ANNOTATIONS

LESSONS IN TRUTH (Cady)

Lesson 3

"THINKING"

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QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

for

LESSONS IN TRUTH (Cady)

Lesson 3

"THINKING"

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2. Explain God as "universal Mind." If there is only one Mind why does there appear to be many "minds"?

3. What is thinking? Can one come into a realization of Truth by arguing?

4. Explain the three phases of our being, and show the function of each and how they are related.

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"THINKING"

1. Describe the foundation principle of Truth.

1. The everywhere-present Spirit of Absolute Good, or God, is the foundation principle of Truth.

The foundation of anything is that which stands under and supports the structure that rests upon it; the principle of anything is the source of its origin. Therefore the Spirit of Absolute Good is the framework upon which all creation rests. This foundation of God's presence and power supports and sustains every atom that exists anywhere, because God is all there is. Whether or not this Truth is acknowledged it remains unaltered and unalterable, for "in him we live, and move, and have our being... for we are his offspring" (Acts 17:28). The fundamental principle on which we build our life successfully may be stated as the realization that

"There is but one presence and one power in the universe, God, the good omnipotent."

Our next consideration is to seek to understand the relation between God and His creation, and specifically His relation to us. We have already learned that God is Spirit, Divine Mind, in which inhere all the ideas that produce manifest creation, including man.

"Thus a right understanding of mind, and especially of Divine Mind, is the one and only logical key to an understanding of the beginnings of man and the universe." (page 10, Mysteries of Genesis).

The subject of this lesson is "Thinking" and until we realize that thinking is a process that is ours to control, we do not make headway in directing our life. The God ideas that make up absolute good are spiritual patterns that are to be used by all creation. Thus a divine idea is the real of every manifestation and is its true foundation.

2. Explain God as "universal Mind." If there is only one Mind why does there appear to be many "minds"?

2. Universal Mind is another name for Divine Mind, the infinite, all-inclusive, all-pervading Mind, teeming with divine ideas. These ideas are permeating all the universe in both manifested and unmanifested forms. In Lesson two we termed this one Mind as omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence.

Just as there is only one air, whether we call it fresh air,
foul air, cold air, or hot air, so there is only one Mind which is
the source and origin of all ideas of good, all the blessings of
God. One person does not have a mind and another person a separate
mind in the strictest sense of the word. Each of us has conscious-
ness in the one Mind and we all use the ideas that originate in
the one Mind.

"We have no independent mind--there is only universal Mind--
but we have consciousness in that Mind, and we have control
over that consciousness. We have control over our own
thoughts, and our thoughts fill our consciousness."
(page 138, Teach Us to Pray).

From an idea that originates in the one Mind we form concepts
or beliefs according to our understanding of the idea and the use
to which we put it. If we use the idea in the right way then our
human consciousness is a clear channel for its expression. If we
do not use the idea as God intended, we build states of mind or
consciousness that we term "error consciousness," which will be
dealt with in annotation 5 of this lesson.

The following quotation gives us a deeper understanding of God's
ideas:

"An idea is the mode of expression of the mind . . . God ex-
presses Himself through ideas. Ideas, timeless and space-
less agents of the divine will, mold and form all outer
manifestations . . . It is through ideas that we know God.
They might be thought of as . . . divine messengers sent
from Him to inform us of His nature and of the nature of the
world. . . . Man works with divine ideas to mold and shape
the substance of God" (page 2, Addenda to Metaphysical Bible
Dictionary).

When we speak of "your mind" and "my mind," we are referring
to the human consciousness, with its activities of thinking and
feeling. Thus it appears that there are many minds instead of one
Mind (God-Mind) teeming with ideas that are being used by all human
beings at the level of their own individual unfoldment.

A great deal of the time we judge according to appearances.
Many times our five senses seem to mislead us because we think of
them as sources of wisdom, instead of only as sources of accumulated
knowledge. We are functioning in a lower state of consciousness
when we fail to turn to the true source of wisdom, the Christ with-
in, the pattern of perfection.

