Hi Friends -

This is my final post on Emilie Cady’s Lessons in Truth. For this Study Edition I’ve placed Liberty or Bondage, Which? back to it’s original location—as the last chapter—partly for respect to Emilie Cady, but also because its message is more nuanced than the 11 chapters that originally came before it.

I sense that the popularity of Lessons in Truth has been its message of mysticism and that it has become Unity’s “primary textbook” because the mysticism in the lessons offer an important balance to the metaphysical writings of Charles Fillmore. Here are ten ways I see that to be true:
From Bad Decisions to Fullness of Time (paragraphs 1-5). The first five paragraphs describe God delivering us from our task masters (sickness, sorrow and poverty). Further, Emilie Cady repeatedly talks in this lesson about “an appointed time” when God will deliver and about a time when we were immature children who did not have the capacity for liberty. She implies that the reason we have fallen into bondage is not due to bad choices but rather due to not having entered into a “fullness of time.” Bad choices is a metaphysical explanation of why we suffer; but Emilie Cady has chosen to explain suffering from a mystical perspective—the need to wait upon God for a “fullness of time.”

From Oneness with Self to Oneness with God (6-9). In the next few paragraphs Emilie Cady talks about the prodigal son who will “rise and go to the Father.” This is the language of Oneness, which most of us understand. But it may be, as I believe, that there are two forms of “oneness.” There is a “oneness with the Father” and a “oneness with the Son.” Oneness with the Son is a unity of the Self, which is described in The Twelve Powers of Man and which is a largely psychological process of achieving wholeness of the soul. But “oneness with the Father” is a concept well-accepted in Christian mysticism. It is a spiritual oneness with the God who is both immanent and transcendent. And it is just this kind of oneness that Emilie Cady is talking about in these paragraphs.

From Being Source to Being an Inlet and Outlet (10-19). Emilie Cady writes in paragraph 10 that “All joy and strength and good springs up from a Fountain within one’s own being.” This concept of an “inner source” is well known in both metaphysics and Christian mysticism. But mystics understand this source to be an inlet from God, given to us so that we may become an outlet of God’s blessing. Emilie Cady stresses that “God in us is the fountain” and she does not make the mistake made all too often made by metaphysicians that the source is “our divinity.”

From Calling on Principle to Hearing God’s Call (20-22). In paragraph 20, Emilie Cady quotes Jesus in the Gospel of John “Ye have not chosen me but I have chosen you that ye might bring forth much fruit.” A metaphysician may say that Jesus, as our higher Self, is calling our disciples, our twelve powers. That is valid and may be true. But, as Emilie Cady says in this paragraph, “it was in reality because it was God’s “fullness of time” for you to arise and begin to claim your inheritance.” We may make choices as metaphysicians, but we do so because we are mystics who hear God’s call.

From Practicing Principle to Practicing Presence (23-27). This is the section where Emilie Cady tells us to spend one hour each day practicing the “Presence of God.” Note that she capitalizes the phrase, conveying that, for us, “the Presence” is real God. This is also a well-known teaching from Emmet Fox, who encourages us to shift our focus from the problems of life to the focus on God. It is no wonder that the Sermon on the Mount and other writings from Emmet Fox found acceptance into mainstream
Christianity and recovery circles. Metaphysicians practice Principle, but mystics practice Presence.

From Power to Gentleness (28-31). Emilie Cady talks in this section about a “renewed spiritual power” that comes from a daily practice of the Presence of God. That spiritual power is gentle—she uses the word “meekness”—and it results in “Peace and Harmony” (her capitalization). This language of meekness is the language of mysticism. There is no need to qualify it with an adjective like “heart centered.” It is that language from Theologica Germanica, a 14th century mystical book published in 1895 from which Emilie Cady drew much inspiration. She concludes with a most mystical verse: “Thy gentleness has made me great.”

From Forgiving Evil to Giving Good (32-33). Emilie Cady quotes the well-known root definition of metaphysical forgiveness: to “give for.” For the metaphysician, we give good for evil. And what is given is a higher state of consciousness—if someone cuts us off in traffic, we give them a blessing. Emilie Cady certainly agrees. But she seems to go further. She says that we must “give some actual, definite good in return for evil given.” What that “actual, definite good” may be is not explicit. But my sense is that Emilie Cady is calling us to a higher standard of forgiveness—one in which our “actual and definite” giving extends beyond consciousness to the physical affairs of our life. That is mysticism.

