desire to help others. One may do things for another in an outer, personal way, but the real and lasting help comes through helping another to find the center of his being. This help cannot be given until one has a living faith in the Christ within everyone.

"Faith acquaints you with the power that is hidden from the reasoning mind. It reveals itself to you as a feeling of oneness with the eternal good. It gives you the courage to become the all-conquering man. It arouses the spiritual Self within you" (Dare to Believe! pp. 55, 56).

Lesson II

Denials

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.—Matt. 16:24.

1. All systems for spiritualizing the mind include denial. Every religion in all the ages had some sort of denial as one of its foundations. We all know how the Puritans believed that the more rigidly they denied themselves comfort the better they pleased God. So far has this idea taken possession of the human mind during some ages that devout souls have even tortured their bodies in various ways, believing that they were thus making themselves more spiritual, or at least were in some way placating an angry God. Even today many interpret the above-quoted saying of Jesus as meaning: If any man wants to please God he must give up about all the enjoyment and comfort he has, all things he likes and wants, and must take up the heavy cross of constantly doing the things that are repugnant to him in his daily life. This is why many young people say, "When I am old I will be a Christian, but not now, for I want to enjoy life awhile first."

- 2. There could, I am sure, be nothing farther from the meaning of the Nazarene than the foregoing interpretation. In our ignorance of the nature of God, our Father, and of our relation to Him, we have believed that all our enjoyment came from external sources, usually from gaining possession of something we did not have. The poor see enjoyment only in possessing abundance of money. The rich, who are satiated with life's so-called pleasures until their lives have become like a person with an overloaded stomach, compelled to sit constantly at a well-spread table, are often the most bitter in the complaint that life holds no happiness for them. The sick one believes that, were he well, he would be perfectly happy. The healthy but hard-working person feels the need of some days of rest and recreation, that the monotony of his life may be broken.
- 3. So ever the mind has been turned to some external change of condition or circumstance in pursuit of satisfaction and enjoyment. In after years, when men have tried all, getting first this thing and then that, which they thought would yield them happiness, and have been grievously disappointed, in a kind of desperation they turn to God and try to find some sort of comfort in believing that sometime, somewhere, they will get what they want and be happy. Thenceforth their lives are patient and submissive, but they are destitute of any real joy.
 - 4. This same Nazarene, to whom we always re-

turn because to us He is the best-known teacher and demonstrator of Truth, spent nearly three years teaching the people-the common everyday people like you and me, who wanted, just as we do, food and rent and clothing, money, friends, and love-to love their enemies and to do good to those who persecuted them, to resist not evil in any way, but to give double to anyone who tried to get what belonged to them; to cease from all anxiety regarding the things they needed because "your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things" (Matt. 6:32). And then in talking 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 He continued, "Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you" (John 15:16). "Ask, and ve shall receive, that your joy may be full ... I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father himself loveth you" (John 15:24-26). We have further learned that God is the total of all the good in the universe and that there is in the mind which is God a perpetual desire to pour more of Himself—the substance of all good things-through us into visibility, or into our lives.

- 5. Surely all these things do not make it look as though, when Jesus said that the way to be like Him and to possess a like power was to deny oneself, He meant that we are to go without the enjoyable comforts of life or in any way deprive or torture ourselves.
- 6. In these lessons we have seen that, besides the real innermost self of each of us—the self that is the divine self because it is an expression or pressing out of God into visibility and is always one

with the Father—there is a human self, a carnal mind, which reports lies from the external world and is not to be relied upon fully; this is the self of which Jesus spoke when He said, "let him deny himself." This intellectual man, carnal mind, or whatever you choose to call him, is envious and jealous and fretful and sick because he is selfish. The human self seeks its own gratification at the expense, if need be, of someone else.

- 7. Your real self is never sick, never afraid, never selfish. It is the part of you that "seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil" (I Cor. 13:5). It is always seeking to give to others, while the human self is always seeking its own. Heretofore we have lived more in the human region. We have believed all that the carnal mind has told us, and the consequence is that we have been overwhelmed with all kinds of privation and suffering.
- 8. Some people who, during the last few years, have been making a special study of the mind find it a fact that certain wrong or false beliefs held by us are really the cause of all sorts of trouble—physical, moral, and financial. They have learned that wrong (or, as they call them, error) beliefs arise only in the human mind; they have learned and actually proved that we can, by a persistent effort of the will, change our beliefs, and by this means alone entirely change our troublesome circumstances and bodily conditions.
- 9. One of the methods that they have found will work every time in getting rid of troublesome conditions (which are all the result of erroneous thinking and feeling) is to deny them in toto: First, to deny that any such things have, or could have,

power to make us unhappy; second, to deny that these things do in reality exist at all.

- 10. The word deny has two definitions, according to Webster. To deny, in one sense, is to withhold from, as to deny bread to the hungry. To deny, in another sense (and we believe it was in this latter way that Jesus used it), is to declare to be not true, to repudiate as utterly false. To deny oneself, then, is not to withhold comfort or happiness from the external man, much less to inflict torture upon him, but it is to deny the claims of error consciousness, to declare these claims to be untrue.
- 11. If you have done any piece of work incorrectly, the very first step toward getting it right is to undo the wrong, and begin again from that point. We have believed wrong about God and about ourselves. 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 sickness and poverty and other troubles are evil things put here by this same God to torture us in some way into serving Him and loving Him. We have believed that we have pleased God best when we became so absolutely subdued by our troubles as to be patiently submissive to them all, not even trying to rise out of them or to overcome them. All this is false, entirely false! And the first step toward freeing ourselves from our troubles is to get rid of our erroneous beliefs about God and about ourselves.
- 12. "But," objects one, "if a thing is not true and I have believed a lie about it, I do not see just how my believing wrong about it could affect my bodily health or my circumstances."
 - 13. A child can be so afraid of an imaginary

bugaboo under the bed as to have convulsions. Should you, today, receive a telegraphic message that your husband, wife, or child, who is absent from you, had been suddenly killed, your suffering, mental and physical, and perhaps extending even to your external and financial affairs, would be just as great as though the report really were true; and yet it might be entirely false. Exactly so have these messages of bugaboos behind the doors, bugaboos of divine wrath and of our own weakness, come to us through the senses until we are overcome by our fears of them.

14. Now, let us arouse ourselves. Denial is the first practical step toward wiping out of our minds the mistaken beliefs of a lifetime—the beliefs that have made such sad havoc in our lives. By denial we mean declaring not to be true a thing that seems true. Negative appearances are directly opposed to the teachings of Truth. Jesus said, "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous [right] judgment" (John 7:24).

15. Suppose you had always been taught that the sun really moved or revolved around the earth, and someone should now try to persuade you that the opposite is the truth. You would see at once that such might be the case, and yet as often as you saw the sun rise, the old impression, made on your mind by the wrong belief of years, would come up and seem almost too real to be disputed. The only way by which you could cleanse your mind of the impression and make the untrue seem unreal, would be by repeatedly denying the old beliefs, saying over and over to yourself as often as the subject came up in your mind: "This is not true. The sun does not move; it stands still, and the

earth moves." Eventually the sun would only seem to move.

- 16. The appearances are that our bodies and our circumstances control our thoughts, but the opposite is true. Our thoughts control our bodies and our circumstances.
- 17. If you repeatedly deny a false or unhappy condition, it loses its power to make you unhappy.
- 18. What everyone desires is to have only the good manifested in his life and surroundings-to have his life full of love; to have perfect health; to know all things; to have great power and much joy; and this is just exactly what God wants us to have. All love is God in manifestation, as we have learned in a previous lesson. All wisdom is God. All life and health are God. All joy (because all good) and all power are God. All good of whatever kind is God come forth into visibility through people or some other visible form. When we crave more of any good thing, we are in reality craving more of God to come forth into our lives so that we can realize it by the senses. Having more of God does not take out of our lives the good things—it only puts more of them in. In the mind that is God there is always the desire to give more, for the divine plan is forever to get more good into visibility.
- 19. Intellectually we may see the fact of our own God-being, which never changes. What we need is to realize our oneness with the Father at all times. In order to realize it we deny in ourselves and others the appearances that seem contrary to this—deny them as realities; we declare that they are not true.
- 20. There are four common error thoughts to which nearly everyone grants great power. Persons

who have grown out of sickness and trouble through prayer have found it good to deny these thoughts, in order to cleanse the mind of the direful effects of believing them. They can be denied like this.

- 21. First: There is no evil.
- 22. There is but 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, or good, is omnipresent, so the apparent absence of good (evil) is unreal. It is only an appearance of evil, just as the moving sun was an appearance. You need not wait to discuss this matter of evil or to understand fully all about why you deny it, but begin to practice the denials in an unprejudiced way, and see how marvelously they will, after a while, deliver you from some of the so-called evils of your daily life.
- 23. Second: There is no absence of life, substance, or intelligence anywhere.
- 24. We have seen that the real is the 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 will soon break your bondage to matter and to material conditions. You will know that you are free.
- 25. Third: Pain, sickness, poverty, old age, and death cannot master me, for they are not real.
- 26. Fourth: There is nothing in all the universe for me to fear, for greater is He that is within me than he that is in the world.
- 27. God says, "I will contend with him that contendeth with thee" (Isa. 49:25). He says it to

every living child of His, and every person is His child.

- 28. Repeat these four denials silently several times a day, not with a strained anxiety to get something out of them, but trying calmly to realize the meaning of the words spoken:
 - 29. There is no evil.
- 30. There is no absence of life, substance, or intelligence anywhere.
- 31. Pain, sickness, poverty, old age, and death cannot master me, for they are not real.
- 32. There is nothing in all the universe for me to fear, for greater is He that is within me than he that is in the world.
- 33. Almost hourly little vexations and fears come up in your life. Meet each one with a denial. Calmly and coolly say within yourself, "That's nothing at all. It cannot harm or disturb me or make me unhappy." Do not fight it vigorously, but let your denial be the denial of any thought of its superiority over you, as you would deny the power of ants on their little hill to disturb you. If you are angry, stand still, and silently deny it. Say that you are not angry; that you are love made manifest, and cannot be angry and the anger will leave you.
- 34. If someone shows you ill will, silently deny his power to hurt you or to make you unhappy. Should you find yourself feeling jealous or envious toward anyone, instantly turn the heel of denial on the Hydra-headed monsters. Declare that you are not jealous or envious; that you are an expression of perfect love (an expression which is God pressed out into visibility) and cannot feel negation. There is really no reason for jealousy or envy, for all persons are one and the same Spirit. "And there

are diversities of operations [or manifestations], but it is the same God which worketh all in all" (I Cor. 12:6), says Paul. How can you be envious of a part of yourself that seems to you more comely?

35. Shall the foot be envious of the hand, or the ear of the eye? Are not the seemingly feeble members of the body just as important to the perfection of the whole as the others? Do you seem to be less, or to have less, than some others? Remember that all envy and all jealousy are in the error consciousness and that in reality you, however insignificant, are an absolute necessity to God in order to make the perfect whole.

36. If you find yourself dreading to meet anyone, or afraid to step out and do what you want or ought to do, immediately begin to say, "It is not true; I am not afraid; I am perfect love, and can know no fear. No one, nothing in all the universe, can hurt me." You will find after a little that all the fear has disappeared, all trepidation has gone.

37. Denial brings freedom from bondage, and happiness comes when we can effectually deny the power of anything to touch or to trouble us.

38. Have you been living in negation for years, denying your ability to succeed, denying your health, denying your Godhood, denying your power to accomplish anything, by feeling yourself a child of the Devil or of weakness? If so, this constant negation has paralyzed you and weakened your power.

39. When, in the next lesson, you learn something about affirmations, the opposite of denials, you will know how to lift yourself out of the realm of failure into that of success.

40. All your happiness, all your health and

power, come from God. They flow in an unbroken stream from the fountainhead into the very center of your being and radiate from center to circumference. When you acknowledge this constantly and deny that outside things can hinder your happiness or health or power, it helps you to realize health and power and happiness.

- 41. No person or thing in the universe, no chain of circumstances, can by any possibility interpose itself between you and all joy—all good. You may think that something stands between you and your heart's desire, and so live with that desire unfulfilled; but it is not true. This "think" is the bugaboo under the bed that has no reality. Deny it, deny it, and you will find yourself free, and you will realize that this seeming was all false. Then you will see the good flowing into you, and you will see clearly that nothing can stand between you and your own.
- 42. Denials may be spoken silently or audibly, but not in a manner to call forth antagonism and discussion.
- 43. To some, all this sort of mechanical working will seem a strange way of entering into a more spiritual life. There are those who easily and naturally glide out of the old material life into a deeper spiritual one without any external help; but there are thousands of others who are seeking primarily the loaves and fishes of bodily health and financial success, but who really are seeking a higher way of life, who must needs take the very first steps. For such, the practicing of these mechanical steps in a wholehearted way, without prejudice, is doing the very best thing possible toward attaining purity of heart and life, toward

growth in divine knowledge and fullness of joy in all things undertaken.

COMMENTARY ON "DENIALS"

Denial as a Process of Mind

Denial is recognized in Unity as a process of thinking and feeling. All of us say "no" to certain things in life as well as "yes" to certain things in life. Denial is, therefore, a built-in process of the mind which is used by all of us in making decisions and choosing the kind of life we will live.

But there is a *conscious* use of this process which is one of the basic methods in spiritual growth. It is more than an emotional reaction to what we don't want in our life. The spiritual use of denial involves the clear understanding that the illness we suffer, or the fear we have, or the unhappiness we are experiencing has no foundation in Reality, or in God's plan. Therefore, these conditions have no power in and of themselves. Denial is the process of releasing ourselves from a belief in the power or reality of anything other than God, the Good.