3. What is thinking? Can one come into a realization of Truth by
arguing?

3. Thinking "is the movement of ideas in mind" (page 654, Meta-
physical Bible Dictionary). Thinking is a process by which we
arrive at conclusions. We form mental images, pictures, beliefs,
based on our understanding of ideas. By this process we bring
ideas into manifest form in our human experience in exact ratio
to the interpretation of the idea held in our mind (consciousness
or soul).
Thinking is our intellect in action, which allows us to reason, to choose, to comprehend, to will, to act. The child is taught to think about the a,b,c's, about numbers, about objects, and about people in his world, and all the time his intellect is dealing with the ideas represented by these things. All true thinking, which is the right use of our intellect, is for the purpose of building a consciousness of Truth and a world in which we see only good.

One cannot come into a realization of Truth by arguing.

Argument implies two points of view, and usually each partici-
pant becomes very persistent in presenting his own viewpoint so that his mind is closed to the ideas or suggestions of others. An attempt to get a realization of Truth in this way only leads us into a maze of intellectual reasonings, for "the things of the Spirit of God . . . are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14, A.V.).

An important work for each of us is the training of our intellect--our thinking faculty or conscious phase of mind--so that it is open and receptive to the revelations and guidance of Spirit. Arguing may deal with Truth as a theory, but it is only through a prayerful attitude of mind that the inspirations of Spirit can come into our consciousness. When we act on these inspirations and thus experience Truth we have a conscious awareness of it as a living reality. Further on in this lesson we will consider the subconscious phase of our mind, which enables the ideas of God to become established in our consciousness through our feeling nature.

4. Explain the three phases of our being, and show the function of each and how they are related.

4. The three phases of our being are: spirit, soul, body (sometimes written spirit-soul-body). These three function as a unit, and consciousness of their oneness must be maintained if we are to express and manifest as God intended.

The first phase of our being is spirit, and is called by many names. We say that spirit is the image-likeness of God, for our Scripture tells us, "And God said, Let us make man in our image and after our likeness" (Gen. 1:26). The words I AM are also the name of this indwelling spirit. When God was speaking to Moses from the burning bush, He said, "Thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you . . . this is my name for ever" (Exod. 3:14, 15). I AM is the name of God (or Spirit) in us, and as God's children we inherit this name as our true name. In further explaining the first phase of our three-fold nature, we say that the spirit in man is the divine pattern, spiritual man, the Lord, or law of our being. Because God is the source of all life, we think of His presence in us as the life principle, the breath of life, the divine center of light, the inner reality, so these too are terms we use for spirit, the first phase of our being.

In the Gospel according to John our divine nature is referred to as "the Word," and also as "the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world" (John 1:1, 8). A word in the New Testament that is dear to most Christians is Christ,
which word is used to designate our inner divine nature; Paul emphasizes this in Colossians 1:26, 27 when he refers to "the mystery that has been hid for ages and generations: but now hath it been manifested . . . Christ in you, the hope of glory." Whether or not we know it consciously, as spiritual creations of the one God, we are sons of God. Jesus, in replying to the questions of certain Jews about His being the Christ, called attention to this when He said, "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?" (John 10:34. Jesus is referring to Psalms 82:6, "I said, Ye are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High"). Our lessons have referred to God as Divine Mind, therefore as spiritual beings, offspring of the one Mind, we are in reality the manifested Idea of that Mind.

The first phase of our being, that which we really are, is the Christ Mind, sometimes referred to as the Superconscious, the realm of divine ideas in man. Spirit is our eternal, unchanging, indestructible, complete being.

The second phase of our being is soul, which is also called the self-consciousness, our individual awareness of existence; the phase of our being that says "I am I" and "I will." Soul is the entire mind, for thinking is carried on through the conscious phase of mind (the intellect) and feeling through the subconscious phase of mind (sometimes referred to as the "heart").