From Only Good to Only God (34-38). Metaphysical discussions often focus on what is the will of God. It can be, and should be, a difficult discussion for many, especially those who have experienced great tragedy. My sense is that metaphysicians typically wind up saying that what has happened is “good regardless of how it appears.” The mystic doesn’t talk about good. And the mystic doesn’t talk about appearances. The mystic talks about God. And Emily Cady says in paragraph 34: “God is in everything that happens to you.” She goes on in paragraph 35 “the very circumstances in your life that seem torturing, heart-breaking evils will turn to joy before your eyes if you will steadfastly refuse to see anything but God in them.” In other words there is only Good when we see only God.

From Truth to Trust (39-46). Emily Cady begins paragraph 40 with: “The ultimate aim of every soul should be to come into the consciousness of an indwelling God. And then in all external matters affirm deliverance through and by this Divine One.” The first sentence is about Truth; the second sentence is about Trust. I’ve written previously about at least three different ways we come to understand Truth—by revelation, by discovery and by relationships. The metaphysician learns truth by reading so many books. But the ultimate aim, for the mystic, is to affirm deliverance (Trust).

From Greek Philosophy to Practical Christianity (47-48). The final paragraph of this chapter, and of the entire book, says “Christ is the way.” I am deeply grateful for my training in metaphysics. Metaphysics brought back to me the Gospel in a way that
orthodox theology was never able to do. But, for me, and for Emilie Cady, the bottom line is that “Christ is the way.” We aspire to be both metaphysician and mystic but our spiritual pathway is ultimately the way of Christ—the way of the mystic.

Mark

Sunday, December 29, 2019

Lesson 12 — Liberty or Bondage, Which?

“Finally, brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.”—St. Paul (Eph. 6:10).

“Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, THINK ON THESE THINGS.”—St. Paul (Phil. 4:8).

Clip 1 from Liberty or Bondage, Which?.
001 Overview of LIT
1. Every soul is by nature—or believes itself to be—in bondage to the flesh and the things of the flesh. All suffering is the result of this bondage. The history of the Children of Israel coming up out of their long bondage in Egypt is at once descriptive of the human soul or consciousness growing up out of the animal or sense part of man into the spiritual part.

2. “And the Lord said,” (speaking to Moses) “I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their task-masters; for I know their sorrows.

3. And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.” (Exod. 3:7)

4. These words express exactly the attitude of the Creator toward His highest creation, man, ever since.

5. Today and all the days, He has been saying to us His children, “Surely I have seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt (darkness of ignorance), and have heard their cry by reason of their task-masters (sickness, sorrow and poverty). And I am (not I will but I am, now) come down to deliver you out of all this suffering, and to bring you up into a good land and large, unto a land flowing with good things.”

6. It may, or it may not be here in this phase of life, but sometime, somewhere every human soul must come to itself; having tired of eating husks it will “arise and go to its Father.” (Luke 5:18) For, it is written, “as I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue confess to God.” (Rom. 14:11)

7. This does not mean that God is a stern Autocrat who by reason of supreme power will compel man to bow to Him: It is rather an expression of the order of Divine Law, the law of All-Love, All-Good. Man, who is at first, living in the selfish, animal part of himself, shall grow up through various stages and by various processes unto the Divine or spiritual Understanding where he knows he is one with the Father, and where he is free from all suffering because he has conscious dominion over all things. Somewhere on this journey, the human consciousness or intellect comes to a place where it gladly bows to and confesses that its spiritual Self, its Christ, is highest and is Lord. Here and forever after, not with sense of bondage but with joyful freedom the soul cries out “The Lord reigneth.” Everyone must, sooner or later come to this point of experience.
8. You and I, dear reader, have already “come to ourselves.” Having become conscious of an oppressive bondage we have arisen and set out on the journey from Egypt to the land of liberty; and now we cannot turn back if we would. Though possibly there will come times to each of us, before we reach the land of milk and honey (the time of full deliverance out of all our sorrows and troubles) when we will come into a deep wilderness or up against an impassable Red Sea, when our principle seems to fail, yet does God say unto each one of us as unto the trembling children of Israel, “Fear not, stand ye still and see the salvation of God which He will show you.” (Exod. 14:13)

9. Each soul must, sooner or later, learn to stand alone with its God. Nothing else avails. Nothing else will ever make you master of your own destiny. There is in your own indwelling Lord, all the life and health, all the strength and peace and joy, all the wisdom and support you can ever need or desire. No other can give to you as can this indwelling Father. He is the spring of all joy and comfort and power.

10. Hitherto we have believed we were helped and comforted by others, that we received joy from outside circumstances and surroundings. But it is not so. All joy and strength and good springs up from a Fountain within one’s own being. And if we only knew this truth we would know that, because God in us is the Fountain out of which springs all our good, nothing that anyone does or says or fails to do or say can take away our joy and good.

