ANNOTATIONS

LESSONS IN TRUTH (CADY)

Lesson 1

BONDAGE OR LIBERTY, WHICH?

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QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED
for
LESSONS IN TRUTH (Cady)
Lesson 1
"BONDAGE OR LIBERTY, WHICH?"

1. What is the primary cause of suffering?

2. What is the Fountainhead from which we draw all of our good, such as joy, strength, peace, health, and abundance?

3. What does it mean to be an heir of God? To what are we heirs?

4. Instead of seeking primarily for "demonstrations" or for manifest results, what must be our objective?

5. What is the purpose of meditation? On what should one's thoughts be centered in moments of meditation?

6. Should one be too busy to take time for meditation and prayer? Is it necessary to "practice the presence of God"?

7. What is the Christ life? Explain meekness, love, and forgiveness, showing what part they play in the Christ life.

8. What is the result of our persistently seeking God in every situation? Is there any condition in which God cannot be found?

9. Can man escape adversity by trying to run away from it?

10. What attitude of mind leads to complete deliverance from adversity? Where is victory first won?
1. What is the primary cause of suffering?

1. The primary cause of suffering is that we have lost sight of our innate divinity, our spiritual origin. We have forgotten that each one of us is a spiritual being, a son of God, an heir to all the ideas that inhere in God-Mind.

We have forgotten that, as spiritual beings, we have dominion and authority over our thoughts and feelings. We have used our formative power of thought in wrong ways and have based our thinking on negative reports that were the result of wrong use of the five senses. Because of this we have built up negative beliefs in our consciousness, such as fear of old age, lack, and sickness, and we are suffering the effects.

Sometimes, in our ignorance, we have believed that it is God's will for us to suffer, and have hoped thereby to discipline ourselves into being good. What we need to know is that as spiritual beings we are already "good," being of the same nature as our Father. If we have been guilty of thoughts and acts unworthy of our true nature, we must voluntarily make the change and begin to think and act in accord with our divine nature.

The primary cause of suffering, which is forgetfulness of our divine nature, has in turn caused the wrong thinking that has produced mental images of fear, guilt, anxiety, failure, and frustration. These have reproduced "after their kind" resulting in lack, sickness, and suffering of all kinds.

We may outline the primary cause and the secondary causes of suffering as follows:

(a) Primary cause: Forgetfulness of our divine nature as a son of God.

(b) Secondary causes:
   (1) Wrong thinking, which has built up a belief in separation from God. This has led to fear that we stand alone, and the feeling that our ability to meet the challenges of our daily life is inadequate.
   (2) Our unwillingness, because of ignorance, fear, and indifference, to make a determined effort to release the wrong mental beliefs that bind us and produce unhappy conditions.

The remedy for suffering is to realize that we are spiritual beings; then to do all that is necessary to base the activities of
thinking and feeling (our formative power of thought) on Truth, so that only true words, actions, reactions, and conditions may result.

There are those who have felt, and still feel, that suffering of itself turns us to God. This is not true. It is rather our desire to be free from suffering that can cause us to turn to God. On the other hand, if we do nothing about the desire to be free, the suffering may cause us to be filled with feelings of bitterness, frustration, discouragement, so that we continue to suffer in mind, body, or affairs, resigning ourselves to what we believe is God's will.

The lessons that follow will show us the steps that we need to take in order to come into the realization of our true nature, so that we may free ourselves from the suffering that many human beings experience. Then we can express all the loveliness, beauty, and dignity of our own divine nature, here and now.

2. What is the Fountainhead from which we draw all our good, such as joy, strength, peace, health, and abundance?

2. The Fountainhead is God, the one source of all divine ideas from which we draw all our good. It indwells us as the Christ Spirit or the I AM.

Sometimes the Fountainhead is referred to as the spiritual pattern, the indwelling Lord. It has also been termed the seed of God, which is the pattern in each of us that unfolds the perfect son of God in manifestation, just as the pattern in the seed allows it to develop into the plant or tree, given the right environment.

Every man must eventually come to himself. That is, we must become aware of the divinity within, for only in this way can we find the joy, the strength, all the good we desire to bring forth into our life. However, we must become consciously aware that our responsibility is to direct the activities of our own mind and heart (thoughts and feelings) in the right way so as to manifest good in every phase of our life.

If discouragement should come, a helpful attitude of mind is one of faith in the outworking of good; an attitude like that of Joseph who could say to the brothers who had wronged him, "As for you, ye meant evil against me; but God meant it for good." (Gen. 50:20).