Denial, in the above sense, becomes a conscious act of knowing. We know that the only reality and the only power is God, therefore we know and assert either audibly or silently that there is no power in sin, sickness, fear, or limitation. This does not mean, of course, that we do not recognize these things as events of our mind and body when we are experiencing them. But we deny our *belief* in their having power or reality in God. Since it is

our belief that determines our experiences, such a process keeps our life from being determined by limited beliefs and makes way for a positive affirmation of True power.

"We do this releasing by . . . letting go of the old or that which has done its part and is no longer useful" (*Prosperity*, p. 176).

Throughout mankind's spiritual development there has arisen the teaching of denial, but often this has been interpreted as meaning that we should forgo the comforts and good things of life. This could not have been according to the understanding of Jesus. He told His followers not to be anxious about how to obtain food and clothing and added,

"Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:32, 33, R.S.V.).

A study of spiritual values reveals that true denial is not primarily concerned with things but with the negative beliefs that bring about conditions that are not in conformity with God's plan of good. Denials make it possible for us to forgive, let go, release all negative thoughts or beliefs.

In the study of denial it is vital for us to remember that a denial statement cannot stand by itself; it must be followed by an affirmation. "Affirmations" will be dealt with in the next lesson. In the meantime we are seeking to understand the process that cleanses the mind of wrong thoughts and prepares it to use affirmations effectively.

Our attention can be focused on only one thing at a time. If we concentrate on our problems (inharmonious conditions), we only intensify them in our feeling nature and increase their undesirable effects in our body and in our world. If, on the other hand, we deny the beliefs that caused the problems, we are then ready to be filled with divine ideas that will bring good into all phases of our life.

Both denial and affirmation, which actually form one process related to the cleansing and rebuilding of consciousness, may be in the form of audible statements or silent assertions. We see Jesus' use of these processes in these three verses of Scripture: "Let your communication be, Yea, yea; nay, nay" (Matt. 5:37); "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Matt. 16:23); "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

In the Scriptures denial is represented by the act of "fasting"—the emptying out of depleted or inadequate states of mind (and abstaining from their return) in preparation for the laying hold in consciousness of the ideals that make up our divine inheritance. John the Baptist advocated "water baptism" as symbolic of the washing away of sins. Even Jesus Christ submitted to this baptism of John in order that He might observe the "letter" of the law, having already observed the "spirit" of God's law through His own realization of and consecration to His mission.

Only what God created can have reality. There is no reality in fear, jealousy, the sense of bondage, or any negative emotion, because God did not create them. These negative emotions are the result of false or ignorant beliefs we have held in our mind about God, ourself, others, and the world about us.

If there is, as one of the denial statements of this lesson tells us, "no absence of life, substance, or intelligence anywhere," then we see the truth of the basic statement used in Unity:

"There is only one Presence and one Power in the universe, God, the good omnipotent."

There can be reality only to that which God created. Fear, jealousy, the sense of bondage, or any negative emotion cannot have reality, for they have no principle or divine idea back of them to sustain them. Understanding this truth is the key to denial.

Denial and Judgment

We cannot judge truly if we judge only according to the outer appearance because the appearance is limited, is not the real, and does not always outpicture the perfection of the divine idea that is seeking expression.

God has given to each of us a marvelous discerning faculty that we call "judgment." When viewing things or circumstances in the outer world, we use the judgment faculty based either on the realization of Truth or on appearances that cannot be relied on entirely, whether they seem pleasant or unpleasant.

For example, a person might consider a certain place of employment only by the outer appearance. Working conditions there might appear to be pleasant; but the faculty of judgment looks deeper and discerns that the methods used in operating the business are not ethical, not the kind one would care to be associated with. On the other hand, another place of business might not seem as pleasant, judged from appearances, but judgment

based on Truth sees integrity, harmony, and the possibility of growth and unfoldment into a successful industry.

When the judgment faculty is guided by Spirit within, we always judge correctly. Many who crossed the continent of America in pioneer days were able to look beyond the outer appearances of hardship to the dream of a country of freedom, of plenty, of opportunity for all, because their judgment was based on inner spiritual values.

Appearances are reported to our mind through our senses. The senses are divinely created avenues of expression, but not the source of wisdom, and by their unenlightened use we often misinterpret the truth behind appearances. Many times this misinterpretation causes us to be deceived. For example, we hear a voice that our ears tell us comes from a dummy figure, but it is a ventriloquist throwing his voice; we thrust a straight stick into a pail of clear water and our eyes tell us that the stick is bent, but this is not true. When viewing the landscape from a swiftly moving train or car, the landscape itself seems to be moving by: in the distance the two rails of a railroad track seem to converge. The earth appears to be flat; the sun appears to move around the earth; but the opposite of all this is true. Mirages are another example of how the eye can give reports that deceive us. We also misinterpret the reports of the other three senses of taste, smell, and touch. In the same way, ill-health, poverty, and feelings of inadequacy are appearances that can deceive us, and be misinterpreted by us.

We should measure all things by the principle of Truth rather than by appearances, if we would use righteous judgment. As we rely on spiritual realities, the limited reports of the senses do not have dominion over us. We bless these avenues of expression but seek to keep our judgment based on spiritual truths. "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24), said Jesus.

Specific Denials Are Not Always Necessary

Specific denials are not always necessary, because at times man may not be aware of the line of thinking that has brought him to the error state of mind and the undesirable manifestation that he is faced with at that particular moment. In such cases, the prayer of the Psalmist, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults" (Psalms 19:12, A.V.), serves as an effective, sweeping denial.

John the Baptist came before Jesus Christ and prepared the way for His coming. Since the work of John is symbolic of denial, we can see that denials are frequently necessary to prepare the way for the infilling of the good we are seeking. The ministry of Jesus represents affirmation or appropriation of the God-ideas that we must use in order to unfold spiritually and grow "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52), even as the child Jesus did.

Even to turn one's thought away from an erroneous belief or condition constitutes a denial (without a specific word of denial being spoken), for denial, like affirmation, is primarily an attitude of mind.

We do not plant a new garden over the rubbish of last year's growth, neither do we keep our outgrown garments in a closet and continue to add new clothing. Often the four denials learned in Lessons in Truth are all that is necessary to cleanse the mind of erroneous or limited beliefs, in preparation for the infilling of new ideas. However, in cases where specific denials seem necessary in order to handle such beliefs and the resultant appearances of illness, poverty, or inharmony of any kind, we should by all means use specific denials, spoken either silently or audibly according to the need or circumstance.

"If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, meet for the master's use, prepared unto every good work" (II Tim. 2:21 A.S.V.).

Jesus and Denial

"If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. 16:24 A.S.V.).

When Jesus said these words He was speaking from His Christ or I AM Self. He meant that if anyone desires to come into the understanding, freedom, and abundance of life which the Christ consciousness affords, he must drop from consciousness ("deny himself") all error beliefs and accept the truth of himself as the beloved son of God, with a divine inheritance.

Because deny also means, according to Webster's dictionary, "to disclaim connection with [something]," we realize that the denial to which Jesus is referring is our disclaiming connection with anything less than God's plan of perfection for us in mind, body, and affairs. We fulfill Jesus' command to "follow me" when we raise our consciousness to that of the Christ standard; when we are willing, if

need be, to pray as Jesus did "all night in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12 A.S.V.).

To "follow me" is to live the laws of God in every phase of our experience. We seek to know God as the source of life, so that health, vitality, strength, wholeness may manifest in our body. As we recognize God as the source of abundance, we are able to manifest prosperity in our affairs according to our special needs. Jesus saw God, the Father of us all, as the source to which every man must turn for fulfillment in his life.

By following Jesus' injunction, we are not denying good; we are refusing or erasing error concepts so that we are able to open our life to a greater inflow of God's good. So long as we are bound by misconceptions of ourself, other people, God's world, we cannot follow Jesus on the path of overcoming and freedom. We can discover the method that is best for us individually to follow only as we turn in prayer to our own Christ presence—God in us. The Christ within is the "me" to which Jesus refers.

Denial and Our False Beliefs About God, Ourself, and Others.

When we become dissatisfied with conditions in our life and feel convinced that there is a solution (a right answer) to our problem, our desire stimulates us to seek God; He reveals to us that happiness, success, health, peace, and so forth are ours for the claiming. To correct the wrong answer to a mathematical problem, we must first know that the figures are incorrect, for we realize that the principle of mathematics was not the cause of our wrong answer. We learn and apply the rules govern-

ing that particular mathematical problem, and thus bring about the right answer. We then realize that we need to "erase our wrong figures" in the form of negative beliefs about God, about ourself, and about others, in order to bring about "the right answers" in our life. In this illumined state of mind we no longer blame God, the Principle of good, as the cause of our troubles, anymore than we blame the principle of mathematics as the cause of the wrong answer to a problem.

With the new vision of ourself in relation to God, we are able to deny from consciousness all thoughts, feelings, beliefs of fear, greed, envy, and selfishness, knowing that these are no part of our true nature (our real Self) as a son of God. With this revelation of ourself, we can in turn see the Truth that our fellow man is also a son of God; so we learn to deny from our consciousness all the limiting thoughts we might have had of others.

In summary, we know the Truth about God, then ourself, then others.

Lesson III

Affirmations

Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he will hear thee; And thou shalt pay thy vows, Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee; And light shall shine upon thy ways.—Job 22:27,28.

- 1. Most persons, when they first consciously set out to gain a fuller, higher knowledge of spiritual things, do so because of dissatisfaction—or perhaps unsatisfaction would be the better word—with their present conditions of life. Inherent in the human mind is the thought that somewhere, somehow, it ought to be able to bring to itself that which it desires and which would satisfy. This thought is but the foreshadowing of that which really is.
 - Our wishes, it is said, do measure just
 Our capabilities, Who with his might
 Aspires unto the mountain's upper height,
 Holds in that aspiration a great trust

To be fulfilled, a warrant that he must Not disregard, a strength to reach the height To which his hopes have taken flight.

-Author Unknown.

- 3. The hunger that we feel is but the prompting of the Divine within us, which longs with an infinite longing to fill us. It is but one side of the law of demand and supply, the other side of which is unchangeably, unfailingly, the promise: "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24). The supply is always equal to the demand, but there must first be a demand before supply is of use.
- 4. There is, attainable by us, a place where we can see that our doing can cease, because we realize that Spirit is the fulfillment of all our desires. We simply get still and know that all things whatsoever we desire are ours already; and this knowing it, or recognizing it, has power to bring the invisible God (or good)—the innermost substance of all things—forth into just the visible form of good that we want.
- 5. But in order to attain this place of power, we must take the preliminary steps, faithfully, earnestly, trustingly, though these steps at first glance seem to us as useless and as empty as do the ceremonial forms and religious observance of the ritualistic churchman.
- 6. To affirm anything is to assert positively that it is so, even in the face of all contrary evidence. We may not be able to see how, by our simply affirming a thing to be true, a thing that to all human reasoning or sight does not seem to be true at all, we can bring this thing to pass; but we can

compel ourselves to cease all futile quibbling and go to work to prove the rule, each one in his own life.

7. The beautiful Presence all about us and within us is the substance of every good that we can possibly desire—aye, infinitely more than we are capable of desiring; for "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Cor. 2:9 A.V.).

8. In some way, which it is not easy to put into words—for spiritual laws cannot always be compassed in words, and yet they are none the less infallible, immutable laws that work with precision and certainty—there is power in our word of faith to bring all good things right into our everyday life.

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

10. They who have carefully studied spiritual laws find that, besides denying the reality and power of apparent evil, which denying frees them from it, they also can bring any desired good into their lives by persistently affirming it is there already. In the first instructions given to students, the denials and affirmations take a large place. Later on, their own personal experiences and inward guidance lead them to an understanding of divine law that makes it easy for them to follow simple rules which at first seemed difficult.

11. The saying over and over of any denial or

affirmation is a necessary training of a mind that has lived so long in error and false belief that it needs this constant repetition of Truth to unclothe it and to clothe it anew.

- 12. As it is with the denials, so with the affirmations. There are four or five sweeping affirmations of Truth that cover a multitude of lesser ones, and which do marvelous work in bringing good to ourselves and to others.
- 13. First: God is life, love, intelligence, substance, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence.
- 14. These ideas you learned in the second lesson—"Statement of Being." As you repeat the affirmation, please remember that every particle of life, love, intelligence, power, or of real substance in the universe, is simply a certain degree, or, so to speak, a quantity of God made manifest or visible through a form. Try to think what it means when you say that God is omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient.
- 15. God is omnipresence (everywhere present), and God is good. Then why fear evil? He is omnipotence (all-powerful). Then what other power can prevail?
- 16. Since God is omnipotence and omnipresence, put aside forever your traditional teaching of an adverse power, evil (Devil), that may at any moment thwart the plans of God and bring you harm.
- 17. Do not disturb yourself about the appearance of evil all about you; but in the very presence of what seems evil stand true and unwavering in affirming that God, the good, is omnipresent. By so doing, you will see the seeming evil melt away as the darkness before the light or as the dew before

the morning sun, and good come to take its place.

18. Second: I am a child or manifestation of God, and every moment His life, love, wisdom, power flow into and through me. I am one with God, and am governed by His law.

19. Remember while repeating this affirmation that nothing—no circumstance, no person or set of persons—can by any possibility interpose between you and the Source of your life, wisdom, or power. It is all "hid with Christ [the innermost Christ or Spirit of your being] in God" (Col. 3:3). Nothing but your own ignorance of how to receive, or your willfulness, can hinder your having unlimited supply.

20. No matter how sick or weak or inefficient you seem to be, take your eyes and thoughts right off the seeming, and turn them within to the central fountain there, and say calmly, quietly, but with steadfast assurance: "This appearance of weakness is false; God, manifest as life, wisdom, and power, is now flowing into my entire being and out through me to the external." You will soon see a marvelous change wrought in yourself by the realization that this spoken word will bring to you.

21. You do not change God's attitude toward you one iota by either importuning or affirming. You only change your attitude toward Him. By thus affirming, you put yourself in harmony with divine law, which is always working toward your good and never toward your harm or punishment.