11. Some one has said; “Our liberty comes from an understanding of the mind and thoughts of God towards us.” Does God regard man as His servant or as his child? Most of us have believed ourselves not only the slave of circumstances but also, at the best, the servants of the Most High. Neither belief is true. It is time for us to awake to right thoughts, to know that we are not servants but children, and if children then heirs (Rom. 8:17). Heirs of what? Why, heirs to All-Wisdom so that we need not through any lack of wisdom, make mistakes; heirs of All-Love, so that we need know no fear or envy or jealousy; heirs of All-Strength, All-Life, All-Power, All-Good.

12. The human intelligence is so accustomed to the sound of words heard from childhood that, often, to it, they convey no real meaning. Do you stop to think, to really comprehend what it means to be “an heir of God and joint heir with Christ?” It means as
Emerson says, that “every man is the inlet and may become the outlet of all there is in God.” It means that all that God is and has is in reality for us His only heirs, if we only know how to claim our inheritance.

13. This claiming our rightful inheritance, the inheritance which God wants us to have in our daily life, is just what we are learning how to do in these simple talks.

14. Truly Paul said:

“The heir as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all.
15. But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the Father.
16. Even so we, while we were children (in knowledge) were in bondage under the elements of the world.
17. But in the fulness of time God sent forth his Son. ... And because ye are sons God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts (or into your conscious minds) crying Abba, Father.
18. Wherefore thou art no more a servant but a son, and if a son then an heir of God through Christ.” (Gal. 4:1)

19. It is through Christ, this indwelling Christ, that we are to receive all that God has and is, as much or little as we can or dare to claim.

20. No matter with what object you believed you first stared out to seek the knowledge of the truth, it was in reality because it was God’s “fullness of time” for you to arise and begin to claim your inheritance. You were no longer to be satisfied with or under bondage to the elements of the world. Think of it! God’s “fullness of time” now, for you to be free, to have dominion over all things material, to be no longer bond servant but a son in possession of your inheritance. “Ye have not chosen me but I have chosen you that ye might bring forth much fruit.” (John 15:16)

21. We have come to a place now, where our search for the truth must no longer be for the rewards; it must no longer be seeking a creed to follow, but it must be the living a life. In these simple lessons we have just taken the first steps out of the Egyptian bondage of selfishness, lust and sorrow toward the land of liberty where Perfect Love and All Good reign.

22. Every right thought we think, every unselfish word or action is bound by immutable law to be fraught with good results. But in our walk we must learn to lose sight of results—which are the “loaves and fishes.” We must seek rather to consciously be the truth, be
23. Every soul must take time daily for quiet and meditation. In this lies the secret of power. No one can grow in either spiritual knowledge or power without it. Practice the Presence of God just as you would practice music. No one would ever dream of becoming a power in music except by spending some time daily alone with music. Daily meditation alone with God seems, some way, to focus Divine Presence within us and to our consciousness.

24. You may be so busy with the doing, the outgoing of love to help others,—which is unselfish and Godlike as far as it goes—that you find no time to go apart. But the command or rather the invitation is “Come ye apart and rest awhile.” (Mark 6:31) And, believe me, it is the only way you will ever gain definite knowledge, newness of experience, steadiness of purpose or power to meet the unknown which must come in all daily life. Doing is secondary to being. When we are consciously the truth, it will radiate from us and accomplish the works without our ever running to and fro.

If you have no time for this quiet meditation make time,—take time. Watch carefully and you will find that there are some things even in the active unselfish doing, which can better be left undone than that you neglect regular concentrated meditation.

25. You will find some hours spent everyday in idle conversation with people who “just run in for a few moments” to be entertained. If you can help such people, well; if not, gather yourself together and not waste a moment just idly diffusing and dissipating yourself to gratify their idleness. You have no idea what you lose by it.

26. When you withdraw from the world for meditation let it not be to think of yourself or your failures; but invariably to get all your thoughts centered on God, and upon your relations to the Creator and Upholder of the Universe. Let all the little sand-papering cares and anxieties go for a while; and by effort, if need be, turn your thoughts away.
from them to some of the simple words of the Nazarene or Psalmist. Think of some truth, be it ever so simple.

27. No person, unless he has practiced it, can have any idea of how it quiets one from all physical nervousness, all fear, all over-sensitiveness, all the little raspings of everyday life,—just this hour of calm, quiet waiting alone with God. Never let it be an hour of bondage but always one of restfulness.

