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HOME COURSE IN MENTAL SCIENCE.

BY HELEN WILMANS.

LESSON THREE.

OUR BELIEFS.

## OUR BELIEFS.

### LESSON III.

Because a man is a mental and not a physical creature it follows necessarily that "as a man believes, he is." Therefore his beliefs in sickness and death are real conditions, though mental, and he passes through these conditions on his way up from brute ignorance to divine intelligence. They are incidents peculiar to one phase of his growth. Do not forget that all of a man's growth is purely intellectual. It is the acquisition of new knowledge.

And once more I repeat, that a man being all mind, it cannot be otherwise than that all of his conditions are mental.

One mental condition is as real as another, and every mental condition a man is capable of, is dependent for its character upon his knowledge of absolute truth.

It is not always convenient to put a man's belief in sin or the power of evil in the same category with his beliefs in sickness and death. What he calls his sins, and for the punishment of which he has devised

various tortures, some of them eternal, are simply the mistakes he makes in the heaven born right to pursue happiness. But sickness and death are mental conditions of negation or ignorance, which are universally conceded to bring their own punishment.

The race has never devised a hell in which to punish people for being sick, and yet sickness and death are as culpable as those acts we call sinful, and have their origin in the same cause—viz., negation or ignorance.

It is entirely proper to treat sickness and death as beliefs, because a man is a mental creature, and all his conditions are beliefs; but beliefs are real conditions. A belief that is based on the great foundation theory of this and past ages that evil is a self-existent force, must necessarily be a negative belief because it rests on a mistake. It has not the solid basis of absolute truth on which to rest, and from which it is fed constantly. It is like the house built on sand, which when the rains descend and the floods come is washed away, and the world sees it no more.

But the beliefs which rest upon that incontrovertible and universal truth—all is good, or Life,—are positive; they cannot be shaken; they are fed every instant by an influx of new truth, and they become stronger and stronger, building him who entertains them into splendid health and strength and beauty and courage; carrying him every moment farther



away from the possibility of ever again dropping into the negative condition where sickness and death can master him.

But since animals are comparatively healthy how does it happen that the human family is so diseased?

As stated before, I take an evolutionary view of this subject. And for the sake of those too deeply rooted in the old to take suddenly to the new I will say that this view does not conflict with the bible. I have been an earnest student of the bible, and I am convinced that if the believers in the evolutionary theory knew a little more of the bible, and the theologians a little more of evolution, the "irrepressible conflict" between science and religion would melt into nothing.

I am bound to confess, however, that it seems of no consequence to me whether the bible sustains evolution or not, for evolution is certainly true, and the facts it has recorded with the passing of the ages are not to be disputed by any book whatever. The world contains its own record—indeed the world is its own record—and it is my bible pre-eminently.

The printed bible is a wonderful book. It shows forth the effort of the master minds of past ages to solve the problems that evolution alone has power to disclose in absolute fullness; and the revelations of those struggling minds in conflict with their own ignorance, and the ignorance of the age that surrounded them, is surely the most glorious example of

heroism ever beheld. The men who wrote the bible wrote from their own interior perceptions. They looked in their hearts and wrote. And this is why the bible comes so nearly being a transcript of evolution. Every man is a world in condensation; and when he writes from himself he writes in a great measure the history of the world just as it is written on the rocks and the glaciers.

Take, for instance, what the bible says of the "Garden of Eden" where man dwelt in happiness with himself and "God"—which means good—a state where the infinite good was not doubted. All of this refers to the harmonious, instinctive life of the race before the dawn of man's reasoning faculties, which awakened his conscious individuality and led him to ask a thousand questions that he was not able to answer, and which have kept the race in a constant state of fermentation ever since.

But though the "Garden of Eden" was peaceful and contented, man can never return to it. The angel with the flaming sword does actually guard its gates to this day, and no one who values his growing intelligence—which is his only hope of salvation—will ever attempt to return.