22. 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 sick or hurt or afraid. I manifest my real self through this

body now.

- 23. Fourth: God works in me to will and to do whatsoever He wishes me to do, and He cannot fail.
- 24. Our affirming His mind working both to will and to do, makes us will only the good; and He, the very Father in us, does the works, hence there can be no failure. Whatsoever we fully commit to the Father to do, and affirm is done, we shall see accomplished. These, then, are the four comprehensive affirmations.
- 25. First: God is life, love, intelligence, substance, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence.
- 26. Second: I am a child or manifestation of God, and every moment His life, love, wisdom, power flow into and through me. I am one with God, and am governed by His law.
- 27. 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 sick or hurt or afraid. I manifest my real self through this body now.
- 28. Fourth: God works with me to will and to do whatsoever He wishes me to do, and He cannot fail.
- 29. Commit these affirmations to memory, so that you can repeat them in the silence of your own mind in any place and at any time. Strangely will they act to deliver you out of the greatest external distresses, places where no human help avails. It is as though the moment you assert emphatically your oneness with God the Father, there is instantly set into motion all the power of omnipotent love to rush to your rescue. And when it has undertaken to work for you, you can cease

from external ways and means, and boldly claim: "It is done; I have the desires of my heart."

"Thou openest thy hand,

And satisfiest the desire of every living thing" (Psalms 145:16).

- 30. In reality God is forever in process of movement within us, that He may manifest Himself (All-Good) more fully through us. Our affirming, backed by faith, is the link that connects our conscious human need with His power and supply.
- 31. They who have claimed their birthright by thus calmly affirming their oneness with God know how free they can be from human planning and effort, after they have called into operation this marvelous power of affirmation. This power has healed the sick, brought joy in place of mourning, literally opened prison doors and bidden the prisoner go free, without the claimants calling for human assistance.
- 32. Understand, it is not necessarily the using of just this form of words that has availed in each individual case. It is the denying of apparent evil, and, in spite of all contrary evidence, the affirming of good to be all there is, affirming oneness with God's omnipotent power to accomplish, even when there were no visible signs of His being present, that has wrought the deliverance. In one case within my knowledge, just simply claiming, "God is your defense and deliverance," for a man who had for five years been an exile from home and country (through a series of deceptions and machinations that for depth and subtlety were unparalleled) opened all the doors wide and restored the man to his family within a month, without any further human effort on the part of himself or his

friends, and this after five years of the most strenuous human efforts of lawyers had failed utterly to bring the truth to light or to release the prisoner.

33. Some minds are so constituted that they get better results from repeated use of denials; others, from using denials less and affirmations more.

34. No definite rules can be laid down as to which will work most effectually in each individual case to eradicate apparent evil and bring the good into manifestation, but some little hint that may be helpful can be given.

35. Denials have an erasive or dissolving tendency. Affirmations build up, and give strength and courage and power. Persons who remember vividly, and are inclined to dwell in their thoughts on the pains, sorrows, and troubles of the past or present, need to deny a great deal; for denials cleanse the mind and blot out of memory all seeming evil and unhappiness, so that they become as a faraway dream. Again, denials are particularly useful to those who are hard or intolerant, or aggressively sinful; to those who, as a result of success, have become overconfident, thinking the human is sufficient in itself for all things; to the selfish, and to any who do not scruple to harm others.

36. Affirmations should be used by the timid and by those who have a feeling of their own inefficiency; those who stand in fear of other minds; those who "give in" easily; those who are subject to anxiety or doubt, and those who are in positions of responsibility. Persons who are in any way negative or passive need to use affirmations more; the ones who are self-confident or unforgiving, need denials more.

37. Deny the appearance of evil; affirm good. Deny weakness; affirm strength, Deny any undesirable condition, and affirm the good you desire. This is what Jesus meant when He said, "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe for claim and affirm! that we receive them, and we shall have them" (Mark 11:24). This is what is meant by the promise: "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon [or that you stand squarely or firmly upon], to you have I given it" (Josh. 1:3).

38. Practice these denials and affirmations silently on the street, in the cars, when you are wakeful during the night, anywhere, everywhere, and they will give you a new, and, to you, a strange, mastery over external things and over yourself. If there comes a moment when you are in doubt as to what to do, stand still and affirm, "God in me is infinite wisdom; I know just what to do." "For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to withstand or to gainsay" (Luke 21:15). Do not get flustered or anxious, but depend fully and trustingly on your principle, and you will be surprised at the sudden inspiration that will come to you as the mode of procedure.

39. So always this principle will work in the solution of all life's problems—I care not what the form of detail is-to free us, God's children, from all undesirable conditions, and to bring good into our lives, if we will take up the simple rules and use them faithfully, until they lead us into such realization of our Godhood that we need no longer consciously depend on them.

COMMENTARY ON "AFFIRMATIONS"

Affirmation Defined

Affirmation is recognized in Unity as a process of thinking and feeling. It is the process of mind which has the capacity to say "yes." We say "yes" to certain conditions by condoning them, to thoughts by thinking them, and to other persons by the positive way we relate to them. To affirm is to give positive assent to something in ourself or in our life.

The conscious use of this process is expressed in the use of specific affirmative statements, which forms one of the basic methods in spiritual development.

An affirmation is a statement of Truth by which we establish in our consciousness the truth about God, the universe, ourself, others, or about a condition or thing.

Affirmation is the presentation of constructive ideas by definite words, spoken silently or audibly, in order that the ideas may take hold of the feeling nature, the subconscious phase of mind, and be-

come an habitual possession.

"An affirmation is a positive and orderly statement of Truth. By affirmation we claim and appropriate that which is ours" (Keep a True Lent, p. 142).

The word affirm comes from the Latin word affirmare which means "to make firm, to assert positively." When a thought becomes so firmly grounded on the Truth of God that it cannot be shaken or diverted therefrom, it is established in consciousness. The repeating of constructive affirmations, silently or audibly, adds firmness and strength to the mind, just as repeated physical exercise adds firmness and strength to the muscles of the body. Man's "mental muscles" are his abilities to think, reason, and feel, and these need strengthening by affirmations.

We must bear in mind that affirmations, as well as denials, are more concerned with attitudes of mind than with words, because mental attitudes are the result of the use that has been made of divine ideas.

The Purpose and Practice of Affirmations

The primary purpose of affirmations is to build a consciousness of the presence of God; a consciousness of Truth; a consciousness of God as absolute good, as the only Presence and Power in the universe.

In our daily living, affirmations are used to train and direct our mind into right habits of thinking and feeling concerning everything in us and in our world. After we have erased error beliefs by denials, we replace them with new beliefs by the use of affirmations, or statements of Truth. When an idea of Truth concerning our health, the health of a loved one, or an idea concerning our affairs or our human relationships is presented by an affirmation, a little time may elapse before it is completely absorbed by the subconscious phase of mind, or feeling nature.

"For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little" (Isa. 28:10 A.S.V.).

The practice of any skill or art requires repetition in order that it may become an automatic function. The repetition by the conscious phase of mind of a Truth idea through the use of an affirmation presents the idea to the feeling nature (subconscious phase of mind) until it becomes natural to respond to the God qualities of love, power, life, faith, understanding.

Another vital purpose of affirmation is to bring ideas out of God-Mind into the realm of manifestation, or formed things.

Affirmation does not in any way change God. It does, however, quicken in us a response to the good. This response brings our supply in the form of ideas that are awaiting expression through us.

Affirmation plays a very important part in the fulfillment of desire. Affirmation is a claiming of the good that is ours as a divine heritage, and it sets the pattern on which the conscious phase of mind may think. It is a step toward fulfillment of desire because it puts us in contact with the law that assures the fulfillment.

Repetition of an affirmation is very important because the idea embodied in the affirmation then becomes a permanent pattern in the feeling nature, or subconscious phase of mind. When these two functions of mind, the conscious thinking and the subconscious feeling, are in accord, the idea has become established in our consciousness where it now acts spontaneously to bring the fulfillment of our desires.

The following affirmations could be used to improve our understanding of God, the universe, ourselves, others, a condition:

"God is Spirit, limitless, changeless Principle."
"There is only one Presence and one Power in the universe, God, the good omnipotent."

"I am a spiritual being living in a spiritual universe, governed by spiritual laws."

"I see you unfettered and unbound, triumphant! glorious! splendid! free!"

"God's love and harmony are present in this condition."

The Power in Affirmation

The power in the affirmation that brings about its fulfillment is the idea or meaning back of the words. Silent, audible, or written words are the clothing of ideas.

The idea is the "spirit" back of the words. "The written code [letter] kills, but the spirit gives life" (II Cor. 3:6, R.S.V.). Affirmations spoken without an understanding of the meaning of the words underlying them are spoken in the "letter" only. In such a case feeling has not entered in, and thus the affirmation is just a group of words lacking the "spirit."

Faith is the faculty of mind necessary to make our affirmations most effective. Jesus said to His disciples, "Have faith in God" (Mark 11:22, R.S.V.). He also said, "According to your faith be

it done to you" (Matt. 9:29). Our faith must be in God and in the power of His ideas to achieve perfect expression. The law that moves ideas into expression always works, but it takes faith to set the law into operation for us. It takes inner conviction, a calm assurance, to enable us to persist until the idea is made visible.

When our affirmations are spoken with joy and faith that the fulfillment of our desires will be realized, we hasten the manifestation of the desired good. The ideas that are embodied in the words of our affirmations will manifest as health of mind and body, or as harmony, happiness, prosperity, success in our affairs, according to our decree.

The two most powerful affirmative words are I AM. You will recall that, when Moses had his mountainside experience with the burning bush, the name of God was revealed to him to be I AM. The burning bush in this Biblical story represents a burning desire in the soul of Moses to go back into Egypt to free his people there from slavery. We read that the bush burned but was not consumed, which means that it was a burning desire that would not go away. When Moses responded positively to this desire, it was revealed that he should tell his people in Egypt that "I AM hath sent me."

So it is that Moses knew the name (nature) of God to be I AM. At a later time it was this same Moses who said, "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain" (Ex. 20:7 R.S.V.). This means that any time we speak the words I AM, they must be associated with the qualities which comprise the true character of God (I AM love, I AM peace, I AM courage, I AM life, etc.). To associate the name I AM with negative or

destructive qualities is to take God's name in vain.

Because I AM is the name of God, it has tremendous creative power in it. By its own nature, the I AM power must reproduce itself in one's life. The most powerful affirmative prayer one may use is "I AM . . ." associated with a quality or condition which a person wants to demonstrate in his life and affairs.

How Do We Know What Affirmations to Use?

When we let Spirit within guide us, we will know what denials and affirmations to use, and how to use them. In the beginning, however, it is necessary to discipline our mind by definitely working with both denials and affirmations until the ideas back of the words become attitudes of mind that work automatically as the need arises. Sometimes just lifting up our heart in gratitude and thanksgiving, without an audible word, becomes our most powerful denial of any power other than God, as well as a recognition (affirmation) of His presence.

Neither denials nor affirmations need be confined to set forms. Sometimes when they are, we find ourself bound by the "letter" and miss the

"spirit" or quickening quality within.

Often it is helpful to change the wording of either a denial or an affirmation in order to convey to our consciousness the true meaning. It may be that certain words are not familiar to us and find no response in our feeling nature. In such a case, it is better to present the ideas in words that have a vital meaning for us. The question is not of dealing with "set forms" so much as it is the danger of confining our affirmations to them, instead of letting the ideas back of the words have freedom to

accomplish their work in our life.

So long as we keep in mind that the purpose of affirmations is to establish divine ideas in the human consciousness, we will never find ourself confined to set forms. Rather we will be able to use so-called "set forms" of affirmations and Bible texts with a sense of freedom, for the words will be so at one with the ideas they contain that they will be our own soul's language.

The Question of Committing Affirmations to Memory

It is often helpful to commit affirmations to memory, not in order to speak them thoughtlessly but to enrich our mind with the *ideas* of Truth they contain. As we hold true thoughts in our mind they begin to glow with new and deeper meanings. The mind that is richly filled with affirmations and Bible texts is fortified with Truth to meet the challenging experiences of daily living.

There is activity of thought in our mind at all times, for it is never a vacuum. If our thoughts are not constructive, then they are destructive, since nothing stands still. If we have in mind plenty of Truth affirmations (and this includes Bible verses) we can call on the *ideas* they convey whenever we have need of them. We should remember that there is a law of mind action ("like begets like") operating in and through our affirmations that has power to fulfill our desires.

We come to realize that merely memorizing affirmations, without understanding their meaning, is keeping the "letter" and not the "spirit." When we keep in mind that the purpose of affirmations is to lay hold of divine ideas (the spirit) and bring

them into manifestation, then we are not likely to misunderstand the reason for memorizing them.

Jesus and Affirmation

Entering the Jesus Christ consciousness is in itself an affirmation, the mightiest one that we could make. Jesus lifted Himself into the high consciousness of divinity by His use of the sopken word. He continually made the highest affirmations for Himself:

- 1. Jesus was affirmative at His temptations.
- 2. Jesus was affirmative in His healing of individuals—"Take up thy bed and walk" (Mark 2:9 A.S.V.).
- 3. Jesus was affirmative at the feeding of the five thousand—God is the source of prosperity.
- 4. He was affirmative concerning His own life. "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18 A.S.V.).
- 5. He was affirmative about His mission. "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).
- 6. He was affirmative in the Garden of Gethsemane and at His crucifixion. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46 A.S.V.). "Not my will, but thine be done" (Luke 22:42 A.S.V.).

The Spoken Word

Because words communicate ideas, our real desire is that the words of Truth we speak shall accomplish in mind, body, and affairs all the good embodied in the ideas we are expressing through our words. We want our words to "come alive"

because our desire is to follow the deep urge within us to manifest the divine heritage that is ours as a son of God.

"The mind moves upon ideas; ideas are made visible through words. Hence holding right words in the mind will set the mind going at a rate proportioned to the dynamic power of the idea back of those words" (Talks on Truth, p. 176).