"Soul is man's consciousness—that which he has apprehended or developed out of Spirit; also the impressions that he has received from the outer world. Soul is both conscious and subconscious." (page 628, Metaphysical Bible Dictionary).

The soul is the user of the ideas of God that are found in the Superconsciousness or the first phase of our being. As brought out in annotation 3 of this lesson it is through the conscious phase of mind (intellect) that we are able to think, to reason, to choose, to examine, to judge, to analyze, to will, to select, to decide, to form, to deduct, to reject, to accept, and to conclude. This phase has also been termed the "objective" phase of mind. The other phase of the soul, the subconscious, is the realm of feeling, and has been termed the "subjective" phase because it is subject to the thoughts received from the conscious phase of mind. The subconscious uses these thoughts as a pattern to work by in bringing forth manifestation. It is the storehouse of memory, acting as a reservoir of all thoughts, experiences, observations, inspirations, accumulated knowledge, emotions, moods, opinions, temperaments, beliefs, that we term attitudes of mind.

Our soul is pivotal in its action, that is, the thinking and feeling (conscious and subconscious) may turn inward to the first phase of being (spirit), the Superconscious realm of divine ideas, or may turn to the outer where they receive impressions through the five senses. It is our privilege to decide whether we will build our consciousness on outer impressions, upon that which is transitory, or on the divine ideas that assure us of the kind of body and world we really desire.

The third phase of our being is body, for there must be a vehicle through which spirit and soul may express. Body is primarily "a temple of the living God" (II Cor. 6:16).
"When man realizes that there is but one body-idea and that the conditions in his body express the character of his thought, he has the key to bodily perfection and immortality in the flesh" (page 34, Christian Healing).

The body is, therefore, an idea in God-Mind, and is spiritual substance in form and shape, embodying all the divine ideas. "The body is the material manifestation of the life principle" (page 1, Addenda to Metaphysical Bible Dictionary). While the body is always perfect in its original creation as a God-idea, the appearance that the body takes on will be according to the use we make of divine ideas. In its physical form the body is a marvelous instrument with a divine intelligence in every atom, cell, nerve, tissue, muscle, and bone. When the soul is not using divine ideas in the right way (through the processes of thinking, feeling, speaking, acting, and reacting), then it is the body that suffers, for chaotic, confused, unhappy, anxious, fearful states of mind interfere with normal functioning of the body.

An illustration for the three-fold nature is seen in fruit: the seed could be said to represent the spirit or life principle, that which has power to reproduce itself; the pulp could represent the soul, or character of the fruit; and the skin or peel could represent the body that identifies the type of fruit in the world of visibility. We must remember that such an illustration falls far short of what we are in our completeness as spirit, soul, body, but it does give us some idea of the relation of the three phases.

An excellent statement for us to use to develop the awareness of our three fold-nature is the following:

"I am a perfect spiritual being, functioning through an illumined mind and a vitalized body."

5. What is meant by error consciousness?

5. Error consciousness is a negative state of mind built up in the human consciousness by wrong use of the divine ideas that are our inheritance. It is man's belief in what is untrue.