The race is in a transitional period from animal to divine. In our animalhood and while guided by instinct, before the awakening of the reasoning faculties, we were at rest, at ease—whole in our condition. We were all mind then as now, for there is nothing but mind; but we

were crude mind—crude minds, rather—whose organisms did not evolve sufficient thought to awaken and call us out of our sphere. We were in a condition of repose. Even now we see the animals content, comparatively healthy and happy, except as they come under man's influence and yield to the ban of his beliefs.

But man in his long journey upwards from the lower planes of development reaches a place where he begins to ask questions. The first question shaped in the animal mind brings disquietude and shuts the primitive Eden on the questioner. His ease is broken; the search for more positive truth has begun, and it will never end until understanding rewards him.

The road—a very dark road indeed—from our Eden of primitive content to the heaven of understanding, is through an almost unbroken jungle of doubts and perplexities. As each small eminence is reached from which we can see a short space ahead and around, we gain a new belief with regard to our conditions and situation.

These beliefs are "legion." The world is full of them. All down the ages as far back as the memory of the race can reach they have been bad, worse and worst.

Always the idea of God existed. The idea has had its form in every shade and grade of crudity. People have even thought Him a monster

to be propitiated. Almost universally He was believed to be outside of man and apart from him. A power was felt and acknowledged, and the idea of becoming reconciled to this power became the central thought of the religions of the world.

Disease is absence of ease. When the reasoning power first emerged from the instinctive or animal life sufficiently to ask a question, then there was disease—absence of ease. Then a little more light came, and with it more questions, and still greater absence of ease.

Presently men began applying herbs and such remedies, thus medicating the effect instead of the cause; and yet because cause and effect are different degrees of the one mind, herbs and minerals have operated to work cures, and still operate to do so among those persons who have not awakened to a knowledge of their own positiveness and to the fact that drugs are negative to themselves. It is only a negative person who can be affected by drugs. As soon as a man becomes conscious of his own position in the world, and sees himself master of all things, he knows that drugs are negative to him and can do him no good.

The time was prophesied when men would drink poisons without harm. This time would be here when men knew themselves at one with the "Father;" when they should have made the "atonement"—the at-one-ment, the at-one-mind—when they should be one with the Law of their Being.



All of which means that when men understand the Law of Being they can do what they will and suffer no death. Death is an intellectual separation from the Law of Being, or the Life Principle, which the race has foolishly personified and called God.

This is as good a place as any to speak of the character of drugs, etc. I maintain that Life can only be expressed through individualization; that every shrub and every created thing has its own individuality and its own character; and that the character of different herbs and minerals affects us when taken into our organizations until such time comes as we rise to the positive pole of our life magnet. Then all drugs and all minerals will become negative to us. As this process of becoming positive is a gradual one, so it will only come about gradually that drugs will lose their influence upon us. Fire will also lose its power to harm us in time. It, like other negative things, will become negative to us. All these things are negative to us now in point of inherent force, but until we rise to an understanding of the positive pole of life, where we come to an intelligent recognition of the fact, they might as well not be.

We can have no truth until we recognize it. We are all mind, and mind can only have what it believes it has. The beliefs of these individualized minds called men and women are their realities.

I am aware that Christian Scientists say there is no power in drugs



but that power conferred by the belief of persons—by the belief of the world. But this is not so. The peculiar quality of almost all medicinal herbs was discovered accidentally. The true character of the herb created the belief; the belief never created the character of the herb. We might as well say that belief created the quality of cold in ice or of heat in fire.

But no matter what the character of any herb or substance, that character will cease to affect him who has come consciously into a knowledge of his true relations with all the earth. Man is master, and everything below him is ready to acknowledge it as soon as he declares his authority.

But to return to the point from which I departed in order to make the foregoing explanation. I call the world to witness that in spite of improved sanitary conditions disease has increased with the progress of civilization. This is because man's intellect has expanded, and in this expansion he asked more questions which he could not answer, and so has created in his mind still greater disease, or absence of ease. He still imagines himself an outcast from his God in consequence of some sin committed by his ancestors, and all the time he is trying to make his peace.