Sometimes students learning to use words of Truth are of the opinion that it is the words themselves that accomplish results. This of course is not true. It is the *ideas* back of the affirmations, or words, that contain the Truth. We need to know the meaning of the words to feel the Truth. Such a realization reveals that the divine ideas expressed in the words may be considered as "seeds."

"Thus every word brings forth after its kind. The 'seed' is the creative idea inherent in the word, the nature that it inherits from its parent source—God" (Christian Healing, p. 65).

The type of words we use to convey ideas is very important. When we are convinced that ideas do represent our divine inheritance, we are able to speak with feeling the words that convey divine ideas of faith, power, love, life, and so forth. Our inner conviction and enthusiasm enable ideas to "come alive" in our consciousness, then to come into manifestation. We may say in the words of the prophet Isaiah:

"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55:11 A.S.V.).

If we speak the word of health for ourself or others, our true desire is that life, strength, vitality, energy, wholensss shall manifest in our body, or in the body of the one for whom we pray. When the word of plenty is affirmed, we want to be sure that our affirmation will lay hold of the divine idea of abundance so that prosperity will actually fill our affairs, or those of another person for whom we are praying. When harmony and peace are desired in our individual life as well as in the world, it is the ideas in our words that produce these conditions. We want the words of the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," to become an actuality.

"Every word has its root in an idea.... We use words as instruments of ideas and ... it is the idea that we are seeking to enlarge and establish by our words of praise and blessing.

"So 'praise' and 'bless' are words freely used by those who love spiritual values, because these words are heavily charged with capacity to express creative Mind. In themselves alone the words 'praise' and 'bless' are potent for good because they are associated with ideas that eulogize the good. These words are not found in the vocabulary of the pessimist or atheist....

"Metaphysicians find that words that express thanks, gratitude, and praise release energies of mind and spirit; and the effects of their use follow so quickly that they can almost be identified with the originating words.

"Let your words of praise and blessing be to Spirit and the increase will be even greater than it has been when addressed to man. The resources of Spirit are beyond our highest flights of imagination. You can praise a weak body into strength, a fearful heart into peace and trust; shattered nerves into poise and power; a failing business into prosperity and success; want and insufficiency into supply and support" (Teach Us to Pray, pp. 90-92).

Do Affirmations Cause Changes?

Good, practical changes take place in mind, body, and affairs through the use of affirmations. In this lesson we have learned that two vital purposes of affirmations are: first, to educate the mind in positive habits, and second, to bring *ideas* out of the unformed into the formed or visible world.

Our mind, under the influence of affirmations, is receptive to the ideas of God. Its conscious phase (the thinking faculty or intellect) becomes more positive, efficient, keen, wise, decisive, alert, strong. Through affirmations the subconscious phase of mind (the feeling nature, sometimes referred to as the heart) when cleansed of negative beliefs becomes more compassionate, understanding, loving, more peaceful and constructive in its reactions.

The next practical change is in our body. With the change of thought and feeling attained through the use of positive affirmations, the body begins to manifest vitality, strength, energy, wholeness—radiant health! We feel different; we look different; we are different because old limited thoughts and desires have left us and we have begun to conform to spiritual laws. Our body reveals itself for what it truly is—"the temple of the living God" (II Cor.

6:16), with all its members functioning in divine order.

Just as changes come in our mind and body, so changes come in our circumstances through the use of affirmations backed by faith, love, and understanding. Peace, order, and harmony begin to manifest in our daily living; many things become adjusted, and we recognize that divine justice is at work. We no longer fight against conditions we have to meet in the outer. We know that as we affirm divine order and justice, we need have no fear of the outcome. We are easier to get along with in our home, in our place of employment, in our social contacts, for our affirmations of God's love and harmony make these qualities active in all our human relationships. No matter what the situation, we turn to God and affirm that He is in charge, that His love and wisdom are actively working throughout all of His creation.

Lesson IV

Finding the Secret Place

- 1. 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 the history of the world, are engaging the hearts of men. More than anything else it is what I want. It is what you want.
- 2. All the steps that we are taking by speaking words of Truth and striving to manifest the light which we have already received are carrying us on swiftly to the time when we shall have consciously the perfect mind of Christ, with all the love and beauty and health and power which that implies.
- 3. We need not be anxious or in a hurry for the full manifestation. Let us not at any time lose sight of the fact that our desire, great as it is, is only God's desire in us. "No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him" (John 6:44). The Father in us desires to reveal to us the secret of His presence, else we had not known any hunger for the secret, or for Truth.

- 4. "Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit" (John 15:16).
- 5. Whoever you are that read these words, wherever you stand in the world, be it on the platform preaching the gospel, or in the humblest little home seeking Truth, that you may make it manifest in a sweeter, stronger, less selfish life, know once and forever that you are not seeking God, but God is seeking you. Your longing for greater manifestation is the eternal energy that holds the worlds in their orbits, outpushing through you to get into fuller manifestation. You need not worry. You need not be anxious. You need not strive. Only let it. Learn how to let it.
- 6. After all our beating about the bush, seeking here and there for our heart's desire, we must come right to Him who is the fulfillment of every desire; who waits to manifest more of Himself to us and through us. If you wanted my love or anything that I am (not that I have), you would not go to Tom Jones or to Mary Smith to get it. Either of these persons might tell you that I could and would give myself, but you would have to come directly to me, and receive of me that which only I am, because I am it.
- 7. In some way, after all our seeking for the light and Truth, we must learn to wait, each one for himself, upon God for this inner revelation of Truth and our oneness with Him.
- 8. The light that we want is not some thing that God has to give; it is God Himself. God does not give us life or love as a thing. God is life and light and love. More of Himself in our consciousness, then, is what we all want, no matter what other

name we may give it.

9. My indument of power must come from "on high," from a higher region within myself than my present conscious mind; so must yours. It must be a descent of the Holy (whole, entire, complete) Spirit at the center of your being into your conscious mind. The illumination we want can never come in any other way; nor can the power to make good manifest.

10. We hear a great deal about "sitting in the silence." To many it does not mean very much, for they have not yet learned how to "wait...in silence for God only" (Psalms 62:5), or to hear any voice except external ones. Noise belongs to the outside world, not to God. God works in the stillness, and we can so wait upon the Father of our being as to be conscious of the still, inner working—conscious of the fulfillment of our desires. "They that seek Jehovah shall not want any good thing" (Psalms 34:10). "They that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength" (Isa. 40:31).

11. In one of Edward Everett Hale's stories, he speaks of a little girl who, amidst her play with the butterflies and birds in a country place, used to run into a nearby chapel frequently to pray; and after praying always remained perfectly still a few minutes, "waiting," she said, "to see if God wanted to say anything" to her. Children are often nearest the kingdom.

12. When beginning the practice of sitting in the silence, do not feel that you must go and sit with some other person. The presence of another personality is apt to distract the mind. Learn first how to commune alone with the Creator of the universe, who is all-companionship. When you are able

to withdraw from the outside and be alone with Him, then sitting with others may be profitable to you and to them.

- 13. "Sitting in the silence" is not merely a sort of lazy drifting. It is a passive, but a definite, waiting upon God. When you want to do this, take a time when you are not likely to be disturbed, and when you can, for a little while, lay off all care. Begin your silence by lifting up your heart in prayer to the Father of your being. Do not be afraid that, if you begin to pray, you will be too "orthodox." You are not going to supplicate God, who has already given you things "whatsoever ye desire" (Mark 11:24 A.V.). You have already learned that before you call He has sent that which you desire; otherwise you would not desire it.
- 14. You know better than to plead with or to beseech God with an unbelieving prayer. But spending the first few moments of your silence in speaking directly to the Father centers your mind on the Eternal. Many who earnestly try to get still and wait upon God have found that, the moment they sit down and close their eyes, their thoughts, instead of being concentrated, are filled with every sort of vain imagination. The most trivial things, from the fixing of a shoestring to the gossipy conversation of a week ago, chase one another in rapid succession through their minds, and at the end of an hour the persons have gained nothing. This is to them discouraging.
- 15. This is but a natural result of trying not to think at all. Nature abhors a vacuum, and if you make (or try to make) your mind a vacuum, the thought images of others that fill the atmosphere about you will rush in to fill it, leaving you as far

away from the consciousness of the divine presence as ever. You can prevent this by beginning your silence with prayer.

16. It is always easier for the mind to say realizingly, "Thy will is being done in me now," after having prayed, "Let Thy will be done in me." It is always easier to say with realization, "God flows through me as life and peace and power," after having prayed, "Let Thy life flow through me anew while I wait." Of course prayer does not change God's attitude toward us, but it is easier for the human mind to take several successive steps with firmness and assurance than for it to take one big, bold leap to a point of eminence and hold itself steady there. While you are thus concentrating your thoughts on God, in definite conversation with the author of your being, no outside thought images can possibly rush in to torment or distract you. Your mind, instead of being open toward the external, is closed to it, and open only to God, the source of all the good you desire.

17. Of course there is to be no set form of words used. But sometimes using words similar to the first few verses of the 103d Psalm, in the beginning of the silent communion, makes it a matter of face-to-face speaking: "Thou forgivest all mine iniquities [or mistakes]; Thou healest all my diseases; Thou redeemest my life from destruction, and crownest me with loving-kindness, now, now, while I wait upon Thee." Sometimes we may enter into the inner chamber with the words of a familiar hymn; as:

Thou art the life within me,
O Christ, Thou King of Kings;
Thou art Thyself the answer

To all my questionings.

18. Repeat the words many times, not anxiously or with strained effort, not reaching out and up and away to an outside God; but let the petition be the quiet, earnest uplifting of the heart to a higher something right within itself, even to "the Father in me" (John 14:11). Let it be made with the quietness and assurance of a child speaking to his loving father.

19. Some persons carry in their faces a strained, white look that comes from an abnormal "sitting in the silence," as they term it. It is hard for them to know that God is right here within them, and while in the silence they fall into the way of reaching away out and up after Him. Such are earnest men truly feeling after God if haply they may find Him, when all the time He is near them, even in their very hearts. Do not reach out thus. This is as though a seed were planted in the earth, and just because it recognized a vivifying, life-giving principle in the sun's rays, it did nothing but strain and stretch itself upward and outward to get more of the sun. You can see at a glance that by so doing it would get no solid roots in the earth where God intended them to be. The seed needs to send roots downward while it keeps its face turned toward the sun, and lets itself be drawn upward by the sun.

20. Some of us, in our desire to grow, and having recognized the necessity of waiting upon God in the stillness for the vivifying and renewing of life, make the mistake of climbing up and away from our bodies. Such abnormal outstretching and upreaching is neither wise nor profitable. After a little of it, one begins to get cold feet and congested head. While one is thus reaching out, the

body is left alone, and it becomes correspondingly weak and negative. This is all wrong. We are not to reach out away from the body even after the Son of righteousness. We are rather to be still, and let the Son shine on us right where we are. The sun draws the shoot up as fast as it can bear it and be strong. We do not need to grow ourselves, only to let the Son "grow" us.

21. But we are consciously to let it; not merely to take the attitude of negatively letting it by not opposing it, but to put ourselves consciously where the Son can shine on us, and then "be still, and know" (Psalms 46:10) that while we wait there it is doing the work. While waiting upon God, we should, as much as possible, relax ourselves both mentally and physically. To use a very homely but practical illustration, take much the attitude of the entire being as do the fowls when taking a sun bath in the sand. Yet there is something more than a lax passivity to be maintained through it all. There must be a sort of conscious, active taking of that which God gives freely to us.

22. Let me see if I can make it plain. We first withdraw ourselves bodily and mentally from the outside world. We "enter into thine inner chamber, and . . . shut thy door" (Matt. 6:6) (the closet of our being, the very innermost part of ourselves), by turning our thoughts within. Just say, "Thou abidest within me; Thou art alive there 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. The

divine substance does flow in at the center and out into the visible world every moment you wait; for it is an immutable law that "every one that asketh receiveth" (Matt. 7:8). And substance will come forth as the fulfillment of your desire if you expect it to. "According to your faith be it done unto you" (Matt. 9:29).

- 23. If you find your mind wandering, bring it right back by saying again: "It is being done; Thou art working in me; I am receiving that which I desire," and so forth. Do not look for signs and wonders, but just be still and know that the very thing you want is flowing in and will come forth into manifestation either at once or a little farther on.
- 24. Go even beyond this and speak words of thanksgiving to this innermost Presence, that it has heard and answered, that it does now come forth into visibility. There is something about the mental act of thanksgiving that seems to carry the human mind far beyond the region of doubt into the clear atmosphere of faith and trust, where "all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26). Even if at first you are not conscious of having received anything from God, do not worry or cease from your thanksgiving. Do not go back of it again to the asking, but continue giving thanks that while you waited you did receive, and that what you received is now manifest; and believe me, you will soon rejoice and give thanks, not rigidly from a sense of duty, but because of the sure manifest fulfillment of your desire.
- 25. Do not let waiting in the silence become a bondage to you. If you find yourself getting into a strained attitude of mind, or "heady," get up and

go about some external work for a time. Or, if you find that your mind will wander, do not insist on concentrating; for the moment you get into a rigid mental attitude you shut off all inflow of the Divine into your consciousness. There must be a sort of relaxed passivity and yet an active taking it by faith. Shall I call it active passivity?

26. Of course, as we go in spiritual understanding and desire, we very soon come to the place where we want more than anything else that the desires of infinite wisdom and love be fulfilled in us. "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 than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8).

27. Our desires are God's desires, but in a limited degree. We soon throw aside our limitations, our circumscribed desires (as soon, at least, as we see that more of God means more of good and joy and happiness), and with all our hearts we cry out in the silent sitting: "Fulfill Thy highest thought in me now!" We make ourselves as clay in the potter's hands, willing to be molded anew, to be "transformed into the same image" (II Cor. 3:18), to be made after the mind of the indwelling Christ.

