

"PSYCHIANA"

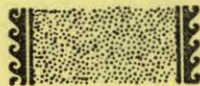
(THE NEW PSYCHOLOGICAL RELIGION)

ADVANCED COURSE

NUMBER TWO

By

Frank B. Robinson, D.D.



"PSYCHIANA"



LESSON NO. 10.

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LESSON NO. 10.

BY

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Dear Friend and Fellow-Student:

I told you two weeks ago that this week we would continue our attempt to get to the bottom of this thing called Immortality. In the last Lesson, we knocked out of the picture entirely any hope of Immortality coming through the religious story of Jesus Christ. Regardless of the symbolism in that story, I think we definitely proved it to be not founded in fact.

Now in this Lesson, we will see if we cannot get into the Realm of fact for perhaps that realm will be more profitable than this realm of dogma and tradition which the preachers so love to delve in. I have a friend, (believe it or not) in the ministry who has stated time and time again to me that he is sure of Immortality because of the hope of it in the human soul. I do not think that is logic. I hope to have a million dollars some day, but that is not proof that I will have.

This idea of Immortality originated entirely in pagan religions. God after God was made and they flared across the horizon only to go down into deep oblivion, never to return again.

We look back as far as we can--as soon as man became conscious of his

existence and as soon as he was able to reason, he asked himself the question, "From whence did I come?" Then he asked himself another question, "Where do I go from here?" It was very natural that he should wonder how he came to be here on the earth and what should become of him after death, for that same problem is troubling thousands of people even today. He saw in his primitive state, his fellowmen fall asleep and never awaken. He saw others mauled to death by animals and they never awakened either. He saw life extinguished all around him and it was his effort to solve this problem that caused primitive man to create a belief in life after death and in the power of a superhuman being.

If we look back over the history of the race, we find that man has formed three different ways of explaining his activities. In other words, there have been but three conceptions of history and but three basic explanations by man of his doings on this planet. First there has been the religious conception and then, the Materialist Conception of man. Now, all these three have a distinct bearing on the question of Immortality. The theological conception, or the religious conception is based upon their belief that back of the universe, there is some great supreme being and that all the things we do here are but the workings out of the will of this supernatural being. History, therefore, is but a record of the unfolding of the scheme of things, which according to these religionists is a divine scheme. I suppose that if we followed out this religious theory, we should eventually be told that the combination of all their philosophies would end in eternal life or Immortality. Although this conception has held the field for ages, today it is almost abandoned. The preachers themselves no longer defend it as it puts them in a very absurd position. If it is true that man is simply carrying out the divine will, that his actions are a part of the divine plan, if he is preordained to do certain things and cannot do otherwise, then he is not directly responsible for his actions. Murder, theft and other crimes are not his work. He is but the humble agent carrying out divine will. Benjamin Franklin in his autobiography expresses this concept as follows: "And now I speak of thanking God, I desire with all humility to acknowledge that I attribute the mentioned happiness of my past life to his divine providence, which led me to the means I used and gave the success. My belief of this induces me to hope, though I must not presume, that the same goodness will still be exercised toward me in continuing that happiness or enabling me to bear a fatal reverse, which I may experience as others have done; the complexion of my future fortune being known to him only in whose power it is to bless us, even in our afflictions."

According to this theological conception of man, it would logically

follow that if I were to kill someone, I would not be to blame. I could not help doing it since a greater power than I had decreed that I must. On the other hand, if I were to save the life of another at the risk of my own, I would be unworthy of any praise, since I could not avoid doing it. We have all heard a preacher say, "It was God's will." If this conception of man is defended, then it means that man is not directly responsible for his actions. The good or evil which he does is not of his own doing.

Now we come to the other conception which is the idealist conception of man. Official society advances this theory today and it is based upon the theory of a free-will. According to this conception, man is a free agent. He has the power to make a choice in relation to his actions, the power to choose between "good and evil." God may help him, or the devil may tempt him, but he alone must make the final choice. This free-will, this power to choose between "good and evil," is necessary to the making of a "sinner." If man has no power to choose he cannot be a "sinner." The saving of souls would come to an end. Today the church defends the free-will theory. But what is the will? It is the mind in which ideas are formulated. The idealist Conception of History is based upon the human idea.

From the standpoint of the defenders of this conception, the idea is all-important. Good people are those with good ideas, good thoughts. Bad people are the result of bad thoughts, "wicked" ideas. The ideas, good or bad, come first and the actions follow therefrom. Clever people are the outcome of clever ideas. Stupid people are the result of their own stupid ideas. Advanced nations are based upon advanced ideas, and backward nations upon backward ideas. People who are up-to-date are so because of their progressive ideas and out-of-date people are the result of old-fashioned ideas. This is the essence of the Idealist Conception of History.

