ANNOTATIONS
LESSONS IN TRUTH (CADY)
Lesson 7
"PERSONALITY AND INDIVIDUALITY"

UNITY
CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL LESSONS

UNITY SCHOOL OF CHRISTIANITY
LEE'S SUMMIT, MISSOURI

10-25-72
QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

for

LESSONS IN TRUTH (CADY)

Lesson 7

"PERSONALITY AND INDIVIDUALITY"

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1. What is evidence of the most advanced teaching?

Evidence of the most advanced teaching is its simplicity. Such teaching presents a principle to the student, which, when understood, can be applied to his everyday life. Simplicity in presentation is always evidence of a teacher's good grasp of a subject. This is especially true when dealing with spiritual truths.

So also ye, unless ye utter by the tongue speech easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken?" (I Cor. 14:9).

Simplicity of instruction deals not only with the principle but also with the practice of a given subject. The teaching is expressed by a mind that understands the subject clearly; a mind that sees the subject stripped of all confusion, uncertainty, and doubt. Such a mind will always express itself in the simplest words and phrases, that is, in a clear, direct, and to-the-point manner.

The purpose of teaching is to prepare students to understand principles that they will be able to put into practice. The objective of a teacher is to assist students to comprehend fundamental principles, or ideas. This goes beyond merely memorizing codes, formulas, or precepts, valuable as they are in their place. The teaching must be so simple that persons at all levels of understanding will receive something from it that will benefit their particular need for enrichment. While schooling is a system of informing man, advanced teaching of spiritual truths is a process of transforming man.

The teacher or writer who really understands the basic ideas of God, which are our divine inheritance, and their right application, finds no difficulty in expressing them simply. Efforts to express Truth simply result in a clearer understanding for the speaker, or writer, as well as for the student.

2. What constitutes the greatness of the Sermon on the Mount?

The greatness of the Sermon on the Mount lies in the simplicity of the language, which enables the reader to understand and to use the principles it embodies.

Jesus Christ knew His mission perfectly; He knew how to turn in prayer to the Father within to gain the wisdom necessary to help Him to fulfill this mission "to save the race from bondage, from sin, sickness, and death" (page 120, Mysteries of John).
"The multitudes were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes" (Matt. 7:28, 29).

In the book Talks on Truth, on pages 67 and 68, Charles Fillmore mentions the originality of Jesus' mission and His words, as follows:

"Jesus Christ was imbued with a spirit purely His own. He did not borrow His mission, or His words, or His precepts . . . He was a genius that burned with His own wick and oil . . . His presentation is peculiar in that it carries with it, and illustrates by its works, a basis more enduring than mere metaphysical presumption."

In his book "The Sermon on the Mount" Emmet Fox says:

"It [the Sermon] covers the essentials. It is practical and personal. It is definite, specific, and yet widely illuminating. Once the true meaning of the instructions have been grasped, it is only necessary to begin putting them faithfully into practice to get immediate results" (page 16).

"We are told more about the nature of man and the meaning of life, and the importance of conduct, and the art of living, and the secret of happiness and success, and the way out of trouble, and the approach to God, and the emancipation of the soul, and the salvation of the world, than all the philosophers and the theologians and the savants put together have told us--for it explains the Great Law" (page 117).

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus Christ presented Truth principles simply, fearlessly, and freely.

"Where the simplicity of His teaching is received and appreciated the people change their manner of living, doing away with ostentation and getting down to the simplicity and beauty of the things that are worthwhile" (page 106, Prosperity).

The Sermon on the Mount presents a clear, direct, and to-the-point teaching that has burned into the hearts and minds of men through the ages, stimulating them to think deeply. Its pattern has become to many "a way of life" that transcends any ordinary pattern of living. Charles Fillmore emphasizes the practicality of the Sermon on the Mount as follows:

"In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus laid down the law for those who desire to follow Him into the regeneration--to be born again. If you seek this spiritual birth, examine your daily life and see whether you are conforming to its requirements" (page 86, Talks on Truth).