3. What does it mean to be an heir of God? To what are we heirs?

3. To be an heir of God means to be a son of God, entitled to the property or estate of God, just as the heir of a relative or friend comes into possession of the property bequeathed to him. Jesus spoke of the relationship of God and man as that of Father and son, declaring His oneness with the Father. "I and the Father are one." (John 10:30). In this relationship man is conceived of as a co-worker with God. We can then say for ourselves that we are "no longer a bond servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God." (Gal. 4:7).

"An heir is one who receives or is entitled to receive any endowment or quality from a parent or predecessor" (Webster's Dictionary).
Each of us is an heir of God, the Parent Mind, whether aware of it or not, because each of us is an offspring of God, our Father. However, the property or estate of God does not consist of "things" but of divine ideas such as life, substance, intelligence, love, power, and these ideas will take form as "things" through our thinking, feeling, and acting. We can claim or have only as much of our heritage as we become conscious of and use righteously according to our present capacity. We can have all the good that is ours when we reach the understanding of our birthright under divine law, and act accordingly.

We may desire things that do not seem within our reach, for we see them only as belonging to others; or they may be beyond our present capacity for honest attainment at our particular stage of development. But anything righteously desired ultimately comes within our reach as we apply our energies in right thinking and feeling, in right words and actions toward its attainment.

While things, of themselves, are not what we basically desire, they do represent essential values such as ideas of love, security, prosperity, power, wisdom, substance, and well-being. The things that are needed to fulfill our life are always attainable and within the reach of each of us. Their attainment lies within the realm of our own mind. Thus we come to see that the most priceless and satisfying treasures are not just things outside ourselves but the ideas of God within us. An important point we must keep in mind is that things are the result of God ideas.

"Creation is not complete until it becomes manifest in the outer" (page 1 Addenda to Metaphysical Bible Dictionary).

In His creation God expresses His ideas perfectly, but the things that make up our outer world are the manifest forms that have come forth through our use of the ideas, which are our divine inheritance. With this understanding of ideas we come into a new appreciation of things for we see them as the manifest substance that clothes divine ideas.

It rests with us to prepare our consciousness for the acceptance of outer things by seeking the ideas lying back of them, e.g. in order to experience prosperity, we must have an inner realization of God substance as our inexhaustible source of supply. In order to have health, we must have an inner realization of God as our perfect life and wholeness. In order to have peace within ourselves and in our world, we must have an inner realization of God as the source of love and understanding in all human relationships. Jesus shared this insight in saying,

"But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

We continue to be an heir of God even though there are times when we seem to be slaves of circumstances. It is, however, our wrong attitude toward circumstances that binds us. When we realize that we are heirs of God, and that dominion and mastery lie within ourselves, then we are truly free from old thoughts and conditions, free to accept our true inheritance from the Father, which is the birthright of every person.
4. Instead of seeking primarily for "demonstrations" or for manifest results, what must be our objective?

4. Our objective or purpose must be to live according to divine law in our thinking, feeling, speaking, and acting. "Seek ye first his kingdom" (Matt. 6:33). We should not, of course, concentrate our attention altogether on results, or effects, but we should contemplate the causes, namely God ideas. This in no wise implies that demonstrations or manifest results are not to be expected or to be considered inferior, unworthy, or unnecessary. Ideas are meant to be manifested, but emphasis is to be placed on the God idea that lies back of each manifestation or effect. We read on page 13 of Christian Healing:

"Divine ideas are man's inheritance; they are pregnant with all possibility, because ideas are the foundation and cause of all that man desires. . . . All the ideas contained in the one Father-Mind are at the mental command of its offspring. Get behind a thing into the mental realm where it exists as an inexhaustible idea, and you can draw upon it perpetually and never deplete the source."

Our objective is to live the Christ life here and now; to so live in conscious oneness with God that we can unfold in our soul (consciousness) the perfect Christ idea that embodies all the ideas that make up the nature of God which is our true nature. When we do this, then the things in our life take on a new meaning. We enjoy them, give thanks to God, the source, and we appreciate them for the enrichment they bring to our daily living. This consciousness of our own oneness with God strengthens and enhances our human relationships, for now we love enough to give freedom to others; we love as God loves us.

In order to live, to radiate, and to express God consciously, we must experience a period of preparation during which we learn to control and direct our mind activities so that the God ideas, which are our divine inheritance, may be expressed in the right way in our daily living. Scripture refers to the "fulness of the time" (Gal. 4:4) and for each of us it means the completion of the period of preparation. This "fulness of the time" will be different for each of us, for it depends on a person's unfoldment. Each person will unfold the various God ideas (qualities) according to his particular needs, and the demonstrations will follow in divine order, i.e. "all these things shall be added" (Matt. 6:33).