And so the whole world is struggling in the toils of a thousand

absurd beliefs, born of ignorance of its true relations to the Law of Being. We are in the dark, we have never been in the light.

Incipient man, undeveloped man (and remember that all things are man—the tree is a rooted man, and the horse is a four-footed man), is at ease in his ignorance of a higher life of understanding. And this condition was his Eden before he reached forth his hand and took fruit from the tree of knowledge. The tree of knowledge has wrought to the full every curse that was predicted of it. Woman became conscious of her pain in childbirth and learned to dread it. Man became dissatisfied with herbs and berries and earned his bread by the sweat of his brow. And thus the race has forged its way through bitter experience since that far away first question which destroyed the even balance of the instinctive nature, until now.

And what do we find now? Why this—as Tennyson expresses it—“knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers.” The knowledge of many things is ours. Look over the world and see what mighty combinations we have made, what states we have builded, and what inventions we have constructed. And yet “wisdom lingers,” for we are no happier than the beasts of the field or the birds of the air; nay, we are not half so happy. They still enjoy their first Eden, but we, though long since departed from that crude state, have not yet completed the circuit round



that upward spiral which shall open the corresponding Eden lying so far above the other, all bathed in that light which never "shown on land or sea"—the light of understanding. But we are coming to it. And at last we see that all our disquietude which we have named sin, sickness and death, is only false beliefs—false opinions based on untenable grounds. We have believed ourselves separated from the good, the Life, and therefore aliens to happiness. We now know by argument based on the eternal principles of absolute truth that this is impossible. We know that the Law of Life, the mainspring of vitality, does fill all space, and that we are a part of it, as pure as it is. We know that we do not have a dual life—one of spirit and one of matter. We know that our lives are whole, or "holy." We have come consciously into true relations with the universe through the knowledge of the truth. We know that we are all mind, or spirit.

Note the point. We have always been in true relations to the Law of Being, but we have not always known it—we have not always been conscious of it. All the long road covered by the period in which our reasoning powers have been developing up to this state of consciousness in the truth, has been filled by ignorant beliefs and wild speculations based on such evidences as we got from our five avenues of sense. But the five senses were never to be trusted. They themselves were crea-



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tures that needed education before we could safely rely upon them. They brought us reports of evil continually when there is no evil. Now that we know what truth is, these senses are constantly bringing us reports of good, and it is only as they bring us reports of good that we can trust them.

To deny entirely the evidence of the senses, as some of the leaders in Christian Science are doing, is the height of folly. I simply deny their evidence when it is not in accord with the fundamental truth—all is good; all is Life.

For observe this: We have recast the statement of our lives. We no longer reckon from the premises of a dual life, part mind and part matter. We have to get our reckoning from a different standpoint. We are all mind; therefore, each individual mind must shape its conclusions from a mental basis.

If I reason out the fact that all is good and there is no evil, my senses must bring evidence from every point in accordance with the truth which my brain has evolved, or I will not believe them. By the truth evolved from the positive pole of me (my brain), I have learned that all is good, and my senses, which belong to the negative pole of this me, must submit to the logic of the fact as reported by their superior in authority and power, and must bring evidence from every point of the compass in confirmation of it.



By the light of the great truth—all is good—I have reasoned out the fact that there is no sin. Then up jump the senses clamorously and say, "Why, here in Chicago a few nights ago an innocent old man was murdered for his money. Do you pretend to say that the miscreants who did this deed committed no sin?"

In answering this I still hold firmly to the conclusion of my reasoning powers. I say that there are no miscreants and that no sin was committed. I say that the men who did this deed were following that natural Law which urges every living creature on in the pursuit of happiness. These men were seeking their own happiness and were directed by the picture of the whole world's selfishness in their misguided attempt to realize it. They did not commit a sin as the word is understood by government, by society and the clergy. They made a fearful mistake and this was all. So it is seen that what we call sin is ignorance of the Law of Being—the Law of Life, that is altogether good.