The greatness of any teaching lies in its ability to change lives, and this is exactly what the Sermon on the Mount has been
able to do through the many centuries since it was spoken on the mountainside by Jesus. Today, two thousand years after the words were uttered, the doctrine of Jesus Christ given in this Sermon is just as vital, as dynamic, and as practical as it was when He walked the earth among men. Its application by us can transform our lives just as it did the lives of many who followed and listened to Him. There is nothing mysterious about the Sermon on the Mount, for it is the simple, practical presentation of the laws of life that anyone may apply.

3. Define personality.

3. Personality is the sum total of the distinctive personal characteristics that each of us shows forth through facial expressions, mannerisms, through mental and physical attitudes.

Sometimes the personality is referred to as the "garment of the soul" because it is the combination of both soul and body (the second and third phases of our three-fold nature--spirit-soul-body).

"It is the sum of all your former thinking. . . . It is the outside of the inside. . . . it is the observable form of your mental processes" (pages 14, 15, What Are You?).

Personality is that which makes a person appear either different from others or like others. It is what we build mentally, emotionally and physically for ourselves, as the vehicle of expression, through soul and body of the Spirit in us. This Spirit in us is the Christ, the I AM, and referred to in this lesson as individuality. The expression will always be according to our particular understanding of this Spirit which is our true self.

Personality has been analyzed as something that may be acquired, developed, strengthened, or changed in part by understanding, persistent effort, through study, education, travel, and association with other persons, but above all through prayer. Because personality is a combination of physical inheritance, intellectual pursuit (thinking and reasoning) and emotional reaction (feeling) in a human being, we may say that it is a showing forth of the human mind or consciousness.

"Jesus is the name of the personality. To the metaphysical Christian--that is, to him who studies the spiritual man--Christ is the name of the supermind and Jesus is the name of the personal consciousness" (page 10, Jesus Christ Heals).

When we refer to a person's character as being weak or as being strong, we mean the type of characteristics that the personality is exhibiting. The greatest influence for good on the personality is the realization of ourselves as spiritual beings.

Because the personality is the way, the fashion, or the manner in which our ever-evolving human consciousness expresses itself, it may manifest selfishness, fear, timidity, arrogance, or pride. On the other hand, when enlightened, the personality will express the qualities of the individuality (Christ) such as love, friendliness, humility, dignity, and enthusiasm.
The word personality comes from the Latin word persona meaning "a mask," through which the voice of the actor would sound through in old classical plays. Personality is that which "masks" the individuality or the Christ Self. As the aggregate of characteristics we have acquired through living, personality is the changing part of our being. As we become more and more aware of the divine qualities (ideas) that make up our true nature, our individuality, we release the limited, ignorant, or immature characteristics of personality so that the spiritual qualities of our individuality may express without interference. The following was found among the papers of Charles Fillmore dated 1899:

"persona, a mask--to sound through. The corporeal manifestation of a soul. The outward appearance, expression, body, etc."

Like the artist who changes the strokes on his canvas so that it may more perfectly portray the person or scenery he is painting, we change the "canvas of personality" so that our Christ nature, our individuality, may be more truly portrayed. The highest purpose of the personality may be likened to the setting in which the "diamond" of individuality (the Christ self) is displayed.

4. Define individuality. How do we cultivate and strengthen our consciousness of our individuality?

4. Individuality is the I AM, or Christ, the first phase of our three-fold being (spirit-soul-body); the phase through which we are always identified with God.

Through the I AM or Christ identity (individuality) we are able to express all the powers (ideas or qualities) of God such as life, love, wisdom, strength, faith, power—all that Spirit is in its infinite variety of expression. God, Spirit, is eternal and unchanging, so the expression of God in every man (as the first phase of his three-fold nature) is also eternal and unchanging.

The root meaning of the word individuality is "not divisible; of the same essence or nature" (Webster's Dictionary). No matter how the spiritual identity or individuality may be obscured by the beliefs of mankind, it is always present as the divine center in every human being.

We cultivate our consciousness of individuality (our consciousness of the Christ within) by focusing all of our attention on divine ideas. We do this first by breaking up the "soil" of our human consciousness by denials, in somewhat the same manner as the farmer breaks up the soil of his fields, removes the weeds and stones, preparatory to planting the seeds. By denial we "break up" all the beliefs of greed, envy, fear (weeds in the soil of the mind) and link ourselves with the nature of God by "planting" in our consciousness (by affirmation) the "seeds" of love, honesty, steadfastness to principle, life, faith, and the like. Daily we should commune with the Christ Spirit within (our individuality) by letting our thoughts lead us to a definite feeling of oneness with this Spirit within us. The communion we have with the indwelling Christ presence makes us acquainted with the ideas of God, giving us knowledge of their character and
function, so that we are able to express the ideas in our daily living.

