

Eric
Butterworth
Speaks

Essay #7
THE PILLAR OF A CLOUD

In yesterday's lesson we discussed the pillar of fire; in today's lesson we will discuss the pillar of a cloud.

The great problem of the desert wanderer is the heat of the sun, and the pillar of cloud has several meanings. Actually, in the context it was used in the thirteenth chapter of Exodus, the Hebrew word translated "pillar" means a stationary object, a platform, seeming to denote rather than a tall column of smoke an umbrella of cloud covering that is standing over the Israelites and following them wherever they went. This was a symbol of divine protection, an evidence that God was truly with them. Charles Fillmore says that the cloud, from the metaphysical viewpoint, means the presence of the mind of God in spiritual visibility. In other words, it is a conditioned receptivity to and releasement of the flow of divine ideas and guidance. The pillar of a cloud--how great is our need for just such a state of consciousness in every day of our lives.

The great fundamental truth, "As a man thinketh, so is he," means for us that if you want success you must think success thoughts, if you want harmony, you must think harmonious thoughts. Of course, it's a big "if!" But, if we can keep our minds attuned to that which is positive, we will certainly be somewhat less susceptible to the sort of experiences that are difficult, and we will be better enabled to demonstrate to ourselves the sort of experiences that are what we long for. Conditioned receptivity to inner peace and power, this is the thing.

We need to know that we have the ability to tune in to the infinite mind within us, that we can get on the peaceful wavelength of life, that we can receive new ideas and concepts and creative attitudes that will bring us basic harmony. When we perceive that we can think of ourselves as naturally receptive channels for the flow of divine inspiration, then we must begin to recognize that any deviation from this awareness of the God-self within us is giving up something, and any kind of conditioning or programming process may well be self-limiting in the long run. The great astronomer, Johann Keppler, peering through his telescope at the vast display of the cosmos said, "Oh Lord, I am thinking thy thoughts after thee." This is the key to right thinking, to emotional control, to the management of our minds, letting the mind of the Infinite express and have its way in us. To develop this receptivity to the inspiration of the Almighty should be our goal.

We must develop for ourselves certain techniques and exercises, prayers and affirmations that work for us, that will effectively program our day for a continuity of good thought impulses, but that program ourselves from within. Let us examine some techniques for waking up and going forward during the day.

For going forward into the activities of our waking hours, we need to develop the techniques that will program the mind from within with a momentum that will carry us through the day in positive consciousness. If man is a spiritual being then it is foolhardy to start the day without taking time to get in tune, to plug in, to contemplate our inner source of power. So often we plunge into our day's activities unthinkingly without any kind of preparation; even if we begin with prayer, it is on the run like that last cup of coffee. With careful preparation and some affirmative thoughts we can actually program our day from within so that we will translate and modulate the hectic tempo of contemporary living into a divine tempo of peace, poise, and power. One suggestion: take five minutes immediately upon awakening to realize your divine origin, to give yourself a pep talk, to condition yourself to a positive view of life. You can in this way pick yourself right up by the bootstraps and make a joyous and peaceful and successful day out of what otherwise might have been quite chaotic, just by the expenditure of a few moments while still in bed, on awakening, on getting your thoughts in tune.

The Psalmist says, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh." You might pic-

ture sitting on a lofty mountain and overlooking your life experience. You would see things more objectively. If you are not being overheard, you might even laugh for a moment. To laugh would set the theme of joy for the day ahead. You would, so to speak, get some altitude on your thinking. From on high you can see the entire road ahead, and from such a perspective things will be seen as easy and manageable.

I love that beautiful thought of the Psalmist, that God has put a song in my mouth. As a matter of fact, this is included in an affirmation that I personally use quite often: "God has put a song in my mouth, and I sing it with joy." Every day, through the blessing of sleep at night, God has put a new song in our mouths, a new flow of inspiration, new ideas, new guidance, a new pillar of a cloud for the day. But, we must sing the song, instead of harping on the same old tune; a determination on our part is needed.

Following the example of Robert Frost, I make my bed each morning, smoothing out the wrinkles all the while I am doing the same thing with my mind. Thus, my mind starts each day established in the continuity and the consciousness of the divine order that flows within. This is a very simple but very effective way for me to begin the day and to order my mind for the coming events of the day.

Another man, an incurable optimist, and an amazingly energetic and vital person who lives in a demanding, chaotic world, yet at all times is relaxed and happy, says that he starts each day with his own ritual of preparation. He says that he begins the day by taking a few minutes to breath deeply, filling and lungs, and to stretch his body fully, trying all the while to get into his consciousness that even while thus exercising he is also opening his mind, his spiritual and mental potential to its fullest extent. Then, following the example of Winston Churchill, he dons a bathrobe and sets a hat rakishly on the side of his head, puts a cane over his shoulder, turns full blast a rousing march on, and prances around the room for five minutes. This, he claims, gives him a feeling of importance, of mastery, of conquest, of self-confidence, and of enthusiasm.

Now, obviously, each of us needs to develop his own techniques, but do not sell short the idea of gearing yourself for abundant living. Condition your mind to enthusiasm and creative thought. You will be amazed at how you can actually program your day, especially when you program it from within. Determine that during the day you will remember that life is lived from within out, so that you will be like a light that radiates, rather than like a sponge which absorbs; then you will go forth letting your light shine. You will be singing a new song unto the Lord, getting the feeling that you do not walk alone nor do you work alone, and that there is a divine process at work in you, that divine inspiration is constantly igniting within you the sparks of ideas and of creative plans and of enthusiasm.

Be aware, constantly, of the pillar of a cloud by day, and, reviewing our thought of yesterday's lesson, of a pillar of fire by night.