

Foreword

This course is a beginning, not an end. Your Friend goes with you. You are not alone. No one who calls on Him can call in vain. Whatever troubles you, be certain that He has the answer and will gladly give it to you if you simply turn to Him and ask it of Him. He will not withhold all answers that you need for anything that seems to trouble you. He knows the way to solve all problems and resolve all doubts. His certainty is yours. You need but ask it of Him, and it will be given you.

You are as certain of arriving home as is the pathway of the sun laid down before it rises, after it has set, and in the half-lit hours in between. Indeed, your pathway is more certain still, for it cannot be possible to change the course of those whom God has called to Him. Therefore obey your will, and follow Him Whom you accepted as your Voice, to speak of what you really want and really need. His is the Voice for God, and also yours. And thus He speaks of freedom and of truth.¹

With these words, *A Course in Miracles* concludes its prescribed curriculum of 365 daily lessons, and it is with these words, too, that we begin our study.

A Course in Miracles (often called just “the *Course*”) is a self-study course for retraining the mind that is spiritual, rather than religious, in its perspective. Although it uses Christian terminology, it is ecumenical in its approach, and its underlying ontology is reminiscent of ancient refrains, echoing the world’s most hallowed traditions.

The *Course* is pragmatic in its method, and its aim is a peaceful mind: “*Knowledge is not the motivation for learning this course. Peace is.*”² Nevertheless, the *Course* frequently emphasizes its simplicity.³

The story of the *Course* began when, in the midst of an environment of intense competition and negative attitudes, Columbia University clinical psychologist Dr. William T. Thetford decided he had had enough and declared to his colleague, Dr. Helen Schucman, “There must be another way, and I’m determined to find it.” Dr. Schucman vowed to help him.

What ensued was a dramatic progression of waking dreams for Schucman,

¹ W365:2-3..

² T8:1.

³ For example, see T9:29, 10:74 , and 15:39.

which culminated in October 1965 with her experience of a voice which spoke clearly in her mind, saying “This is a course in miracles. Please take notes.”

With Thetford’s support and assistance in transcribing her shorthand notes, Schucman took down some fifteen hundred typewritten pages of *A Course in Miracles* over a period of seven years.

Schucman did not claim to be the author of the material herself. As she often explained, she heard a kind of inner dictation, and she felt compelled to write it down, even though at times she disagreed with the content and resisted the process. The voice which spoke through Helen clearly identifies himself as Jesus. Nonetheless, one need not be Christian nor accept Christianity’s traditional doctrines to benefit from the teachings of the *Course*. Indeed, traditional Christians will at first find many of the pronouncements contained in this work to be startling and perhaps unbelievable. Persistence and open-mindedness will nevertheless be rewarded.

Completed in 1972, *A Course in Miracles* consists of three volumes—the Text, the Workbook for Students, and the Manual for Teachers. The *Course* was first published in book form by the Foundation for Inner Peace three years later, in 1975, after further editing by Kenneth Wapnick and Helen Schucman with only minimal consultation with Thetford, despite the fact that he had been put in charge of content.⁴ As a result of that later editing, about a quarter of the material included in first five chapters of the Text was deleted and the remaining material was rearranged and rewritten; a brief new section, the Clarification of Terms, was also added.

The original transcript that became *A Course in Miracles* was produced as a result of collaboration between Schucman and Thetford, whom many believe were involved with each other in the “holy relationship” described in Chapters 17-22 of the Text. This edition of *A Course in Miracles* preserves the original language of the dictation of those chapters, which were addressed to the two collaborators as they worked together to produce the manuscript that became the *Course*. The later editing changes the focus of these important chapters and addresses them to a solitary reader, removing the mutuality that is explicit in the original dictation.

The edition of *A Course in Miracles* that is reproduced in this volume is sometimes referred to as the Hugh Lynn Cayce⁵ version because, upon completion, it had

⁴ See Appendix II at pages 631 for a discussion of the direction that Bill be in charge of decisions as to what material to include in the *Course*.

⁵ See Appendix II at pages 630-31 for a description of the Hugh Lynn Cayce manuscript.

been delivered to Hugh Lynn Cayce and others in 1972, before the manuscript was subjected to the substantial editing process referred to above. This edition contains the unabridged Text volume of the *Course* as it was completed by Schucman and Thetford, as well as the Workbook for Students and the Manual for Teachers. The only changes that have been made to the edition of the *Course* as completed by Schucman and Thetford have been to correct obvious typographic errors and misspellings, to modernize and render consistent punctuation and capitalization, and to format the material for print publication. Apart from the simple section and paragraph numbering which we include for ease of reference and navigation, nothing has been added to or omitted from the main body of the work.

The *Course* frequently gives uncommon meanings to common words. For that reason, a Glossary is provided in Appendix I to the Text as an aid to the beginning student. A second Appendix provides an understanding of the editing process that *A Course in Miracles* has undergone.

Both its history and detailed textual analysis clearly establish that this edition is closer to the dictation that Helen Schucman received than other versions of the *Course* that have been published. Great care has been taken in dealing with the editorial issues presented by the original typed manuscript, and we trust that those to whom this book comes will benefit by it as greatly as have we.

We are indebted to Robert Perry for his contribution of the Glossary and “The Earlier Versions and the Editing of *A Course in Miracles*,” which are included as Appendices to the Text in this edition. We have sought to emulate his high standards of care and scholarship in preparing this book.

Finally, we would be remiss were we to fail to acknowledge the selfless support provided to the Society by its members and others. From its earliest days, the work of the Society has been enabled by generous financial support provided by many individuals whose only benefit has been the satisfaction of fostering the circulation of this sacred writing in the world. Publication of this edition, in particular, has been underwritten by a substantial grant from a member who wishes to remain anonymous. In addition, we want to acknowledge the important contributions that have been made by a *Course* teacher and member of our Society, Armando Brons, who has provided insightful editorial assistance throughout the process of bringing this edition to print. To those supporters and all of our members, we extend a sincere “thank you.” We are most grateful.