5. What is the purpose of meditation? On what should one's thoughts be centered in moments of meditation?

5. The purpose of meditation is to become aware of and acquainted with our spiritual nature, which we know as the Christ, or the I AM, our indwelling Lord. Meditation is contemplation of God and His ideas that make up this spiritual nature, that may be expressed through our thinking (the intellect or conscious phase of mind) and our feeling (the subconscious phase of mind). When used, ideas become habitual in our mind (our consciousness) and active in our live and affairs.

God ideas merely held in our mind (consciousness) lie dormant
and do not produce the desired good in our life. Our consciousness must be open, drawing ideas from the one source and expressing what we have received. Were we to spend all our time in meditation, receiving divine ideas and not using them to advantage, for ourselves and others, we would not be complying with the spiritual law of giving and receiving. We would be attempting to get without giving. It is often easier to meditate than it is to express and manifest divine ideas in every situation of our daily life, but we must learn to do both if we would live the Christ life.

During meditation, our thoughts should be centered only on divine ideas, on the good we desire to express and not on the problems we wish to solve or the illness we wish to have healed. We meditate on the idea of life and we build a consciousness of health and wholeness. We dwell on thoughts of light and wisdom and we are illumined and guided. We contemplate peace and we are filled with a sense of harmony and well-being. We think about the idea of substance, and become conscious of God as our constant and abundant supply. In meditation we contemplate God as impersonal Principle, (our Creator), efficiently carrying on the work of the universe, and also as our own indwelling Lord, the law of our being, the loving Father-Mother God working within us as life, as love, as intelligence.

When the mind waits consciously in the presence of God, infinite Spirit, it becomes united with the ideas (attributes) of God such as life, love, wisdom, abundance. As we develop the habit of communing with God in meditation and prayer, we come into the Silence and our consciousness becomes charged with the activity of divine ideas, our body takes on renewed life, and our affairs become divinely ordered.

We are always one with God, for we can never be separated from Him, but through time set aside to contemplate the rich blessings of God, we become consciously "one with the Father" and are thus able to express more of our divine nature.

6. Should one be too busy to take time for meditation and prayer? Is it necessary to "practice the presence of God"?

6. No, we should never feel that we are too busy to take time for meditation and prayer, for all our progress in life depends on what we gain through these periods. It is only in this way that we consciously contact God and build an awareness of divine ideas.

Many persons seem to think that it is far more important to feed the body with material food than it is to feed the soul with spiritual food. No matter how busy, one seldom lets mealtime go by without stopping his tasks to feed the body. But we let the soul become starved for the "living bread" or substance that gives us mental, moral, and spiritual strength. Periods of meditation and prayer, leading to the Silence, release the ideas (spiritual food) that refresh the mind and body and provide opportunity for the Spirit of God within to reveal our true nature.

It is necessary to "practice the presence of God" for it means that we are learning to think, feel, and see God, or good, under all circumstances. We then come to know that
"There is only one presence and one power, God the Good omnipotent, in us and in our world."

Just as the musician must keep before him constantly the awareness of the principle of music if he would produce rhythm and harmony, so we must keep before us the awareness of God as Principle (as the one Presence) if we would bring forth harmony and good in our life. Practicing the Presence indicates that we are actually using the God qualities (ideas). We forgive faults, our own and those of others, by expressing love and understanding. We use faith to stand firm in the face of any situation, whether success or failure. We use intelligence and wisdom in cases of decision. We use creative imagination to view our own life, the lives of those around us, and our world in general. Using these divine ideas (qualities) is "practicing the presence of God."

7. What is the Christ life? Explain meekness, love, and forgiveness, showing what part they play in the Christ life.

7. The Christ life is that of mastery, authority, spiritual dominion. Our goal, whether we know it or not, is to express our innate spiritual or Christ nature. Therefore the ultimate aim of the individual should be to attain a consciousness of spirituality or Christ-likeness. We can then master our own thoughts, feelings, words, actions, and reactions and demonstrate the dominion that is ours as sons and heirs of God.

Meekness, love, and forgiveness are prerequisites of the Christ life. Meekness is not weakness nor is it servility. It is spiritual strength rightly directed that makes us receptive to our true nature as a son of God. To be meek or humble is to be free from all negative reaction. Meekness is a nonresistant attitude of mind in which we feel free from fear of losing our so-called rights. It is knowing that God's will for us is good, and then conforming to it. The quality of meekness enables us to be open and receptive to God's guidance at all times; it makes us teachable and obedient to this guidance. Without meekness the Christ life cannot be attained.