Men believe themselves and others to be evil, and thus believing they proceed to work out their own beliefs. We being all mind, are as sinless as the Law, of which we are the manifestation or visible expression; and when our senses confirm this doubly demonstrated truth we can trust them.

But when our senses tell us that we are sinners, or that our neigh-

bors are faithless or vile, we know that they lie to us because we have proved by logic, based on universal or absolute truth, that no one can be vile.

When our senses tell us we are sick we must deny the power of sickness over us. Before we come into the truth that all is good we cannot deny it. We have to submit perforce, and thus take the consequences of our ignorance. But now, in the light of absolute truth—the truth that all is good—those relative truths of our negative or ignorant former life called sin, sickness and death—are to be denied in the most uncompromising manner. For do we not know that we are all mind and that mind is the Law made visible?

There are cases where I count it wise to repeat. It is always well to repeat again and again in teaching, and therefore the following will be excusable:

Mind is both negative and positive. If any substance could be perfectly inert (which is impossible) it would be perfectly negative mind. Neither can we mention anything altogether positive. The terms negative and positive are relative. They mean vitality unexpressed, and vitality more and more expressed in higher and still higher degrees; for the universe is one mighty magnet ranging from lower to higher degrees in expression of vitality all the way through.

In proportion to the amount of vitality expressed by an order or group of beings is the intelligence of that order or group. In the entire range of being from a clod to a plant, from a plant to the lowest animal life, and from the lowest animal life to man, the entire difference in shape and intelligence is accounted for by the difference in the amount of vitality expressed. If a tree expressed as much vitality as a cow it would not be rooted in the ground. It would possess a different organization and be enabled to walk abroad. If the cow expressed as much vitality as a man her gaze would not turn downward. Her superior vitality would have projected a nobler expression of itself, and her thoughts would range out horizontally and upward.

All along the road of development from low to high, from negative to positive, we have been climbing step by step from animalhood to divinity. Born of the first faint monition of sex, which is only another name for the Law of Attraction, or the Life Principle, was the resolve to move on. And this resolve is the organized Life impulse as expressed in the individual. It is the Law of Attraction individualized—incarnated. That is to say, it is positive good, or the Life Principle, made visible by recognition of itself. It is the first little thrill of desire, or aspiration. All compulsion is in aspiration. Desire is the beginning of growth. All along the road up to where we now are this original life impulse to move

on has pushed its way through negative forms of mind. At every advancing step it has left behind it that negative part which it could not refine or make to correspond with its own more vital desire—and this dropping off, or leaving behind its less intelligent part is called death.

And thus man has made a stepping-stone literally of his dead self at every point where the negative part of his mind (he is all mind) prevented the growth or expression of his positive part—his thought life. He has burst through a thousand rings of negative mind before he reached the place where he knew that all is mind. But he has reached that place now.

Through and through, the consciousness of the true metaphysician tells him that he is whole, or "holy"—being all mind. It is the consciousness of his wholeness that is called the atonement in the bible, and upon which the salvation of the race is rightly declared to depend. Jesus stated a scientific truth when he said that man was one with the father—by which I take it he meant the Law of Being. For it is by reason of this consciousness that man is endowed with all power over negative mind. He can make this negative mind conform to him to the utmost. So perfectly indeed will be his ability to control negative mind that he need no longer escape from it as in death, but will have it in his power to refine and vitalize it to such a degree that he will not need to lay it down in death.



The salvation of the bible is made to depend on belief. This also is the doctrine of evolution. Believe and you will be saved. Believe what? Believe "God," which means good. Believe in the allness of the good; believe in the perfectness of the one spirit of Life that permeates all things.

All is good, and there is no evil. This is the great truth to which **Mental Science** has at last carried the leaders of the world's thought. These leaders have passed the long night of hideous dreams which the race calls sin, sickness and death. They know that sin, sickness and death are but the changing shapes projected upon the world's camera obscura by the people's dawning intelligence—not yet brightened into that light where its reflections could be considered anything more than the fleeting vision of the hour. Our beliefs in sin, sickness and death are the result of our negative condition. What we call death is the climax of these conditions. We can educate ourselves in positive truth to such an extent there need be never again the breaking of the magnet man by what the world calls death.