28. We repeat from time to time, while waiting, words something like these: "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." Be still, be still while He works. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith

Jehovah of hosts" (Zech. 4:6).

29. While you thus wait, and let Him. He will work marvelous changes in you. You will have a strange new consciousness of serenity and quiet, a feeling that something has been done, that some new power to overcome has come to you. You will 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. Oh! how one conscious touch of the Oversoul makes all life seem different! All the hard things become easy: the troublesome things no longer have power to worry; the rasping people and things of the world lose all power to annoy. Why? Because, for the time, we see things from the Christ side of ourselves; we see as He sees. We do not have to deny evil; we know in that moment that it is nothing at all. We no longer rigidly affirm the good from sense of duty, but with delight and spontaneity, because we cannot help it. It is revealed to us as good. Faith has become reality.

30. Do not be discouraged if you do not at once get conscious results in this silent sitting. Every moment that you wait, Spirit is working to make you a new creature in Christ—a creature possessing consciously His very own qualities and powers. There may be a working for days before you see any change; but it will surely come. You will soon get so that you can go into the silence, into conscious communication with your Lord, at a moment's notice, at any time, in any place.

31. There is no conflict or inconsistency between this waiting upon God to be made perfect, and the way of "speaking the word" out toward the external to make perfection visible. Waiting

upon and consciously receiving from the Source only make the outspeaking (the holding of right thoughts and words) easy, instead of laborious. Try it and see.

32. Clear revelation—the word made alive as Truth to the consciousness—must come to every man who continues to wait upon God. But remember, there are two conditions imposed. You are to wait upon God, not simply to run in and out, but to abide, to dwell "in the secret place of the Most High" (Psalms 91:1).

33. Of course I do not mean that you are to give all the time to sitting alone in meditation and silence, but that your mind shall be continually in an attitude of waiting upon God, not an attitude of clamoring for things, but of listening for the Father's voice and expecting a manifestation of the Father to your consciousness.

34. Jesus, our Master in spiritual knowledge and power, had many hours of lone communion with the Father, and His greatest works were done after these. So may we, so must we, commune alone with the Father if we would manifest the Christ. But Jesus did not spend all His time in receiving. He poured forth into everyday use, among the children of men in the ordinary vocations of life, that which He received of the Father. His knowledge of spiritual things was used constantly to uplift and to help other persons. We must do likewise; for newness of life and of revelation flows in the faster as we give out that which we have to help others. "Go, preach... Heal the sick... freely ve received, freely give" (Matt. 10:7, 8), He said, Go manifest the Christ within you, which you have received of the Father. God works in us to will and

to do, but we must work out our own salvation.

35. The second indispensable condition to finding the secret place and abiding in it is "my expectation is from him":

"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, the tumult on the mountains: truly in Jehovah our God is the salvation of Israel" (Jer. 3:23). It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.

- 36. Is your expectation from Him, or is it from books, or teachers, or friends, or meetings, or societies?
- 37. "The King of Isreal, even Jehovah is in the midst of thee" (Zeph. 3:15). Think of it; In the midst of you—at the center of your being this moment while you read these words. Say it, say it, think it, dwell on it, whoever you are, wherever you are! In the midst of you! Then what need for all this running around? What need for all this strained outreaching after Him?
- 38. "Jehovah thy God is in the midst of thee [not God in the midst of another, but in the midst of you, standing right where you are] a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing" (Zeph. 3:17). You are His love. It is you that He will rejoice in with singing if you will turn away from people to Him within you. His singing and joy will so fill you that your life will be a great thanksgiving.
- 39. Your Lord is not my Lord, nor is my Lord your Lord. Your Lord is the Christ within your

own being. My Lord is the Christ within my own being.

- 40. There is one Spirit, one Father of all, in us all, but there are different manifestations or individualities. Your Lord is He who will deliver you out of all your troubles. Your Lord has no other business but to manifest Himself to you and through you, and so make you mighty with His own mightiness made visible; whole with His health; perfect by showing forth the Christ perfection.
- 41. Let all your expectation be from your Lord. Let your communion be with Him. Wait upon the inner abiding Christ often, just as you would wait upon any visible teacher. When you are sick "wait thou in silence for God only" (Psalms 62:5) as the Most High, rather than upon healers. When you lack wisdom in small or large matters, "wait thou in silence for God only," and see what marvelous wisdom for action will be given you. When desiring to speak the word that will deliver another from the bondage of sickness or sin or sorrow, "wait thou in silence for God only," and exactly the right word will be given you, and power will go with it, for it will be alive with the power of Spirit.

COMMENTARY ON "FINDING THE SECRET PLACE"

God Can Be Approached Directly

We can approach God directly. It is true that other persons as well as books may help us find the road that leads to conscious contact with our Father, but only we ourself may actually walk this particular "road."

When we know intellectually that God is as close to us as our own heartbeat, is in fact the power that causes the beating, then we see why we can make a direct approach to God.

Prayer is our direct approach for through the highest phase of prayer, which is "the silence," we become acquainted with God's own nature of Absolute Good comprising all of the ideas (qualities) of life, love, power, strength, faith, substance, intelligence, and so forth.

Is Jesus The Means?

Jesus did not teach that He was the means through which we may reach God. He said, "But thou, 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" (Matt. 6:6 A.S.V.). However, He also said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6 A.S.V.), and "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John 10:9 A.S.V.). In making these statements He was directing attention to the I AM, the Christ, the Spirit of God that dwells within every human being and which Jesus recognized as His own indwelling divinity and source of power.

The "way" represents the road that one must travel in fulfilling the plan; and the "means" refers to the resources that one must use. Jesus, the Man, is not the means of our reaching God, nor is He the "way"; the Christ Spirit within us is the "Way" or our "hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). Jesus is the Way-Shower. He teaches us how to make active the spiritual resources of our being, which are the ideas that are our divine inheritance.

When we follow Jesus' example and His teachings we consciously become aware of God, just as He did. Jesus said, "Follow me" (John 12:26), but He also said, "it is expedient that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you" (John 16:7 A.S.V.). In His great understanding Jesus knew that so long as the disciples looked to Him as the "Way" rather than as the Way-Shower they would not turn to God's presence, the Comforter within, but would continue to look outside of themselves for the way to reach God. Jesus' entire ministry was focused on the premise that we are all God's children. Through His teachings and His example, He showed us how to apply the same

spiritual laws that He used to fulfill Himself as God's perfect Son.

It is important that we realize that the instruction given by Jesus to "enter into thine inner chamber" is not something mysterious but a simple turning within to our loving Father. The instruction telling us to "enter" also advises us to "shut thy door," meaning that we are to close the mind to anything of the outer that would intrude upon this meeting with our Father.

"What we need to know above all is that there is a place within our soul where we can consciously meet God and receive a flood of new life into not only our mind but also our body.... Quietly entering the inner chamber within the soul, shutting the door to the external thoughts of daily life, and seeking conscious union with God is the highest form of prayer we know" (Teach Us to Pray, p. 5 and 17).

Prayer Is Not Begging

Prayer in its highest form is not begging God for something we do not have. Rather it is thanking Him for that which is already ours in the ideal. Prayer is grateful acknowledgment of the truth that God and man are one. The truth is that it is the will of God that man be consciously one with Him. Man is important to God and worthy of this union because of his innate sonship.

"It is then necessary that we understand our own importance as God manifestations. We should understand that we are not separate nor insignificant but the vital, important, integral parts of a mighty whole" (AtomSmashing Power of Mind, p. 61).

Such acknowledgment has to take place in our consciousness or our soul, for the soul is the phase of our being where we perceive, think, feel, and will.

Our first step in prayer will be to turn our attention away from external conditions. At those moments when we may be facing either a difficult problem or an important assignment, we will learn to seek joyously the presence of God within. In no other way can we find the courage to triumph over outer challenges. In prayer, we feel the goodness of God working in us and in the entire universe. We feel the unity, the oneness, of all life; we see the beauty and holiness of life. Prayer enables us to realize our own relation to all creation, in the sure knowledge that all is essentially good because all is of God.

As the activity of prayer expands, however, it must reach far beyond our *own* contemplation (meditation) upon God and His good into the realm of the silence, or the secret place itself. Here we no longer dwell on our own observations *about* Truth but make ourself receptive to hear the truth that God will "speak" to us. The silence is the time when God reveals Himself to us as all the good we may have contemplated in our period of meditation.

Prayer's Ultimate Goal

What is the ultimate goal of prayer? It is to receive inspiration from God, the Holy Spirit, that shows us how to bring our inheritance of good ideas into visible form.

Prayer is ... "the unfolding of one's will to God that he may fulfill it" (St. Thomas

Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, III, 21, i. 1272).

Prayer is something entirely different from "prayer as a means to effect a private end" (Emerson). This type of prayer is mental activity only. It stems from lack of understanding of the true nature of God and the true nature of man. It deals with dualism, separation, rather than with oneness, which is the essential relationship of God and man. Back of such begging prayer is usually the fear that one may not get the good that he feels is rightfully his or that he yearns to have. Instead of realizing the fullness of good as his birthright, he feels he lacks some form of good. He believes that someone or some situation can withhold the fulfillment of his desires.

Such an attitude is based on the belief that God is in some places but not in others; that He gives to some persons and withholds from others. The one who prays to "effect a private end" does not believe in the omnipresence of God, the justice of God, or the love of God. One who frantically beseches God for good in some form cannot make conscious connection with the Source of the good he desires so desperately. Thoughts and feelings that belie the omnipresence of God become a barrier between that person and his realization of God. "Be transformed by the renewal of your mind" (Rom. 12:2). But only the person himself can effect a change in his own thinking.

One thing we need to keep in mind is this: Often the desperate desire for some good may be the very thing that will lead a person to seek God in the right way—through true prayer.

Prayer and Faith

Faith is the mental faculty (spiritual power) that is of vital importance in true prayer because it is "the perceiving power of the mind" (Prosperity, p. 43). It is this spiritual power, moving in our consciousness as a mental faculty, that enables us to "perceive" God as the one Presence and one Power of all good in and around man and all creation. Without this perception there would be no basis for prayer. It would be fruitless to pray if we did not recognize God as the Source of the very good we seek.

"The power to see in Spirit is peculiar to faith. In its outer expression this power is sight; interiorly it is that which perceives the reality of the substance of Spirit. Mental seeing is knowing; when we perceive the truth of a proposition, we say, 'I see, I see,' meaning that we mentally discern... This illuminating power of faith covers the whole constitution of man, making him master of all the forces centering about spiritual consciousness. Faith and prayer go hand in hand" (Christian Healing, p. 89).

Jesus Christ had faith in God as the indwelling Presence and Power and referred to Him as "the Father." We have a number of instances in the Bible where Jesus emphasized the importance of faith to those who sought help concerning some problem. Without the perceiving power of faith, a prayer—no matter how sincere—can never be "true prayer," and results will be uncertain.

Prayer enables us to perceive the good that is already ours in God's storehouse of substance.

More than that, prayer keeps us steadfast in the claiming of this inheritance.

If with all our heart we seek consciousness of our oneness with God, we will see the need for change in our mind. We have to face the fact that any beliefs that are not in accord with oneness have to be dissolved. All that would stand in the way of our consciously knowing oneness with God must be erased from the mind. This makes us an open channel for His revelations and inspiration. There can be no "striving" for Truth; Truth is free. It belongs to man as a divine birthright. It is true we must "seek" the Truth, but it is a matter of seeking in mind that which is already ours in Spirit. This seeking, rather than striving, is an opening of ourself to the inflow of Truth into our consciousness.

Even the desire for knowledge about Truth, about our oneness with God, must give way to desire just to know God. "And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God" (John 17:3 A.S.V.).

Praying to God as "Father".

The benefit which comes to us from praying to God as "our Father" reaches into all areas of our life. Recognizing God as "our Father" causes us to see ourself as heir to the qualities (also termed ideas, truths, principles) that make up His nature.

"See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are" (I John 3:1).

The possessive adjective our in "our Father" links us with all humanity as brothers. Because there is but one Creator, all men have the same

Father; every human being belongs to the family of God and each is an heir to God's estate of good. Consciously recognizing God as "our Father" inevitably moves one into the larger perception of the brotherhood of all men where God is recognized as the universal Father of all.

"One God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all" (Eph. 4:6).

Relaxing Mind and Body

The realization of Truth cannot come to a mind that is not still, but is concerned with the exterior world. A divided mind cannot receive the revelations of God; these come only to a mind that is still, that is alert and concentrated on the "still small voice." Truth is the vision, the ideal we perceive through soul insight, and if the "sight" is turned outward it is not insight. When the soul is still, we are offering God a listening and a heeding attitude. We will then receive the true guidance that can help us to go about our business in the outer world.

Prayer is the line of conscious communion between us and our Creator. In the "secret place of the Most High" (Psalms 91:1 A.S.V.) within our own being, we appropriate the divine ideas that belong to God consciousness. It is in this "secret place" of prayer that we learn that the will of our Father is for our highest good. Only in the stillness can the full revelation come to our soul. For prayer to be effectual, we need to abide in the realization that our true place is in the one creative Mind, where all is peace and harmony. Therefore, we must learn to keep silence before God; to still the false reports of the senses that impinge on our

consciousness, so that we may listen to the "still small voice" that will teach us all things—even the deep things of God.

In order to relax ourself mentally, we are to release our mind from thinking of the things we need to do in our everyday living, and especially to release the mind from the tension of confused or disturbed thinking. Sometimes we let ourself become tense through an ardent desire to contact God, but this defeats our purpose. Relaxation takes place in the body as we release muscles and nerves from tension.

The quieting of mind and body is done so that there will be no interference with our conscious waiting upon God: In no other way can we become a receptive channel for the working of Spirit. We have to *feel* that Spirit is working in us, and this feeling cannot come to us if we are tense in either mind or body. While our body is relaxed, it is alive and ready to carry out any command. While our mind is quiet, it is alert and ready to hear the "still small voice" of God.