Love is the attracting, harmonizing, unifying, equalizing, binding idea in Divine Mind. It is "the idea of universal unity" (page 130, Christian Healing). Love is a combining influence, thus we are all one in Spirit. As the attracting power of Divine Mind, love draws to us all the good we may ever desire. Love dissolves all inharmonious conditions in human experience, giving to each participant a sense of divine security. Love acting as a magnet brings forth joy, happiness, well-being in us. Words such as the following are good to affirm:

"I am a radiating center of divine love, mighty to attract my good and to radiate good to others."

Love helps us to understand the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

Forgiveness is a way of release, a mental letting go of every thought and feeling of fear, anxiety, worry, selfishness, greed, hurt, injustice, or disappointment. Forgiveness means giving the blessing of love for feelings of wounded pride, egotism, or injury.
It includes forgiving oneself as well as others. We cannot pour out a blessing of forgiveness without feeling an inrush of power and peace.

The practical application of meekness, love, and forgiveness builds a consciousness of Christ mastery that enables us to function from this high spiritual consciousness in our daily living.

8. What is the result of our persistently seeking God in every situation? Is there any condition in which God cannot be found?

8. The result of our persistently seeking God in every situation is that we find Him as understanding, love, guidance, healing, supply, faith, wisdom, peace. This was a revelation of Jeremiah who wrote to the Israelite captives in Babylon.

"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith Jehovah" (Jer. 29:13,14).

There is no situation in which God cannot be found, for He is the one Presence and the one Power. If there is any appearance in a situation that seems not good, we come to see that this has been caused by man's wrong use of the powers that are His to form conditions. We must learn to use consciously the laws of life through our thinking in ways that produce only desired good. Our search for God in every situation reveals that His substance, His power, His life, His intelligence are always awaiting our acceptance. We must learn to use aright the power of thinking so as to form only good conditions in our life.

9. Can man escape adversity by trying to run away from it?

9. No! We cannot possibly escape adversity by trying to run away from it. "Life is consciousness" and wherever we go, we take our consciousness (mental attitudes or habits of thought) with us.

Adversity is the result of the wrong use of our spiritual powers, so its cause lies in our own mind or consciousness. By running away from the adverse conditions we have not changed the beliefs that produced them. On the contrary, we have intensified the negation by giving it attention.

Nothing can come to us in the outer that has not first come as a thought in our mind. But we might say, "Oh, I did not think of such a thing." This may be true so far as the specific condition is concerned. However, we have let our thinking dwell on something of a negative nature, something that does not accord with the Truth of our being as a son of God. Worry, anxiety, fear, hate, envy, jealousy, unforgiveness, are all seed thoughts that produce some form of adversity in our life.

We can thus see that to change an adverse condition it is necessary to overcome our wrong beliefs and exercise spiritual dominion over our own soul (our thinking and feeling) so that our words, actions, and reactions will accord with God's Truth. Therefore, it is good
to pray for illumination and guidance from God in finding the solution to problems, rather than centering our attention on them.

When we have faith that problems can be solved, that unwanted circumstances can be changed, we see adversity as a challenge to be met and overcome, and as an opportunity to prove the supremacy of Truth. As we grow in understanding, we realize, as already brought out in this lesson, that God is indeed the one Presence and the one Power, and that there is no condition where His divine ideas (qualities) cannot be found.

The primary step toward escape from adversity or any kind of suffering lies in attaining a consciousness of our oneness with God, in practicing the presence of God at all times and in all situations.

10. What attitude of mind leads to complete deliverance from adversity? Where is victory first won?

10. The attitude of mind that leads to complete deliverance and freedom is right thinking. By the habit of right thinking we can build deep-seated faith in the power of God as the only activity in the outworking of good. By right thinking we learn to express love toward our fellowman; we are inspired with courage to meet life's issues and stirred to joy in living. When the positive attitude of right thinking has become the habitual trend, then faith, love, courage, joy, are a normal part of our day-to-day living.

Inherent in the attitudes mentioned is an acknowledgment of oneness with God as the source of all good; acknowledgment of our innate divinity; of our spiritual powers; and of our ability to make manifest the divine ideas that are our inheritance from God.

Victory is first won in our own soul, that is, in our consciousness (thinking and feeling). We must receive our own inspirations from the Spirit of God within, and make our own overcomings. Prayer is the means of contact with God that enables us to receive the inspirations that make us master of our soul.

Meditation and prayer help us to establish the attitude of mind that is freeing. Our thinking and feeling then conform to divine ideas, and our actions and reactions become affirmative habits. In learning to exercise our spiritual dominion and authority over all the activities of our consciousness, we are able to harmonize our outer world with the inner world of Spirit. This is the victory that rightfully belongs to every child of God!