This lesson would be imperfect were I to pass on without acquainting the reader with the power of the world's established beliefs, and giving him an idea of how they are to be overcome; for they must be overcome, or death and disease will always hold the race in the very same fetters in which it writhes to-day.

Race belief is responsible for the condition in which we see the people. It is responsible for all the weakness and wretchedness and poverty we see about us. And yet the greatest crime one can commit is to project a belief beyond the damning beliefs that are killing the people, one and all. It is heresy to think a vital thought, because a vital thought reflects discredit upon the old, stratified or fixed thought called race beliefs.

These old beliefs are holding the race in a condition of living death, and nothing but new, vital thought—which is "heresy"—can save it.

I call the entire product of the world's old thought to judgment this day. I ask it to show something it has produced besides disease and death. I state boldly that it not only has nothing else to show, but that it has rung down the curtain and turned off the lights upon the farther power of the people to show something better. It says virtually, "Wisdom dies when I die." "I am the ultimate of intellectual effort," claims this most monstrous tyrant of all the ages. Think of an ultimate to human intelligence that ends in death instead of a conquest over death! An ultimate to the ever progressive mind that sanctions the existence of disease and murder and poverty and a condition of unbroken hell, instead of conquering all these negations, or denials, of mental power, and establishing heaven on earth! Think of an ultimate to human endeavor that

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ends in pulseless sleep, instead of awakening the vital powers of an unexplored universe and rifting its treasures for the enhancement and the perpetuation of its own vitality and pleasure!

"We are getting old, and death is inevitable." This is the language of the day. This is the effect of the world's devitalizing and monstrous beliefs; to which it adds the threat that he who projects a belief beyond these beliefs is a heretic and must be damned.

Why, the race is damned already in the deadness of the beliefs that hold it on the low and wretched plane of vitality where it now rests; and who cares for farther damning? The only farther damning possible will be more damning of the same kind; and this will be more deadness; and complete deadness will be better than the half deadness of our present condition. In our present condition we are dead and conscious of our deadness. In deeper death we will be as we are, only unconscious of our misery; and this will be a gain.

Half-way conditions are never palatable. I want to be either dead all over or alive all over; and I know that there is nothing that can revitalize us but the birth of new thought in our organisms. By the birth of new thought I mean the acquisition of new truth.

And the acquisition of new truth I am going to have, though all the hells of the whole world's old thought must be met single-handed

and conquered. Why? Because my salvation and the salvation of the race depend upon it.

There is but one thing to be saved from, and that is this creeping deadness which is even now benumbing the faculties of every soul who has emerged from childhood, and which ends in death. This condition is the negation of life, and is the result of living too long in one set of beliefs without prospecting farther ahead for still more of truth's living waters. For the waters of truth that sustain us to-day will not sustain us to-morrow; we must draw fresh draughts from this undying spring daily, or we die ourselves.

It has been the bane of the race to believe that one draught from this spring of life is enough for its salvation. As this one draught, however, has not saved it, it then makes another mistake by supposing that the salvation promised is to be postponed to a life after death. In this way it entirely ignores the self-evident fact that present life is all the life there is. Life is Being, and Being is now and can only be now. To live to-day, we must be to-day. When to-morrow comes, it will then be the present time, in which we must still be. Life is the one fact in which there is no postponement. If we fail to live to-day we have lost the day; we cannot postpone this day's living until to-morrow.

We are expressions each instant of an ever-present truth; and by

the understanding of this truth we live. But it is each day's new understanding of it that enables us to show forth new or fresh life. The understanding of the truth that we obtained yesterday will not serve for to-day's needs, although it served for yesterday's needs. It is like the food we ate yesterday. The food that strengthened us yesterday sufficed for that day, but we need more for the present day.