"When we are truly relaxed, we are as unconscious of the body as we are of well-fitting clothes. The body is the clothing of the soul and the soul is the clothing of the Spirit, and a body so cramped that it cannot let go and relax is closed to the beauty and life that Spirit seeks to express in it through the soul" (Effectual Prayer, p. 40).

The musician who does not relax mind and body before his performance cannot give a true rendition of a composition, for the principle of music must have a responsive vehicle through which to express. God, as Principle, must also find responsiveness in us in order for Him to do His perfect work.

If the body is tense, too much attention is given to it by the mind, and the latter cannot reach the point of either meditation or concentration. Perhaps none of us will follow exactly the same method of becoming relaxed in mind and body, but we must find the way that is right for us at any given time. Sometimes music can help to bring the desired quietness of mind and body; at other times just speaking affirmations of relaxation can gently bring both mind and body into the needed relaxation.

If we remain tense or strained in spite of all our efforts to relax, a change to some active work may help to remove the tension. There are times when work in the outdoors, such as gardening, can bring release from tension. If it seems wise to do some active thing, we may even find ourselves "entering the silence" without effort while our hands are busy. Or perhaps we shall be able to return to our period of silence after the outer work is done.

"For me the time of action does not differ from the time of prayer, and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are together calling for as many different things, I possess God in as great tranquillity as when upon my knees" (Brother Lawrence [Nicholas Herman of Lorraine], 1605-91).

Opening Your Mind to God

We open our mind to God by thinking on the ideas, qualities, or attributes that make up God's nature of Absolute Good. As we think about these God ideas, we learn their nature and value and seek to use them in our daily living.

The more we think about a thing, the more are we able to understand its nature. The same truth applies to God. In order to center our attention on God, or any of His ideas, we often find it helpful to use Scripture, the Lord's Prayer, or any uplifting statement, whether in poem, song, or hymn, that presents the *ideas* we seek.

In our communications, one with another, what we say or what we write is for the purpose of imparting ideas. In the endeavor to center our mind on God, we use words as vehicles only to bring us into close awareness of God ideas. When we truly feel the Presence of God we may be able to discontinue the use of words, because the ideas will have become deeply impressed in our consciousness and are ready to bear fruit.

There is nothing mysterious about centering our mind on God, for every step we have taken in these lessons has been part of this process. True prayer is centering one's mind on God.

The Still Small Voice of God

The "still small voice" might best be defined as the voice of God, the Holy Spirit, speaking to our soul as intuition. It is a "knowing" that comes from Spirit within; it is not an audible voice but the activity of the Holy Spirit revealing Truth to our consciousness. Like Elijah, we sometimes expect the voice of God to speak to us in some tumultuous or miraculous way—the rushing wind, the earthquake, the fire. We are surprised when we really become still and listen, for the "still small voice" is not a voice at all, but it speaks more clearly and directly to us than a voice. The "still small voice" is inward knowing; it is light; it is

inspiration; it is that in us which lifts us up in consciousness and guides us in our choice of that which is right and good. The "still small voice" is that in us which says "I AM" and fills us with a sense of joy and peace.

While the "still small voice" is not audible to the physical ears, we become acutely aware of it in our consciousness. It may "speak" as an idea, an impression, an inspiration, a feeling, or just a sense of well-being. It is the indwelling Spirit of God, the Christ, the I AM, seeking to "voice" Itself, to fulfill Itself, in and through us.

When does the "still small voice" speak to us? It has spoken to us when we feel inspired to think on divine ideas, moved to do a kind deed, urged to express love, compassion, and understanding. The "voice" has spoken to us when we are exercising wisdom and good judgment in our experiences; when we are led to do the right thing in any situation. When we feel the surge of life and power, we may be sure that God is "speaking" to us as the voice of love, wisdom, faith, life, and power.

How are we to develop receptivity to the "still small voice"? Through periods of prayer we harmonize ourself with all that is constructive and uplifting, and it becomes natural for us to listen to the "still small voice" of intuition. God "speaks" to each of us in a language that we understand and that will meet the specific need of the moment. On one occasion we may be in quiet surroundings, without interruption of any kind, and we will hear God's voice as the words of a beloved hymn or poem, as words of Scripture. At another time, we may not seem to be praying but when our heart is turned Godward for an answer to a problem, or for

guidance in making a decision, the voice of God will come clear and sure, indicating a definite step we are to take. Then again, the voice of God may leave us with that deep conviction which comes from understanding faith, assuring us that God is in charge and all is well.

The knowing to which we refer as *intuition* does not come through the usual channels through which we ordinarily obtain knowledge in the outer, such as schooling, observation, experience. However, the "still small voice" of intuition may use any of these media. Most of us have had the experience of listening to a teacher or a minister, or of reading a book, singing a song, speaking words of Truth—and actually "hearing" God "speak" to us through the audible or written words.

"Communion in mind can be said to be without sound. It is the 'still small voice,' the voice that is not a voice, the voice using words that are not words. Yet its language is more definite and certain than that of words and sounds, because it has none of their limitations" (Jesus Christ Heals, p. 33).

Intuition, sometimes called the "inner tutor" or "inner teacher," quickens and illumines the faith faculty and causes it to become activated to good. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17, A.V.). The stronger our faith in God becomes, the more we follow the guidance of intuition, and the more we listen to intuition, the stronger our faith becomes. Faith "is born of intuition" (Lessons in Truth, p. 63). Thus we see that intuition and faith are closely related. In addition to quickening our faith, intuition quickens other faculties, especially the faculty of

understanding, which is able to guide us in the right use of our faith faculty in every phase of our life. Without the guidance of intuition, our use of the faith faculty could become fanatical, unloving, and unreasonable.

There is usually a quick response in our feeling nature to both intuition and faith, but they are never intended to set reason aside. Rather, intuition illumines the intellect so that our thinking and reasoning are based only on Truth.

Intuition, the voice of God, is not to be confused with *conscience*. Intuition points out the true way for us to follow; it says, "this is the way, walk in it" (Isa. 30:21). Conscience, on the other hand, is the voice of the soul that speaks from experience. It says to us, "Do not do that because it is wrong." Our past experiences, our race, religion, culture, and our associations all determine what our conscience shall tell us.

Satisfaction cannot be found in outer things alone. The things we see in the outer are but the visible forms of ideas. There is a tremendous truth in the statement of Jesus, "Seek ye first his kingdom [realm of ideas], and his righteousness [right use of the ideas]; and all these things [the forms] shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33 A.S.V.). Until we seek God, the Source of ideas, the forms, no matter how good, can never bring us satisfaction of themselves. Thus to seek God is to lay hold consciously of the ideas that will by the law of mind action bring things into manifestation.

If the good things in our life are not recognized as God ideas in visible form, not seen as the blessings of God in manifestation, we have not yet found full satisfaction. When we come to know God consciously as the Giver of all good, then we appreciate things for we see them as they truly are.

Silence: The Key to the Secret Place

The key to the secret place is a state of mind called "the silence." It is a state of mind in which one centers his attention on God and waits "silently" for the inspiration of God.

The general term "the silence" covers the entire process that brings us into conscious contact with the Presence of God. It is the state of mind into which we enter to make the acquaintance of this Presence. The silence is perhaps the most vital phase of prayer, for it is the ultimate in our search, bringing us consciously into the divine Presence.

"The fundamental purpose of the silence is to establish a means of conscious communion between God and man. It is literally seeking first 'his kingdom, and his righteousness,' knowing that in the discovery of the kingdom itself the lesser objectives are attained" (Meditation in the Silence).

This special form of prayer that we term "the silence" is preceded by a period of time when we still the thinking and feeling activities of our mind and then direct our whole attention to God, so that we may be a ready channel to receive His inspiration. It is not that we do not think at all in the silence, but rather that the thinking and feeling activities of the mind are no longer drawn outward, but turned consciously inward to Spirit.

In the silence our mind, or consciousness, is open and receptive to divine ideas. It is alert, but the activity is the working of Divine Mind moving its ideas on a receptive mind and heart.

"The purpose of the silence is to still the activity of the individual thought so that the still small voice of God may be heard. For in the silence Spirit speaks Truth to us and just the Truth of which we stand in need" (*Teach Us to Pray*, p. 17).

God "speaks" to us in the silence in various ways to suit our needs at the time. Sometimes His "speaking" may be an inner harmonious feeling or a direct inner knowing; it may come as an idea or a definite statement or affirmation; perhaps the words of a beloved hymn or poem or Bible verse suffice to present His answer. There are times when we just have a sense of peace, of well-being. At the core of all these ways is some divine idea that God is revealing to us.

"God answers our prayers in ideas, thoughts, words; these are translated into the outer realms, in time and condition" (Christian Healing, p. 78).

Because "Order is heaven's first law" (Alexander Pope) there is an orderly technique to be observed in steps that lead to the silence. There are times when one step seems to follow so closely upon another that we are not conscious of its being a separate activity.

The Process of Entering the Silence (Secret Place)

Step 1 - Relaxation

All efforts to get into "the silence" will be unavailing unless both mind and body are relaxed. Relaxation is not inertia, but is rather a state of freedom and responsiveness on the part of mind and body. When the mind is calm it is easier for the

body to relax; when the body is relaxed it is easier for the mind to respond to the revelations of God in "the silence."

"Much can be accomplished in the way of bodily relaxation by quietly telling the body to relax, to let go, to cease from its struggle...True relaxation... is a complete surrender to the presence and power of Spirit... one should be physically comfortable, free from strain, so that the body itself is not a disturbing factor or a distracting influence" (Meditation in the Silence).

Step 2 - Meditation

Meditation is the act of contemplating; keeping the mind or attention fixed on a definite subject; musing on or pondering. During meditation we think about God and His ideas; we think about our relation to God as His son. In meditation we contemplate divine ideas and begin to deny unreality and affirm the Truth.

"True meditation consists in allowing the mind to make unlimited flights of speculation regarding the nature of the Mind of God... until man becomes conscious of the presence of God (Meditation in the Silence).

For example, if we are meditating on the idea of life, we may find it necessary to deny the unreality of illness, weakness, or death. We then begin to affirm the truth that God is life; that He is the Source of all life, and we are heirs to His life, which is eternal. Many other related thoughts may come to us during this meditation period; some we will probably discard, but others we will undoubtedly accept as we ponder their meanings.

Step 3 - Concentration

Concentration means to bring all one's mental powers, faculties, or activities to bear upon one course of action or thought, or one object; to fix exclusive attention.

In this step we focus our entire attention consciously on God. The period of concentration is actually the time when we begin to *know* God; it is the meeting of our human mind *consciously* with the Mind of God. Whereas in meditation we have moved ideas in our mind, it is now our mind directly *addressing* God, as the first step in the divine "dialogue." We are making ourself open and receptive to what will follow in "the silence."

"Concentration is singleness of mind or purpose.... that sort of interest in which all the forces of your being are intent upon a given objective, or unified in a given purpose.... This concentration... is best attained by continually turning the attention to the infinite nature of God, in whom 'we live, and move, and have our being' "(Meditation in the Silence).

We hold ourself in "singleness of mind or purpose" without interference by mixed thinking. It is like holding up an empty cup so that God may fill it with His inspiration.

Step 4 - Realization

Realization of the presence of God is actually the silence itself. It is the time when we

"Are still, and we no longer entertain
Our own imperfect thoughts and vain opinions,
But God alone speaks in us, and we wait
In singleness of heart, that we may know
His will . . . " (Longfellow).

When mind and body are wholly relaxed, the meditation period has cleared the way for concentration on God as the one Presence and one Power. We are now directing our attention Godward so that when we reach the point of "the silence" we shall know that we are in "the secret place of the Most High," in the very presence of God. In eagerness "we wait in singleness of heart" for the revelation, inspiration, or illumination from the Father. When God "speaks" it is the movement of Divine Mind in us expressing divine ideas that are absorbed by our waiting consciousness. We have now come to the place where we know!

When we have "found" the "secret place of the Most High," the period of the silence is the time of inspiration when God breathes into our soul consciousness just the ideas of which we have need at that time. This is *God's part* in the divine "dialogue."

Step 5 - Thanksgiving

Probably nothing works more quickly to make the mind receptive and responsive to God ideas than gratitude and thanksgiving, for these attitudes of mind fill us with expectancy.

"Metaphysicians find that words that express thanks, gratitude, and praise release latent energies of mind and spirit; and the effects of their use follow so quickly that they can almost be identified with the originating words" (Teach Us to Pray, pp. 91, 92).

We find that two things occur when thankfulness fills the mind: first, there is increased growth or expansion in our consciousness, for we have come to the place of acknowledging God as the source of good and ourself as His heir; second,

there is a consequent increase in manifestation of this good in body or in affairs. Our recognition of good has prompted our "attitude of gratitude" and this in turn has opened the way for the manifestation of our desire.

The attitude of thankfulness opens the way for the fulfillment of our righteous desires, for thankfulness is the action of both faith and love—the faith that perceives that good is awaiting our claim, and the love that unifies us with the good we long to manifest in mind, body, and affairs.

That thankfulness is vital in the fulfillment of our desire is not a new teaching. Charles Fillmore reminds us of this in his book *Jesus Christ Heals*, page 139, when he says:

"The prophets of old knew the power of increase inherent in thanksgiving. 'Praise ye Jehovah' is repeated again and again in the Psalms, because the Psalmist knew that praise and thanksgiving divinely directed tap the mighty reservoirs of infinite Mind."

To sum up: true thanksgiving is knowing the good, seeking the good, speaking only good, expecting only good, and the result of these attitudes is to bring the fulfillment of our righteous desires.