Conscious awareness of our individuality (the Christ Spirit) is strengthened each time we refuse, by denial, to be affected adversely by negative appearances in our world of effects, and by giving our attention to what Spirit or individuality reveals to us in the Silence.

"When Jesus prayed He was setting into action the various powers of His individuality in order to bring about certain results. Within, His identity was of God; without, He was human personality" (page 69, Jesus Christ Heals).

5. Explain what John the Baptist and Jesus Christ represent.

5. John the Baptist and Jesus Christ were cousins, and each was a "promised son" with a mission; that of John the Baptist was to be the forerunner or the "voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ye ready the way of the Lord, Make his paths straight" (Matt. 3:3); while that of Jesus Christ was to be the Way-Shower for all mankind. Jesus said of John, "Among them that was born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist" (Matt. 11:11). John's testimony in regard to Jesus was, "He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear" (Matt. 3:11).

In Mysteries of John, page 18, Charles Fillmore writes of John the Baptist:

"Metaphysically interpreted, John the Baptist symbolizes in each individual the natural man, but with an illumined intellect. His face is turned toward the light in the measure that he recognizes and pays homage to the higher self within the individual."

Before he is fully spiritually illumined, the intellectual-moral man (represented by John the Baptist) in his zeal to do that which is right, takes cognizance of both good and evil in a relative sense. It is through the intellect (the thinking, reasoning faculty) that we first come to learn about the nature of God. With the first quickening comes the impulse to seek to uphold good and destroy what seems evil; we see, and rightly so, the great need for repentance, for cleansing of the consciousness and the outer life.

One phase of John the Baptist represents personality which, before it is enlightened, may seek to force one to live a good life. This is why John the Baptist may also represent conscience, which is the voice of the soul, the voice of experience, speaking through the personality. As was brought out in the fourth Annotation of Lesson 6, conscience warns us when something wrong has been done, or is about to be done, and thus becomes a moral guide until one has learned to listen to the "still small voice," the voice of Spirit. The voice of conscience is often negative, emphasizing "do not," and when not guided by Spirit can foster fear and indecision. We find laws and customs in countries and in religions that have seemed right from a human moral standpoint and one brought up under them feels the "prick of conscience" when he
disobeys them. However, there are laws and customs set up by society that serve their purpose for a time, then cease to be of value in spiritual unfoldment.

In this lesson, Jesus Christ represents the individuality demonstrated as man, or God identified in every man as the Christ, or I AM, being expressed and manifested in the visible realm. Future lessons will go more deeply into the metaphysical meaning of both "Jesus" and "Christ" but the purpose of this lesson is to consider John the Baptist as representing personality and Jesus Christ as representing individuality, the former only expressing itself perfectly when guided by the latter.

While we have referred to John the Baptist as representing conscience or the voice of the soul relying on experience, we may say that Jesus Christ represents the voice of God speaking as intuition, or the "still small voice" (I Kings 19:12) which says, "This is the way, walk ye in it" (Isa. 30:21). The subject of the "still small voice" is more extensively dealt with in Annotation 9 of this lesson.

"Jesus Christ is the living symbol of God's good in any form. He took Truth out of the abstract, and made it a way of life. He brought it into the realm of man's experience. Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, is the embodiment of all that God is" (page 39, Dare to Believe!).

John the Baptist felt unworthy when Jesus asked for baptism, but Jesus said to him, "Suffer it now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" (Matt. 3:15). By this we see that the awakened intellect, or thinking faculty, represented by John the Baptist, is indeed the forerunner of spiritual understanding. It sees the necessity for discipline of our thinking and feeling by the process of denial (water baptism) and affirmation (spiritual baptism) before spiritual understanding can come to us. Not until there has been the inner cleansing can the soul receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and hear the words, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17).

