

BIBLE LESSON XV.

John 14:1

POWER OF THE MIND

Jesus Christ said to His people when He was about to go away out of their sight and they were deeply troubled about it, "Let not your heart be troubled. . . . I go to prepare a place for you. . . . The Comforter whom the Father will send in My Name shall teach you all things."

His command at this particular time to these disturbed hearts is evidence of His knowledge of the supreme power of mind over the most intense feelings. He evidently did not believe in letting the passions master mankind, even though the recognized leaders of thought were teaching the world at that time that since the passions are masters of mankind and not mankind of the passions there is no way of ridding ourselves of the passions but by annihilation.

Look at the man torn by jealousy: who is the master, himself or jealousy? Look at him under the wind of anger; who is master, the man or anger? To live thinking this is not life, therefore let us be rid of life. But Jesus of Nazareth paid no attention to sophistries. He knew that every man is as great as he has courage to declare himself and will demonstrate as much greatness as he has

confidence in his affirmations. "I am myself now that I know myself. My highest ideal – I am it! So is every heart that knows the right, and choosing it, rejoices that what it thinks is true – itself is that."

He had already taught them of their equality with Himself, and here again He reiterates that He and His Father are in them and that if He goes out of their sight and mind as a man of flesh and blood they will be so thrown upon their own indwelling spirit that they will better realize their power and greatness. He did not believe in greater and lesser. He believed in universal equality through universal recognition of the truth concerning the impartial God indwelling everywhere.

There is nothing more heart-breaking than separation from those you love best. There is nothing more despair-filling and frenz-stirring than to see the failure of all your cherished plans, your earthly hopes and ambitions, with abundant evidence that even your religious aspirations will never be realized, and nothing of your teaching will demonstrate what you have proclaimed. This was the state of mind of those men the Master was talking to.

Those Jews who had given up their old form of faith for the one He taught, and had publicly espoused Him and His cause, were now told that He was to be crucified as a malefactor in the utmost disgrace. They were told that He would leave them to the companionship of a being or principle of action which they had never seen, viz., the

Holy Ghost. Their hopes had been raised to the highest pitch of enthusiasm that their Messiah would conquer the Romans and set Israel free. They hoped for the noblest prosperity of His teachings. His triumph would be their triumph. They wanted to see the old church converted to their Teacher's doctrine of the unreality of material things and the reality of Spirit. They hoped to see their Master's announcement that the devil is a lie from the beginning prevail – not so much because it was true, but to triumph over the rest.

They were sure in some mysterious way that all things seen and touched are but symbols of what is real, and as their chosen leader was making great demonstrations in explanation of how the wonderful healings were performed by the miracle workers of all ages, they wanted to see Him succeed.

He made God seem so real to them, so near, so mighty to save, so substantial, yet evidently they loved the man Jesus better than they did the God He preached. There had been a great many strong minds teaching that ideas are the only real things, but at present Jesus was more comforting than an idea of one.

Their love for Him was intense. Their reverence for Him was unbounded. Their confidence in His power was stupendous. So their disappointment at the way things were turning out had troubled their hearts with anguish. It was the opportunity of Jesus to give them to best lesson is self-treatment that

He had ever given. It is very good to know how to treat ourselves so as to be in no need of a physician. It is better to understand self-cure than to rely upon the best doctor in creation. The effect of disappointment and grief is disease, waste of property and finally death. Socrates had taught this law long before Jesus Christ. So right here was the chance to handle the cause of poverty and disease before it had resulted in anything – while it was raging.

Political disappointments, social humiliation, religious despair: He told them not to let these feelings have any place in their being. He said He had their highest good at heart, and unless He went away they would never step forward into their rightful place at all. They must know that it was totally unscientific to lean upon any man, woman, or child for strength, power or advancement. He personified all their thought of leaning – all their inclination to depend upon something or somebody, and not until they put Him out of their mind as a personal being would their mind spring forward into its rightful place.

They had stood back and let Him in person, not principle, fill all their mind, till He was their support, their teacher, their defender, and the principle He taught was lost sight of. They literally must step forward in their own estimation as Spirit. They were in substance self-increasing and self-supporting, self-defending and self-rewarding. “My mind to me a kingdom is.”

It is better to love principle than persons. If we love principle best we find ourselves growing in strength, or, rather, showing forth that strength which we always had. We find ourselves showing forth better and better judgment. We find ourselves more and more the personifications of fearlessness. If we love persons best we find ourselves swayed more or less, swerved more or less from our highest judgments.

Such is the effect of dependence upon people for our happiness, or support, that, even while we are not with them, the thoughts they are thinking cause our fears and tremblings, our elations, and depressions, which seem so unaccountable. There is no dependence to be placed upon one who is good because his love for or his fear of his companions make him so. When a stronger love or a stronger fear stirs him he will go its way. Your child kept from tobacco simply because he is afraid of you or loves you is not safe. There is a way of teaching that will make the love of right in the heart, and all the tobacco stores and saloons in a great city would be no temptation.

It is better to learn this teaching than to deal with people. There is a way of thinking in the secrecy of your own room that will cause the shadows of temptation to fall away as nothingness. The Word of this principle is omnipotent. Temptations flee. Appetites fall. Anger is forgotten. It is the Word of Truth concerning the Spirit of mankind; the responsive, noble Spirit, indwelling everywhere.