In annotation 2 of this lesson we learned that all the ideas of Divine Mind are available to every person, and that each of us will form a consciousness, or what we refer to as "my mind" or "my human consciousness," according to the interpretation and use we make of the ideas. When we think of ourselves as merely flesh and blood beings, separated from God, then the activities of thinking, feeling, speaking, acting, and reacting, are based on a false premise and we build states of mind that bring forth many unhappy conditions in our mind, body, and affairs. Through the use of "denials and affirmations" (lessons covering these processes will follow this one on "Thinking") we can dissolve such an error consciousness and build one that allows us to use rightly the ideas of God. Many times an error consciousness of health, of prosperity, of life itself, has been produced not so much through deliberate willfullness as from ignorance of what Truth is.
The term error consciousness is associated with the expression "fall of man," which originated with the allegory in the 2d Chapter of Genesis. As we unfold and develop, we are in the process of growing up consciously into mature sons of God. The "fall of man" is not just something that took place in the far distant past. A fall takes place in our human consciousness (soul) every time we lower our thinking and feeling from the divine standard of Truth, and depart from the guidance of Spirit. This fallen or error state of consciousness can never be permanent, for we are essentially spiritual beings. When we come to know this truth consciously, we may choose at any time to rise above error beliefs in our human consciousness by making the right use of our formative power of thought. That is, all our thinking is to be done from the standpoint of Truth. "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2). The so-called fall is not experienced by our divine nature but only by our evolving consciousness.

6. Through what faculties does man find God?

6. We find or become aware of God through the use of our faculties of thinking and feeling when they are directed Godward. God is not lost but we often lose awareness of Him in our human consciousness.

The word faculties (meaning "ability to act, to do") as used here refers to functions of our mind; abilities of our mind to express or use divine ideas or powers. Through the thinking faculty we observe that laws are in existence; that certain causes produce certain effects. However, this is not enough, for "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation" (Luke 17:20). Merely thinking about God and His nature is not sufficient to really find or experience His presence within. Another faculty must be brought into action and that is our feeling nature. We must combine our thinking and feeling with love and faith if we would come to know God as a living presence within us.

Each individual must make his approach to God at the center of his own being in the way that is right for him. No matter what approach to God an individual takes, he finds God by becoming consciously aware of Him through his thoughts and feelings for they bring him to the place in consciousness where he can say, "I know!" for then he actually experiences the presence of God.

"They should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:27, 28 A.V.).

7. How does each individual receive his own spiritual revelations? Why should we not depend wholly on books and teachers for an understanding of Truth?

7. Each individual receives his own spiritual revelations through turning his attention (his thinking and feeling) to the presence of God within himself. Revelation is the discovery of something hitherto unknown by the individual; it is the disclosure of God's
Truth, or God's will, to man through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

In each of us is a divine plan for the unfoldment of our spiritual nature; this plan is God's will for us. In this unfoldment it is possible for us to find spiritual revelation to guide us only within our own being. As we discover and begin to use the divine ideas that make up God's plan for us, we unfold the plan in our soul consciousness (mind) and manifest it in our body and affairs.

We cannot depend wholly on books and teachers for an understanding of Truth, for it must come from the Spirit of God within ourselves.

Books and teachers are good for the purpose of making clear to us the mental process by which we may find our own indwelling Lord and receive our own illumination, revelation, inspiration, instruction, and guidance.

"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10:14).

When following an unknown road we need guidance; there are laws and rules to be learned. If we desire to travel a certain road we find it necessary in the beginning to receive directions, guidance; we look for signposts, so to speak, to show us the way. Merely to listen to instructions or to study a map is not sufficient. We must actually travel the road ourselves or we will never reach our destination. So it is with the "journey of life." Books and teachers can give us directions, provide signposts, but each of us must consciously travel the road of life with God, so that we will know the way for ourselves. What we get from others may prove helpful; the sharing of ideas can be vital to the participants and important in their soul growth.

However, all that we need or desire is within ourselves, in our own indwelling Christ Spirit, and emphasis is made throughout these lessons that the seeking should be to contact the one Source of all knowledge so that we may find what we specifically need. Nothing is ours until we perceive it by thinking about it; realize it, by feeling it; experience it, by living it. However, when minds of one accord come together to share ideas, we are enriched immeasurably in new inspiration and new understanding, then the whole of our world responds to this new uplift.

8. What is the direct road to spiritual attainment?

8. The direct road to spiritual attainment is through periods of prayer, when we listen quietly for the guidance of God, then act on the inspiration received.