As the personality (John the Baptist) is cleansed of beliefs of limitation, thoughts of error, it decreases in its limited expression, and the individuality (Christ) in turn increases in the expression of power in our life. The intellect is no longer undisciplined or untrained but becomes a willing instrument for the expression of Truth.

"The intellectual perception of Truth by the natural man (John the Baptist) is not the true light (the Christ) but bears witness to the light and prepares the way for its dawning in consciousness" (page 14, Mysteries of John).

6. Give some of the ways in which we may improve our personality so that it becomes a fit instrument for the expression of individuality.

6. When we arrive at the understanding that we are primarily a spiritual being functioning through a soul and a body, we realize that as a self-conscious being in the world of form, we
have a work to do in preparing the soul (mind) and the body to be fit instruments through which the individuality or Christ Self may manifest.

With the physical eyes no one can see the soul any more than one can see the spirit of a man except as they are expressed through the personality. We can see how vital it is that our personality be improved and given a "new look."

Our awakening to the truth that we are a spiritual being is, then, our first step in personality development. Our next step is to take control of our thinking, feeling, speaking, acting, and reacting. We learn to do this through discipline or training in the use of denials and affirmations. By this process we prepare the consciousness for the infilling of the Spirit, so our third step is to go beyond the mechanics of mind, where our thinking and meditating is done, into prayer that leads to the silence or the very Presence of God. Lessons 9 and 10 of this course will go more extensively into the subject of the silence, or "the secret place of the Most High."

In his writings Emmet Fox says of personality and individuality:

"Personality, rightly understood, is God's expression on this plane. Your individuality is your spiritual identity, but this has to be expressed on the physical plane, and that expression is seen as personality. When the expression is clear and logical, we get a brilliant and well-balanced personality, which means true success in life . . . On the other hand, when the expression of the individuality or Christ-man is clouded, confused, and illogical, we see selfishness, confusion, and failure in the personality. Do not try to get rid of personality, but develop your personality on scientific and spiritual lines. Human personality is not to be destroyed, but redeemed."

Study and prayer help us to know whether we have mannerisms of the personality that are offensive to other people, or mannerisms which have no place in our life as sons of God. If this is the case, we can change them into attitudes of understanding, love, tolerance, and consideration for others. As Emmet Fox points out this means the development of "personality on scientific and spiritual lines." We do not try to "make ourselves over" from a merely human standpoint. We seek the guidance of the indwelling Christ Spirit (the individuality) in letting go of unworthy habits that inhibit our personality and we begin to develop the spiritual qualities.

Our study of denials and affirmations has presented the "tools" by which the improvement of personality is made possible. Once the cleansing of certain thoughts in consciousness has been done by denial, we can begin to use affirmations. We do not do this to make something true but in order to establish in consciousness the true ideas back of the words of our affirmation. In this way we claim that which is eternally true of our individuality or Christ Self.

These lessons have already emphasized that love is the
attracting, harmonizing, unifying quality of mind, and affirmations on love help us to build a consciousness that can easily, joyously, change any habits of the personality that are unbecoming to a child of God. In the book Dare to Believe!, page 106, May Rowland says on this point:

"Now let us affirm, 'I am the love of God in expression,' and thus begin gradually and easily to transcend our human limitations. If you will try this practice for even a short period, you will be surprised to find how easy it is to get the feeling of love."

When we come to understand the purpose of personality as the instrument for the expression of our spiritual nature we have a new realization about ourselves. Somehow this lends dignity to a person, the dignity which is rightfully his as a son of God.

7. How may we handle the emotions of fear and timidity that sometimes arise in the presence of an aggressive personality?

7. We overcome the negative emotions of fear and timidity first by changing the concept we have been holding of ourselves. We recognize the truth that we are a son of God and therefore a spiritual being in whose nature fear and timidity have no part.

Fear and timidity are beliefs held by the human consciousness when it has lost sight of man's true nature. These emotions arise in the presence of another when we compare our own inferior feelings with what we think is the superiority of another person.

Very definite instructions are given in I John 4:18 for handling fear or timidity: "Perfect love casteth out fear." As understanding of our divine nature dawns on us, love for God and for our fellow man wells up in our heart. Any fear or timidity we may have felt in the presence of one with an aggressive personality dissolves, leaving only a feeling of oneness. We no longer think of another as causing fear or timidity in us, but come to see that these emotions came about through our ignorance of Truth.