28. Some, having realized the calm and power which comes of daily meditation, have made the mistake of withdrawing themselves entirely from the world that they may give the entire time to meditation. This is asceticism, which is neither wise nor profitable.

29. The Nazarene, who was our noblest type of the perfect life, went daily apart from the world only that he might come again into it with renewed spiritual power. So we go apart into the stillness of Divine Presence that we may come forth into the world of everyday life with a new inspiration, an increased courage and power for activity and for overcoming.

30. “We talk to God; that is prayer. God talks to us; that is inspiration” says Lyman Abbott. We go apart to get still, that new life, new inspiration new power of thought, new supplies from the Fountain Head may flow in. And then we come forth to shed it all abroad upon those around us that they, too, may be lifted up. Inharmony cannot remain in any home where even one member of the family daily practices this hour of the Presence of God, so surely does the renewed infilling of the soul by Peace and Harmony result in the continual outgoing of Peace and Harmony into the entire surroundings.

31. Again, in this new way which we have undertaken, this living the life of the Spirit instead of the old self, we need to seek always to have more and more of the Christ Spirit of meekness and love incorporated into our daily life. Meekness does not mean servility nor imbecility; but it means a spirit which could stand before a Pilate of false accusation, “opening not his mouth.” No one so grand, so God-like as he who, because he knows the truth of Being, can stand meekly and unperturbed before the false accusations of mortal mind. “Thy gentleness hath made me great.” (Psalms 18:35)

32. We must forgive as we would be forgiven.

To forgive does not simply mean to arrive at a place of indifference to those who do personal injury to ourselves. It means far more than this. To forgive is to give for,—to give some actual, definite good in return for evil given. One may say “I have no one to forgive. I have not a personal enemy in the world.” Even so. And yet, if under any
circumstances there is any kind of “served-him-right” spirit springs up within you over anything any of God’s children may do or suffer, you have not yet learned how to forgive.

33. The very pain you suffer, the very failure to demonstrate over some matter which touches your own life deeply may rest upon just this spirit of unforgiveness which you harbor toward the world in general. Put it away with resolution.

34. Do not be under bondage to false beliefs about your circumstances or environment. God is in everything that happens to you. There are no “second causes.” No matter how evil any circumstance may seem, nor how much it may seem that some other personality is at the foundation of our sorrow or trouble, God, good and good alone, is real there.

35. If we have the courage to persist in seeing only God in it all, “even the wrath of man” (Psalms 76:10) shall be invariably turned to our advantage. Joseph, in speaking of the action of his brethren in selling him into slavery said “As for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good.” (Gen 50:20) “All things work together for good to them who love God,” (Rom. 8:28) or to them who recognize only God. ALL things. And the very circumstances in your life that seem torturing, heart-breaking evils will turn to joy before your eyes if you will steadfastly refuse to see anything but God in them.

36. It is perfectly natural for the human soul to seek to escape from it troubles by running away from present environments, or planning some change on the material plane. Such methods of escape are absolutely vain and foolish. “Vain is the help of man,” (Psalms 60:11) or mortal.

37. There is no permanent or real outward way of escape from miseries or circumstances. All must come from within.

38. The words “God is my defense and deliverance,” held to in the silence until they become part of your very being will deliver you out of the hands and the arguments of the keenest lawyer in the world. 39. The real inner consciousness as a truth that “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want” (Psalms 23:1) will supply all my wants more surely and far more liberally than any human hand can.
40. The ultimate aim of every soul should be to come into the consciousness of an indwelling God. And then in all external matters affirm deliverance through and by this Divine One. There should not be a running to and fro of the mortal, making human efforts to aid the Divine, but a calm, restful unwavering trust in All-Wisdom and All-Power within to accomplish the thing desired.

41. Victory must be won in the silence of your own soul first, and then you need take no part in the outer demonstration or relief from conditions. The very walls of Jericho which keep you from your desire must fall before you.

42. The Psalmist said:

“I will lift up mine eyes to the hills” (or to the Highest One) from whence cometh all my help.

43. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

44. The Lord (thy indwelling Lord) shall preserve thee from all evil.

45. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth and even forevermore.”

46. O, if we could only realize that this mighty Power to save and to protect, to deliver and to make alive lives forever within us, and so cease now and always to look away to others.

47. There is but one way to obtain this full realization—the way of the Christ. “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life” (John 14:6) spoke the Christ through the lips of the Nazarene.

48. Holding to the words “Christ is the Way,” when you are perplexed and confused, and can see no way of escape, will invariably open a way of complete deliverance.