In paragraph 19 of Lesson three of the book Lessons in Truth this statement is made:
"If you want to make rapid progress in growth toward spiritual understanding, stop reading many books."

Sometimes students think this means that we are not to read any book, but we find that as we train our thinking and feeling faculties to seek spiritual truths we will read whatever is necessary to help the mind to seek revelation from the God presence within. This is the direct road to spiritual attainment.

As we advance in spiritual understanding, we shall find ourselves reading whatever the Spirit within directs us to read without becoming bound by the "letter" of what we read. As this lesson has already brought out, we need outer help in training ourselves to walk the road to spiritual attainment, but once we have learned the steps, we give ourselves over to God in prayer.

No matter how excellent the spoken or written words of another may seem, nothing is so important to us as our own revelations from God.

"One thought of your own, worked out even with labor, is better for you, more interesting and of more value in your life than a hundred of the most brilliant thoughts that someone else has voiced" (page 30, What Are You?).

We can always know whether a statement is pure Truth, for as we turn within there comes a feeling, a positive inner knowing, a calm assurance that no amount of intellectual reasoning or arguing can upset. We just know!

9. Is God responsible for keeping our thoughts right? If He is not, who is?

9. God is not responsible for keeping our thoughts right. This responsibility lies with each of us. God created us sons, in His image and after His likeness. The ability to think is a gift to us from Him which enables us to use the ideas that are our divine inheritance.

If God were to take control of our thinking in the sense that we have no alternative, we would not be the free-will beings He created. First of all, we would not be free to choose our thoughts, nor, secondly, would we be free to assume the responsibility for what we have thought, both of which are privileges of our birthright as sons of God.

The teacher explains to the student the rules for working a problem, but he does not do the work for him. He knows that only as the student develops his own talents and abilities can he become proficient in the use of the ideas or principles involved. God is the source of rich ideas on which we are to think and when our mind is open He guides us in the right use of these ideas, but He leaves us free to form our own thoughts or concepts about them. If we turn often to God in prayer, we learn the principles or ideas on which to base our thinking, just as the student of mathematics or of music learns the principles on which his work is founded.
What we think and how we think is of course, very important. What and how we think affects the way we feel, and these two actions indicate visibly how we are using or directing the creative power of God. We are learning that every thought projects a form, or produces an effect, so in our freedom to think we make our own concepts about God, about ourselves, about others, and about our world in general. These concepts, by the law of mind action ("like begets like"), produce effects in our body, our affairs, our world, that correspond to the character of our thoughts (concepts).

10. Do we have to beseech God for the fulfillment of our desires? Why? Does God change?

10. We do not have to beseech God for the fulfillment of our desires "any more than we have to beseech the sun to shine. The sun shines because it is a law of its being to shine" (page 34, Lessons in Truth).

"Beseech" as the word is commonly used carries the implication that one is begging for something he doubts will be forthcoming; there is an intimation of anxiety and fear in such an attitude. If our desire is, as Lesson two brought out, one of God's ideas seeking to express through us, then beseeching has no part in the fulfillment of this desire, for God is both its cause and its fulfillment. We need to realize fully that God is the source of all good, and we must have perfect faith that as a loving Father-Mother, He is always ready to fulfill the righteous desires of His children. In place of beseeching we learn to claim our inheritance of good by prayerfully complying with the laws that govern its manifestation.

God, Divine Mind, is the principle of Absolute Good, as our lessons have emphasized, and thus He cannot change. "God is the name we give to that unchangeable, inexorable principle at the source of all existence" (page 22, Lessons in Truth). Were God to change, no law in the universe would be dependable in its operation, and the entire cosmos would be thrown into chaos. We can no more entreat or beseech God as principle to change to meet our demands than we can expect the principle of mathematics to change at our bidding. Where there is need of a change from a negative condition to one expressing good only, the change will not be on God's part, but we shall change our limited state of consciousness to one based on Truth. Then our thinking will be productive of all good.