If what we see in another person makes us feel inferior, fearful, or timid, we should seek more than ever to become conscious of the good that makes up our essential character, but which we have failed to release or develop. Fortified by understanding and love, we feel only compassion in the presence of an aggressive personality, even if that one is seeking to impress us by being dominating or exacting. Our love senses a soul trying to unfold according to his own understanding and in his own way the same God qualities that we are developing.

8. Should we ever feel afraid in the presence of a truly great person?

8. No. We should never feel afraid in the presence of a truly great person because there is nothing in the consciousness of a great soul to stir negation in others.

In paragraph 13, page 74, of the text, we read:
"You never have a similar feeling in the presence of strong individuality. Individuality . . . gives . . . exhilaration and comfort and encouragement to you."

The "strong individuality" referred to is the Christ shining through a soul, being expressed through the personality, so we term that one a great soul or a truly great person. Such a one has developed his personality to be a fit channel for the expression of the spiritual qualities of the individuality (the Christ).

In the presence of a truly great person we feel an uplifting influence, a sense of our own capabilities and spiritual capacities that helps us to release fears and anxieties from our own consciousness. One whose personality has become a clear vehicle for the expression of the Christ, or individuality, has developed love.

"It is through this process of unfolding love that great souls are developed. Men are not created great but with the capacity to become great. Many factors enter into soul growth, some minor and some major, but a soul never attains supermind power without love. The reason why love is essential in a great soul is that love is the binding power, the factor so necessary to strengthening or fortifying the soul" (pages 108, 109, Teach Us to Pray).

9. What is meant by the "still small voice" (I Kings 19:12)?

9. The "still small voice" might best be defined as the voice of God, the Holy Spirit, speaking to our soul as intuition (dealt with in Annotation 4, Lesson 6). It is a "knowing" that comes from Spirit within and 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.
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How are we to develop receptivity to the "still small voice"? Through periods of prayer we harmonize ourselves 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 that comes from understanding faith; assuring us that God is in charge and all is well.

10. Are you necessary to God? Explain.

10. Yes, each of us is necessary to God. We cannot conceive of God as Creator bringing forth any part of creation without a purpose. Certainly the being He created in His own image and after His own likeness must have a very lofty purpose.

"There can be no logical doubt that an all-wise and all-powerful Creator would plan perfection for His creations and also endow them with the ability to bring His plan into manifestation. That is the status of our world and its people. We are God's ideal conception of His perfect man, and He has given us the power of thought and word through which to make that ideal manifest" (page 16, Jesus Christ Heals).

The spiritual ideas that are inherent in God as Divine Mind are also inherent in us as our divine inheritance. They make up the divine "blueprint" we are to follow in building our outer life so that we may fulfill the purpose for which we were created—to express the nature of God. One's station in life does not indicate his relationship to God, for all are His beloved sons, and each has his own special place to fill and his own special way of expression in order to accomplish the plan of creation for him.

We must respect our own worth in building and expressing the spiritual qualities, for no one else has exactly the same capacity for expressing and manifesting ideas. Our work is to act from the standpoint of our own divine sonship, at the same time remembering that this is true of our fellow man.

"God is important to us, and we are important to God, for we are His conscious expression. . . . Our purpose in life is not just to live, not just to rear a family, not just to be a banker, a doctor, a lawyer, a storekeeper, or a business man. These are all secondary purposes. The first purpose for which God created us is to express Him, to develop our spiritual character. When we become aware of this primary purpose, then we can put something real and alive and useful into our secondary purposes, and become successful men and women" (pages 172, 173, Dare to Believe!).
As we dedicate ourselves to the Father's work, we become a symbol of His heart through which humanity feels love; a symbol of His mind through which wisdom and intelligence are made active; a symbol of His hands through which all our fellow men become aware of the blessings of God.

In a poem by James Dillet Freeman this same thought is given to us:

"Sometimes I know that I am in God's heart;
Sometimes I feel alone,
But always when my thoughts and I grow still
I know that I am part
Of Being, and I serve a kindlier will
And have a larger purpose than my own;
Somehow I sense
Through all the mischance of my life's events
The working out of good I never planned--
I must be in God's heart, being in His hand."

(page 31, Be!)