The beliefs of a past age were sufficient for that age. They afforded all the mental sustenance the age demanded. But the new age of to-day is demanding more wisdom—a wisdom that will change our present beliefs—and because it is not getting it in such quantity and quality as it needs, it is more devitalized, more listless and languid, more diseased and dying, more debauched and reckless, than any previous age in the history of civilization.

Old institutions are worn out because they stick to the identical ideas that once met the needs of the race, but that no longer meet the increased needs of a new race. Daily and hourly the people are becoming more indifferent to the allurements of a heaven postponed to a future world. They are demanding heaven right here and now, and are accepting in lieu of it such apologies for their ideal conceptions of it as the world can offer in shape of its poor, little, limited range of unsatisfactory and evanescent amusements.



And what—under these circumstances—are the teachers of the people giving them? What are the churches doing for them? And what is the popular literature offering them?

The teachers of the people are giving them nothing that they need, and have, therefore, lost their power to teach. The churches are still presenting the same old ideas, but the people are no longer accepting them. What then? Are the churches searching for new truths on which to fill the great mental craving, of the populace? For it is a mental craving, no matter what it looks like. No, they are not doing this at all; they are simply calling upon that brute force called established authority to assist them in ramming their rejected ideas down the people's throats in spite of the people's wishes. This is the attitude the church occupies to-day towards the entire body of thinking people, who are craving, as men never craved before, the stimulant of mental food that is to save them right here and now, soul and body, whole and in one piece.

Practical salvation is what the people want; salvation that can only come by an increased and an ever increasing knowledge of new truth.

Practical salvation is the present demand of the people; and the whole world—so far as the schools, the churches and popular literature go, is as dead under this demand as our burnt-out satellite, beneath whose

borrowed rays no seed germ is ever warmed into existence.

And this is only half. This dead theology, and dead educational system, and dead literature that once held their seats of honor by the consent of the people, and even by their veneration, are now holding these same seats by a force at once pugnacious, defiant and intolerant. They have nothing to give the people any longer. The people are demanding new truth; vitalizing truth; truth that will hold out stronger inducements to all of life's present activities and stimulate to the unfoldment of nobler activities right here in the world.

For the thinkers have found out that true life, vital, satisfying life, means action and not ease; means conquest and not slumber; means the ever unfolding functions of their own endlessly progressive intelligences in uses for the benefit of themselves and those for whom it is a delight to work, and to whom it is a delight to give.

Nothing is going to satisfy the thinkers of to-day but the making of men and women out of themselves by that incessant acquisition of new truth that I have already spoken of.

And this acquisition of new truth means death to the old beliefs. But the old beliefs are consolidated, petrified by ages of seasoning, and they are not going to be broken up and scattered to the four winds of heaven without an effort on the part of thinkers.

Farther on in these lessons there will be one or more chapters on denials and affirmations, which will give the student a better idea how to deal with the old beliefs than can be done in this chapter. But a hint at least will be given.

The student is requested to think of the subject as here considered. He is asked to take one idea at a time and scrutinize it closely. Then let him take the entire subject of the lessons and regard it attentively as a whole, and see what conclusion he comes to. If what I have said seems logical, then let him take up the other side and think of it. Let him ask himself what salvation he can find in the old beliefs. Let him look at our whole social fabric, with its competitive and brutal systems, and see if he considers the race saved. Let him acknowledge honestly that such as society is, it is the result of the world's present beliefs; and then ask himself if it is not time to break away from beliefs that have been faithfully held to for thousands of years only to bear such fearful fruit. If he doubts the character of the fruit, let him plunge into such reading as the daily papers for a week, to see the murders; arson; suicides; false dealings of man with man; the huge swindling combinations; the wide disparity between the capitalist and the man who works for him; the thousands and thousands of homeless men who are begging for the simple privilege to work; the soup houses in our cities; the churches closed



and empty of week days, while men, women and children freeze on the streets; the general unrest; the curse of uncertainty in every cup—that of the millionaire no less than the pauper. Let him look at all this and know that it is the result of the world's present beliefs, and then turn back again to the first of these lessons and read them over with an understanding wide awake and receptive to new ideas.