Waiting on God

To "wait" on God is to enter consciously into prayer in all its phases. We quietly meditate upon Truth, upon God, and upon our relationship to Him. We talk to God as naturally as to a loved one. (Often we are even more at ease when we talk to God.) Then we "wait." Some meanings of the word wait are: "to observe; to be alert or watchful; to rest in expectation and patience." Any of these

definitions describes exactly what we do when we "wait" on God. There is first the definite turning of the consciousness Godward so that we may be alert to His guidance. Then there is patience that allows us to be expectant, remaining peaceful yet ready to obey the guidance thus received with no feeling of hurry or anxiety.

The result of our "waiting" upon God will be revelation, inspiration, and guidance in the silence. As we "wait" on God we are in a listening attitude; we are not listening with the physical ear but with our inner ear to the inner voice of the Spirit of Truth.

God expresses His "speaking" through many channels. Sometimes He may be heard in the audible words of other people; sometimes through the written word. At times we may hear Him through a deep desire for justice, perhaps through the feeling engendered by beautiful scenery. We hear His voice in the compassion that wells up in us to correct some condition or circumstance. Whatever channel is used, it has been the inner voice "speaking" to focus our attention on that which is good and beautiful. Through the simple words of a hymn, men and women have been stirred to change their way of life. Seeing the needs of their fellow men has caused others to give their lives in service for humanity. Many times the leading comes simply as inspiring thoughts in mind. However, when we "wait" on God, the answer will be unmistakable-the Truth will be revealed to us in whatever way we need at the moment.

The importance of "waiting" on God is emphasized by the suggestion that students of Truth need to be encouraged to stand alone and not be bound

to teachers, good as they and their work may be. As we "wait" on God in the silence of our own soul, we are standing alone with God, for we have given Him our full attention.

"When you have shut your doors and darkened your room, remember never to say that you are alone, for you are not alone, but God is within, and your genius is within" (Epictetus, Discourses of).

Thus "waiting" upon God must involve standing alone with Him, and the result is victory.

If we are faced with some situation in life that requires adjustment, we learn that we must not attempt to do the work by human strength. We enter the "inner chamber" of prayer and "wait on God," knowing that all of the power of Divine Mind is working in and through us to bring about the right solution. We accept our freedom (salvation) from bondage and claim our inheritance of good in the form of divine ideas. By this attitude we "have this mind... which was also in Christ Jesus." It was the movement of God-Mind in Jesus that made possible His mighty works of healing, supplying of food, raising of the dead, and casting out error. Jesus said, "The Father abiding in me doeth his works" (John 14:10 A.S.V.).

Expressing Your Blessings

We keep the blessings (ideas) of Spirit flowing into our life through waiting on God in "the silence." Then we give out through thoughts, words, and deeds the inspiration we have received through our abiding in "the secret place." This receiving and giving is the practical application of Truth.

"If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17 A.S.V.).

When we ourself become aware of God's love, we are able to love our dear ones, our friends, our neighbors, in a more spiritual way, allowing this same love to embrace all mankind. When our mind is filled with a new sense of divine life, we can pass on this blessing to our physical body so that it may manifest the perfect health that God intended. If in the silence the revelation comes that God is our inexhaustible source of supply, then we keep this blessing flowing by speaking words of prosperity and expressing these words in action. If in the "secret place" we feel the harmony and peace of God, then we radiate these qualities to all around us, and they will continue to flow into our consciousness.

"Remember that blessings cannot remain static. To enjoy a blessing we must pass it along or share it with others. Our blessings circulate between us and God as they pass through the lives of other persons" (Lowell Fillmore).

Giving and receiving represent one law that operates on all levels of life. If we receive blessings from God during our periods of prayer, then it is only logical that in order to keep this law operating we must *give forth* in our daily living the vital inspirations that come to us. Jesus emphasized this point in saying,

"Give, and it shall be given unto you... for with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again" (Luke 6:38 A.S.V.).

The blessings of God are the powers of His nature that come to us in the form of the ideas

that make up our divine inheritance. Therefore, it is only through the practice of "the silence" in the "secret place of the Most High" that we can become aware of these powers or blessings of God. We are able to increase the inflow of God ideas by our practical use of them, rather than by trying to hold them as something apart from our daily activities. The poet tells us,

"Love that is hoarded molds at last, Until we find some day The only thing we ever have Is what we give away"

(Louis Ginsberg).

Lesson V

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 every one that retaineth her. . . . With all thy getting get understanding.

-Prov. 3:13-18; 4:7.

1. What is this understanding on the getting of which depends so much? Is it intellectual lore, obtained from delving deep into books of other

men's making? Is it knowledge obtained from studying rocks (geology), or stars (astronomy), or even the human body (physiology)? Nay, verily, for when did such knowledge ever insure life and health and peace, ways of pleasantness, with riches and honor?

- 2. Understanding is a spiritual birth, a revelation of God within the heart of man. Jesus touched the root of the matter when, after having asked the apostles a question that was answered variously, according to the intellectual perception of the men, He asked another question to which Peter gave a reply not based on external reasoning, but on intuition. He said to Peter, "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).
- 3. You may have an intellectual perception of Truth. You may easily grasp with the mind the statement that God is the giver of all good gifts—life, health, love—just as people have for centuries grasped it. Or you may go farther, and intellectually see that God is not only the giver, but the gift itself; that He is life, health, love, in us. But unless Truth is "revealed... unto thee" by "my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 16:17), it is of no practical benefit to you or to anyone else.
- 4. This revelation of Truth to the consciousness of a person is spiritual understanding.
- 5. You may say to yourself, or another may say silently to you, over and over again, that you are well and wise and happy. On the mental plane a certain "cure" is effected, and for a time you will feel well and wise and happy. This is simply a form of hypnotism, or mind cure. But until, down in the

depths of your being, you are conscious of your oneness with the Father, until you know within yourself that the spring of all wisdom and health and joy is within your own being, ready at any moment to leap forth at the call of your need, you will not have spiritual understanding.

- 6. All the teachings of Jesus were for the purpose of leading men into this consciousness of their oneness with the Father. He had to begin at the external man—because people then as now were living mostly in external things—and teach him to love his enemies, to do good to others, and so forth. These were external steps for them to take—a sort of lopping off of the ends of the branches; but they were steps that led on up to the place of desire and attainment where finally the Master said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16:12).
- 7. He told them of the Comforter that should be in them, and which should teach them all things, revealing the "deep things of God" (I Cor. 2:10) to them, showing them things to come. In other words, He told them how they might find the kingdom of heaven within themselves—the kingdom of love, of power, of life.
- 8. The coming of the Comforter to their hearts and lives, giving them power over every form of sin, sickness, sorrow, and over even death itself, is exactly what we mean by understanding or realization. The power that this consciousness of the indwelling Father gives is for us today as much as it was for those to whom the Nazarene spoke. Aye, more; for did He not say, "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)?

- 9. All the foregoing lessons have been steppingstones leading up to the point where man may realize the ever-abiding inner presence of the Most High, God. "Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you?" (I Cor. 6:19).
- 10. I cannot reveal God to you. You cannot reveal God to another. If I have learned, I may tell you, and you may tell another, how to seek and find God, each within himself. But the new birth into the consciousness of our spiritual faculties and possibilities is indeed 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 every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). The new birth takes place in the silence, in the invisible.
- 11. Intellectual lore can be bought and sold; understanding, or realization, cannot. A man, Simon by name, once attempted to buy the power that spiritual understanding gives, from another who possessed it. "But Peter said unto him, Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right before God" (Acts 8:20, 21).
- 12. Nor will crying and beseeching bring spiritual understanding. Hundreds of people have tried this method, and have not received that for which they earnestly but ignorantly sought. They have not received, because they did not know how to take that which God freely offered. Others have sought with selfish motives this spiritual understanding, or consciousness of the indwelling Father, because of the power it would give them.

"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures" (or to serve selfish ends) (James 4:3).

13. Understanding, or realization of the presence of God within us, is as Peter said, "the gift of God" (John 4:10). It comes to any and all who learn how to seek it aright. Emerson said, "This energy [consciousness of God in the soul] 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 [consciousness] the man comes back with a changed tone. He does not talk with men with an eve to their opinion. He tries them.... But the 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."

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

15. One may so desire a partial revelation of God within himself, a revelation along one line—as, for instance, that of health—as to seek it with all his heart. And if he has learned how to take the desired gift, by uncompromising affirmation that it is his already, he will get understanding, or realiza-

tion, of God as his perfect health. So with any other desired gift of God. This is a step in the right direction. It is learning how to take God by faith for whatever one desires. But in the onward growth, the time will come to every man when he will hear the divine voice within him saying, "Come up higher," and he will pass beyond any merely selfish desires that are just for his own comfort's sake. He will desire good that he may have the more to give out, knowing that as good (God) flows through him to others it will make him "every whit whole" (John 7:23).

- 16. In the beginning of Solomon's reign as king over Israel, the divine Presence appeared to him in a dream at night, saying: "Ask what I shall give thee" (I Kings 3:5). And Solomon said: "Give thy servant therefore an understanding heart" (I Kings 3:9).
- 17. "And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.
- 18. "And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies, but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern justice;
- 19. "Behold, I have done according to thy word: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there hath been none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.
- 20. "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).
 - 21. Thus in losing sight of all worldly goods and

chattels, all merely selfish ends, and desiring above all things an understanding heart (or a spiritual consciousness of God within him as wisdom, life, power), Solomon received all the goods or good things included, so that there was none among the kings like unto him in worldly possessions. "Seek ye first his kingdom [consciousness], and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). "For whosoever would save his life [the things of his life] shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake [that is willing to forget the so-called good things of this life for the Truth's sake, choosing before all things the finding of God in his own soul] shall find it" (Matt. 16:25).

22. When you first consciously desire spiritual understanding, you do not attain it at once. You have been living in the external of your being and have believed yourself cut off from God. Your first step after coming to yourself like the prodigal son is to say as he did, "I will arise and go to my Father" (Luke 15:18) to turn your thoughts away from the external seeming toward the central and real; to know intellectually that you are not cut off from God, and that He forever desires to manifest Himself within you as your present deliverance from all suffering and sin. Just as Jesus taught, we begin our journey toward understanding by cutting off the branches of our selfishness. We try to love instead of to hate. Instead of avenging ourselves, we begin to forgive, even if it costs us great mental effort. We begin to deny envy, jealousy, anger, sickness, and all imperfection, and to affirm love, peace, and health.

23. Begin with the words of Truth that you have

learned, and which perhaps you have as yet only comprehended with the intellect. You must be willing to take the very first light you receive and use it faithfully, earnestly, to help both yourself and others. Sometimes you will be almost overcome by questions and doubts arising in your own mind when you are looking in vain for results. But you must with effort pass the place of doubt; and some day, in the fullness of God's time, while you are using the words of Truth, they will suddenly be illumined and become to you the living word within you-"the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world" (John 1:9). You will no longer dwell in darkness, for the light will be within your own heart; and the word will be made flesh to you; that is, you will be conscious of a new and diviner life in your body. and a new and diviner love for all people, a new and diviner power to accomplish.

24. This is spiritual understanding. This is a flash of the Most High within your consciousness. "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 on your success will fill you with an inexpressible sense of humility; when all mere compliments will be to you as "sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal" (I Cor. 13:1). Truly, from that inspiration a man comes back with a changed tone!

25. With spiritual understanding comes new light on the Scriptures. The very Spirit of truth, which has come to abide with you forever in your consciousness, takes the deep things of God and reveals them to you. You will no longer run to and fro, seeking teachers or healers and rely solely on them for guidance. You will gladly let them help you reach the point where you will know that the living light, the living word within you, will "guide you into all the truth" (John 16:13).

26. What we need to do is to seek the revelation of the living Christ within our own being, each for himself, knowing that only this divinity come forth

can make us powerful and happy.

27. Every person in his heart desires, though he may not yet quite know it, this new birth into a higher life, into spiritual consciousness. Everyone wants more power, more good, more joy. And though to the unawakened mind it may seem that it is more money as money, or more goods that he wants, it is, nevertheless, more of good (God) that he craves; for all good is God.

28. Many today are conscious that the inner hunger cannot be satisfied with worldly goods, and are with all earnestness seeking spiritual understanding, or consciousness, of an immanent God. They have been seeking long, with a great desire of unselfishness and a feeling that when they have truly found God they will begin to do for others. Faithful service for others hastens the day-dawning for us. The gifts of God are not given in reward for faithful service, as a fond mother gives cake to her child for being good; nevertheless they are a reward, inasmuch as service is one of the steps that lead up to the place where all the fullness of God awaits men. And while spiritual understanding is in reality a "gift of God," it comes to us more or less quickly in proportion as we use the light that we

already have.

- 29. I believe that too much introspection, too much of what people usually call "spiritual seeking," is detrimental rather than helpful to the end desired—spiritual growth. "Spiritual seeking" is a sort of spiritual selfishness, paradoxical as this may seem. From the beginning to the end, Jesus taught the giving of what one possesses to him who has none.
- 30. "Is not this the fast that I have chosen [said the Spirit of God through the prophet Isaiah]: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free?...
- 31. "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 . . .
- 32. "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy healing shall spring forth speedily... Then shalt thou call, and Jehovah will answer... Here I am....
- 33. "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 the noonday;
- 34. "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).
- 35. Stagnation is death. A pool cannot be kept clean and sweet and renewed unless there is an outlet as well as an inlet. It is our business to keep both the inlet and outlet open, and God's business to keep the stream flowing in and through us.

Unless you use for the service of others what God has already given to you, you will find it a long, weary road to spiritual understanding.

36. We cry out and strain every nerve to obtain full understanding, just as sometimes we have heard earnest people, but people wholly ignorant of divine laws, beseech God for the full baptism of "the Holy Spirit" (Luke 3:16) as in the day of Pentecost. Jesus said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16:12). We grow by using for others the light and knowledge we have. We expand, as we go on step by step in spiritual insight, until in the fullness of time—which means when we have grown spiritually up to the place where God sees that we are able to bear the many things—we receive the desire of our hearts, understanding.