“If I make my bed in hell (send my word down to the worst seeming of evil) Thou, God, art there.”

Sharper than steel is the sword of the Spirit.
Swifter than arrows the word of the Truth is.
Stronger than anger is love and subdueth.

This does not mean that you are not to love your friends and your family. By no means. But it does mean that your love is a sentimental feeling, not capable of withstanding the pressure of some temptation peculiarly powerful over you, till you are grounded into principle first.

“Principle is God. Seek first the kingdom of God and all these things (friends unfailing, goods abiding) will be added.” To Jesus, religious supremacy, political victory, social honors, counted for nothing except they were the outshowing of a true principle proclaimed and lived. He knew that a church that is held together and owns its memberships by reason of the personal influence of a man is on a shaky foundation. A government that trusts its name and honor to one whose name and honor are not synonyms of a mighty principle is laying a foundation of quicksand.

God is awake – alive. There is no social prestige, attainable worth noticing if it is secured by your personal magnetism, your natural possessions, your education, if you do not stand to your companions as the exponent of some worthy cause which is the principle you live.

When a great preacher is careless about his many obligations, or keeping his engagements,

and is a respecer of persons, there is a screw loose in the future prospects of the church. They saw in Jesus the man their ambitions fulfilled. They must see in the principle He preached the glory of the world.

“Ah, but,” you say, “you would not have us entrust a ship in a storm to a man simply because he was good when the captain who is recognized as a bad man understands ailing? You would not trust the government to a good man when the bad man is the better statesman?” The ship is not safe if the captain is not upright, and the government will court downfall from its deliberate choice of an immoral statesman. What do you think of that time when the fair ship on smooth waters was sailing so peacefully under its notedly good captain, and a lover of God suddenly came to him in the night and urged him to steer the ship straight north? The captain laughed at him but upon his appearing three times during the night with the same entreaty, finally did turn the ship, and was saved from the iceberg floating down from the north, preparing to meet the ship at right angles.

What do you think of the ship in the hurricane with her greatly trusted captain and trained crew utterly hopeless, when the man who dwelt in the midst of the principle of righteousness said, “Turn this way,” and at once they were swung into that center of peace which is the heart of the cyclone, the hurricane, the simoon, the whirling suns?

This principle of goodness trusted, regardless of external fitness, is the

government which shall "reign from sea to sea and from the river to the uttermost parts of the earth."

"Of its kingdom there shall be no end." Under its reign no mother will die, no child meet with accident. Love and trust this principle and all things that you can ask, better than you can imagine, will

Rise from the deeps,

Sail over the seas

And down from the stars

Haste, the nations to please.

Jesus had taught these people this law of trust in the right: trust in the good itself. But no, they crowded their human relations, Himself included, into their heart so tightly that they were even then losing sight of the principles He announced. They quarreled as to who should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven - greatest in the Spirit! They forbade children, women, beggars, to get near their majestic leader. But He said all were equal in God. He spoke of the sure goodness of children. He called the despised women daughters of God. He asked the beggars tenderly what service He could render them, touching the lepers as though they were princes.

He trusted to the principle He proclaimed to hold its own. He preached eternal life and trusted the principle itself to take Him safely through. He trusted to goodness itself to feed and house and clothe Him, and laid Himself so hard to the winds of His teaching that it did feed, clothe, house Him.

Hero worship is not good. It is that for which the heroes stand that we worship, then our love for them is healthy. He knew that the noble thoughts and trust in God of ages of goodness bloomed in Him. Did not the poetic feelings and unconscious observations of the past of Anglo-Saxon human experiences find expression in Shakespeare? So Jesus Christ was the bloom into manifest life of the confidence of all who had lived before Him, that goodness is safer to trust than human skill. Elisha's confidence in his God as able to do mighty works had turned away from the gates of Samaria the armed besiegers, when the King and his lords had failed. Worldly policy had starved the people, but trust in God put fine wheat and sweet barley into their fingers.

Where did the wars and the famines and the pestilences (worldly policies carried out) spring from? But Jesus was the fruit of trust in God. His teachings would save from all evil. To watch flesh or material processes is deteriorating. To say that Spirit is the only substance, we do not believe in any law but the Spirit, is increasing in health, increasing in judgment, increasing in prosperity. Shall we not hear this Man teach that even to look at Himself as a Man is to forget principle, and either get to hating or loving without judgment?

Dante was looked at as a person trying to put his fame up, and they ignored his principle and exiled him; Socrates likewise; Columbus the same; also Bruno, Galileo.

Cleopatra was personally adored, and her people were slain at her whim, smiling at her with love. But principle studied, loved, obeyed, puts us into our right mind – the place prepared for us. There is room enough in omnipresence for us to spread the wings of our love over all the earth. There is power enough in omnipotence for our spirit to conquer the elements. Principle studied increases us to be one with it. So Christ comes again as doctrine, principle, spirit, and makes His abode in us as God, and then there is no taking away of our joy.

There is no oneness with Christ until we understand His teachings. The love of the personal Man is not what He taught. He took that away for the principle of righteousness to be first in our mind. He lives and reigns as an eternal teaching concerning the dominion of goodness. There is nothing to expect from human statesmanship, religious supremacies, social elevations. All things to expect from putting all these things out of mind to understand the principle of righteousness, as to its power, its efficiency, its swift-coming to conquer. This comforts. And the Comforter is the Holy Ghost.

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