37. Seek your own Lord. Take the light as it is revealed to you, and use it for others; and prove for yourselves whether there be Truth in this prophecy of Isaiah, that "then shall thy light rise in darkness, and thine obscurity be as the noonday" (Isa. 58:10) and "then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy healing shall spring forth speedily" (Isa. 58:8).

COMMENTARY ON

"SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING"

What Is Spiritual Understanding?

Probably all of us have had the experience of suddenly becoming aware of new meaning in a verse of Scripture, a hymn, or a poem that we have known since childhood. We feel as though a new world has opened to us through this revelation of the Truth back of familiar words. This is spiritual understanding.

Spiritual understanding is the revelation of Truth by Spirit to man's consciousness. It comes when man turns his attention consciously to God and recognizes his oneness with Him. No matter what tasks we face, what challenges we have to meet, what decisions are to be made, each one of us may contact God through prayer. Prayer awakens our soul so that we may receive the spiritual understanding to say and do the right things. Turning to God is the only way to attain true spiritual understanding.

How did Peter know that Jesus was the Christ? He knew this in the same way that any of us knows that which is the Truth—through spiritual understanding. Peter had known Jesus intimately, had observed His life and His works, had heard His teaching. Intellectually Peter had undoubtedly accepted Jesus' teachings.

When challenged by the question put to the disciples by Jesus, "But who do you say that I

am?" (Matt. 16:15, R.S.V.), Peter in a flash knew the truth beyond his intellectual knowledge or reasoning. This was spiritual understanding. It was revealed from the Spirit of God within his own being, so Peter could say with conviction, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16, R.S.V.).

Jesus realized that at this moment Peter had touched the fount of wisdom within his own divine nature. He assured Peter that he was blessed by this understanding that had not come from "flesh and blood" (Matt. 16:17) but from the Father.

Since spiritual understanding is a "gift of God" it can neither be received from another person nor purchased; we can only attain a consciousness of it when we realize that it is part of our divine birthright. We should affirm its availability, then act on the revelations it gives to us. Understanding unfolds in our soul in exact proportion to the steadfastness of our faith in God, and according to our perseverance in seeking true guidance from the "still small voice" within.

"Spiritual understanding is the quickening of the Spirit within. Spiritual understanding is the ability of the mind to apprehend and realize the laws of thought and the relation of ideas one to another" (*The Revealing Word*, p. 202).

Understanding: Intellectual and Spiritual

As children we were taught about God from the level of understanding of our parents, guardians, teachers, or ministers. We undoubtedly read the Bible and other books telling of God and His laws. However, spiritual understanding goes deeper than

knowledge that is conveyed to us by others or by books, for it is God's revelation of Truth in us. We are not implying that facts are not valuable, but they deal more with the "letter" of the law (II Cor. 3:6, A.S.V.). We are seeking the "spirit" that "giveth life" which God so freely offers. When we earnestly desire to know God, not merely know about Him, desire to understand ourself and the universe as God created it, the Spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit (the Teacher within) "speaks" to us as intuition and brings us the spiritual understanding we so desire.

"Intellectual understanding comes first in the soul's development, then a deeper understanding of principle follows, until the whole man ripens into wisdom" (Keep a True Lent, p. 155).

When our consciousness is directed only toward the external world we receive information through the five senses, which information is then handled by our intellect, or thinking faculty. It is here that we observe ideas, things, people, even beliefs about God, for the intellect (thinking) is the realm of choice and judgment. Too often through ignorance we judge from the appearance of some manifestation, not from the reality. Intellectual knowledge acquired through the five senses and handled by the intellect may be good as far as it goes, but in accepting such knowledge as final we stand in danger of weakening our conscious contact with Divine Mind and putting our dependence on the external world. Unless intellectual understanding has become grounded in Truth, it can fill an individual's life with restlessness and dissatisfaction. giving him a sense of insecurity.

Intellectual knowledge or understanding is developed through use of the reasoning, thinking faculty as it gathers facts on any subject. This is done by listening to teachers, studying books, observing phenomena along any line. Thus we acquire a knowledge of *facts* along some particular line, such as biology, geology, astronomy, physiology, religion, and the like. Many of these facts may be true, but until these facts are enlightened by spiritual understanding we do not apprehend their deeper meaning for our life and our world.

Intellectual seeking may become so all-absorbing that we fail to grasp fully and use what we have learned. It is possible to read too many books, and hear too many lectures, because our mind becomes cluttered with knowledge about God and His laws, rather than becoming more consciously aware of His presence within; we then suffer from what has been called "mental indigestion." The parable of the sower tells of some seed falling on rocky places that had "no deepness of earth . . . they had no root" (Matt. 13:5, 6, R.S.V.). When we do only intellectual seeking for spiritual things, the seeds of Truth do not get into the depths of our being, thus they put down no roots in our consciousness. We need to be rooted and grounded in Truth, not merely to have a theoretical understanding of facts,

"that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love...know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge" (Eph. 3:17, 18, 19 A.S.V.).

Intellectual understanding may present information about God, but spiritual understanding knows God.

How God Is Revealed to Us

God is revealed to us as spiritual understanding. The revelation of God to each of us is an intimately personal thing that takes place within the depths of our own soul. The awakening and growth of Truth in us is an inner process and can be accomplished only by an intuitive recognition within our own consciousness.

Revelation comes from the Latin revelare, meaning "to unveil." It is the act of disclosing something that has been concealed. Revelation also means the "act of communicating divine truth." Someone may tell us about God, just as one may describe to us the beauty of a rose or the music of a symphony. However, we do not actually know God until His Presence has been disclosed to us within our own consciousness, anymore than we are fully conscious of the beauty of the rose or the music of the symphony until we have actually seen the rose and heard the music.

There are many ways that we are awakened to the revelation of God in us. We often say that one person cannot possibly reveal God to another any more than he can eat another's food for him, breathe air for him, or learn his lessons for him. This is true in the sense that true revelation occurs only in the individual soul. Yet the value of other individuals, situations, and experiences in stimulating the revelation of God in us must not be underestimated. For example, Myrtle Fillmore was healed through a transformation in consciousness in which she realized that "I am a child of God and therefore, I do not inherit sickness." But she was stimulated to accept this realization by hearing the

lecturer Dr. E. B. Weeks. It was primarily important that she was ready to hear the Truth of God, yet secondarily it was important for Dr. Weeks to have spoken the words that called forth her positive response. The speaker of Truth and the hearer are of complementary value in the revelation of Truth.

"WHAT GOD IS LIKE

I did not know what God is like Until a friendly word Came to me in an hour of need—And it was God I heard.

I did not know what God is like Until I heard love's feet On errands of God's mercy Go up and down life's street.

I did not know what God is like Until I felt a hand Clasp mine and lift me when alone I had no strength to stand.

I think I know what God is like, For I have seen the face Of God's son looking at me From all the human race."

(What God Is Like, James Dillet Freeman).

It must remain clear, however, that the human agency is not the source of our understanding. The source of our understanding is from within. We respond to external stimuli out of the budding Truth of our own souls. "For their inspiration, the Fillmores had gone, as all great teachers do, direct to God. Mr. Fillmore had written, 'In this babel I

will go to headquarters.' He and his wife never thought of Truth as something to be learned out of books alone or to be absorbed wholly from teachers. They thought of Truth as something that each individual must finally discover for himself in himself." (The Household of Faith, p. 59).

If you look into your own life you will discover that you have been awakened to the revelation of God in you through the agency of many different external stimuli. These would include books, loved ones, contact with nature; in short, all of our experiences both positive and negative are capable of inspiring us to open ourself to spiritual understanding. We have the capacity to respond intuitively to the activity of God in all our experiences.

Just as Peter's answer to Jesus' question came as a revelation from the Father within his own being, so our search for God must be within ourself by thinking and feeling the ideas that make up the nature of God. "Think on these things" (Phil. 4:8).

The child learns to know his father by association. It is by direct association through prayer that we become conscious of our indwelling Father-God. Through the act of prayer we move into that deep inner silence where we listen as God "speaks" or reveals His divine ideas to us; this is spiritual understanding.

Our Part in Spiritual Understanding

Beseeching will not bring spiritual understanding, nor will it bring the realization of God's Presence and Power within us, because spiritual understanding is an ever-expanding revelation of Truth in our own consciousness. In one sense we do not "get" spiritual understanding nor is it brought to

us, but rather it is the "gift of God" that comes through growth and unfoldment.

As the word beseeching is commonly used, it means "to implore, to beg," but often it accompanies a feeling of fear that the request may be turned down. We can see, therefore, that beseeching could not have any part in our attainment of spiritual understanding. When we entertain feelings of fear, distrust, anxiety, or doubt we clog the channel (our own consciousness) through which Spirit wishes to reveal Truth.

When we tune in to one particular channel on television we get only what is being broadcast from that particular station. If we do not "tune in" to God in faith we cannot expect to become consciously aware of His revelations, or spiritual understanding. We must have an abiding faith in God and a genuine desire to be guided and governed by the Christ Spirit. God completed His creation by implanting the gift of His own nature in man. We can have all of His good that we are ready to accept and express. We do not need to beg Him to give it to us. Certainly spiritual understanding is part of this good that is ours for the claiming.

Spiritual understanding cannot come to anyone whose motives are selfish, for spiritual understanding is the power of God moving through an enlightened consciousness to bless the world as well as the individual. We cannot use God for our own selfish purposes, but rather God uses us to uplift and bless all creation as we let go of all erroneous beliefs in our consciousness and open ourselves to His direction and guidance.

All of us must come to the point of desiring spiritual understanding for the good of all, know-

ing that what blesses one, blesses all. If we feel any sense of separation from other members of the human race, we cannot become truly illumined with spiritual understanding for it can only come into a consciousness free of a belief in separation from God and from our fellow man.

Spiritual understanding in the form of divine ideas is accepted as a "gift of God" by our thinking and feeling only after beliefs of selfishness, fear, and distrust are erased from our mind. If we ask for this "gift of God" before we have cleansed our mind and heart to receive it, we are asking "amiss." If we cannot believe that God will answer our prayer, this too can cause a mental block that prevents the acceptance of God's revelations.

We move toward attainment of spiritual understanding by desiring it with all our being, knowing it to be a part of our heritage from God. However, desire of itself does not bring understanding. Work has to be done in the soul to prepare it to accept the gift. Out of our desire we may begin to study Truth principles by reading books, or by listening to teachers. We come to see the value of affirmations, and the importance of taking the words into meditation, so that our soul may "digest" the ideas back of them. We know we must take still another step. We must enter "the silence" where we "listen" to God as He fills the words of our prayer with life and meaning in order that we may feel the "spirit" of the words, which is spiritual understanding.

Perhaps no parable in the Bible points out more clearly the steps taken to attain spiritual understanding than does the story of the prodigal son. Until the prodigal son had the deep desire to get

out of the condition in which he found himself in the "far country" he did not turn his thoughts toward his father. With this desire, however, "he came to himself" (Luke 15:17) and he said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight" (Luke 15:18 A.S.V.). The prodigal's desire to go to his father was followed by definite action, for we read, "And he arose, and came to his father" (Luke 15:20). As the son journeyed to the father's house, he went with a new purpose, not the selfish one he had started out with. Now he was willing to do what was right to put his life in order. After his return he heard the blessed words from his father.

"Bring forth quickly the best robe...and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring the fatted calf...for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found" (Luke 15:22, 23, 24 A.S.V.).

When we are faithful to the steps that we must take to reach our Father's house, we too shall have the symbols of the robe, the ring, the shoes, and the fatted calf in the form of spiritual understanding.

Spiritual Understanding and the Law of Unfoldment

The law of unfoldment is the dynamic urge for fulfillment of the divine plan or pattern for man and all creation.

Unfoldment requires the use of, or exercise of, certain principles necessary to bring about development. A seed may lie dormant, but once put into an environment that makes possible the exercise of

the life principle within it, we find growth beginning. As the word of Truth (seed) germinates and develops within our soul, our capabilities increase, and we find our world enlarged in scope.

Our primary objective in these lessons is to promote spiritual unfoldment, which is the expression of the God ideas that form our spiritual heritage. We increase our mental and emotional capacity in order to receive spiritual understanding.

"From center to circumference is the method of growth throughout the universe" (Atom-Smashing Power of Mind, p. 134).

Because unfoldment is a law of life, we cannot receive the understanding of the whole Spirit of God at once. Jesus was well aware that it had to be an orderly process, for He said,

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16:12 A.S.V.).

As we progress in spiritual study we realize that understanding comes through a step-by-step unfoldment in the individual consciousness. If to our limited stage of comprehension results seem slow in manifesting, we are able to rise above discouragement by using the spiritual understanding already revealed, for "the Lord shall give thee understanding in all things" (II Tim. 2:7 A.S.V.).

Perhaps one of the most significant things that finding God does for us is make us dependent upon Him, yet independent of anything outside of ourself, in the sense of thinking of any person or thing as the ultimate source of our good. This independence does not separate us from our fellow man. As a matter of fact, it brings us even closer to all men in consciousness. Having recognized the

Fatherhood of God and our dependence upon Him, we then know the brotherhood of man and look with love and compassion on others. It is only as we turn in prayer to the "fountainhead" of all good that our oneness with God is fully revealed to us and we feel the inspiration of His ideas of life, love, faith, peace, power flooding our consciousness, ready to be expressed in our human contacts.

Spiritual understanding is not something we hoard for ourself or store up for future use. It causes us to unfold through loving service to God and man. Jesus taught, "Give, and it shall be given unto you" (Luke 6:38 A.S.V.). Service to others, when motivated by love and faith, is one of the steps by which we attain spiritual understanding, for we grow by sharing. Such service does not always mean doing things in the outer, for our truest service is often that which is given in prayer and in thought. For someone needing help, there are times when a silent prayer of blessing can do more than any outer act or gift. When our seeking for Truth includes the sharing of faith, power, and understanding with others, we increase the expression and manifestation of these spiritual gifts in our own life

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