If we follow up this conception of history and apply it to society in general we find that great nations are the result of certain nations having great men, who in turn are the result of their great ideas. History, viewed from this standpoint, simply means that great men have been the makers of history. This is sometimes called "The Great Man Theory of History." Of course it falls within the idealist conception. The whole conception rests upon the notion that the idea comes first and that action follows from the idea.

To a certain extent this conception is correct. It cannot be denied that ideas precede action. For instance, we cannot have a house until we have the idea of one. We can speculate upon how a house will look before

it is started. An architect can draw a plan, he can picture a house in advance. He can show you what it will look like after it is built. Before we can have a table someone must first think of one. Not only the first table which was made but also every individual table that is produced. The idea of a table may have originally arisen from food being placed on a flat stone while eating.

Applying this conception to all things, we are bound to admit that the idea comes before the produced object. If we view history from this standpoint we are forced to conclude that its unfolding is the unfolding of human ideas. There is nothing wrong with this conception as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough, for we are faced with an important question: "If all of our achievements are the result of ideas, if history is the outcome of the human idea, then, where does the idea itself come from?"

The answer which we give to this question is, that all of the ideas of man have sprung from the material environment in which he has lived and moved. This is the substance of the Materialist Conception of History.

In a primitive society, where man is in contact with few things and uses but few tools or weapons, his ideas are primitive, and very limited. In a highly complex society, where man is in contact with countless things, a complex environment, his ideas are complex, many sided, and extensive.

Man's material surroundings determine not only the extent of his ideas but also their general character. The first law of life is "self preservation." Man must eat and protect himself from the elements. The growth of his ideas follow, in the main, the development of the means of securing a living. The first question that man asks, the one which is still the foremost question with the majority, is not in relation to how we came to be here or what will become of us when we die, but "When do we eat?" That is an eternal question. Idealists may repudiate such a "sordid view" but we can rely upon them to be on time at the dinner table.

A few years ago a psychological experiment was tried at a great prison. It was decided to hang one of the prisoners who had been sentenced to die, in the court yard where all the prisoners could see the hanging. As the rope was placed around the neck of the condemned man and the hangman was ready to spring the trap, the hundreds of prisoners looking from their cells were silent. The psychologists were keenly observing the effects of the scene when the silence was broken by a lusty voiced prisoner demanding to know: "When do we eat?" followed by a clamor for breakfast.

The highway over which man has traveled, down through the ages, has been an economic one. Morality, ethics, religion, politics, war, the arts, all that man has achieved, everything which he has today, rests upon an economic foundation. Just try to get away from this and see how far you can travel. When Napoleon said "Armies travel upon their stomachs," he only told a part of the truth. Soldiers are not the only ones who have to eat. The truth is that all society travels upon its stomach. This is a very simple fact but many people lose sight of it.

The present social arrangement is quite complex, the social superstructure almost hides the economic foundation upon which it rests. Many people are so secure that they quite overlook the fact that they eat and wear clothes, and that these things have to be produced by labor. But there are millions of others who never get a chance to forget it. The economic problem is right on their door-step. Next to this main factor, the economic come other material factors, such as climate, topography and other natural features of man's environment. If the community is an agricultural region, or an industrial city, it has its corresponding effect upon the ideas of the populace. All of the ideas of man, religious, moral, political, etc., are but the reflex of the economic and material environment. The brain acts much like a mirror. It reflects all that shines into it from the outside. The five senses convey to the brain sense perceptions, "food for thought." The brain "digests" these sense perceptions into ideas. If the ideas become more or less fixed we call them opinions. The brain can not reflect that which is not. It can only reflect real things.

When a child is born its mind is like a clean page upon which nothing yet is written. I do not contend that its mind is a blank, but that it is incapable of thinking. At this stage it is governed by instinct alone. It responds to hunger or pain. The awakening of its mind follows the awakening of the senses. The five senses, seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching, must first function before there can be anything resembling thought in the mind of a child.

All the lies and humbug, all the superstition and fear, that a child may acquire as it grows up, are the result of its environment. They are the "gifts," very often, of fond but foolish parents. An average child, one that is not subnormal, will become really intelligent if it is brought into contact with intelligent people. But the same child, in contact with stupid people, may grow up with its mind full of nonsense, in fear and trembling of imaginary beings. Many years of a child's life may be spent in terror of the invisible things which it is taught to believe exists

around it. This is nearly always the case when the child is unfortunate enough to have stupid parents, or is born and raised in a backward neighborhood, where other children and adults are superstitious.

The five senses are like little railroads that carry sense perceptions to the brain. Many people have strange notions about the functioning of the brain. They surround the mind with much mystery, yet the brain is just a natural organ of the body like any other part. The function of the hand, for instance, is grasping, writing, and so forth. The function of the legs is walking, running, jumping, and so forth. The function of the stomach is the digesting of food. The function of the brain is thinking. But there can be no thought without sense perceptions.

If no food is conveyed to the stomach then there can be no digestion. If no sense perceptions are conveyed to your brain there will be no thinking. The five senses convey the "food for thought." The mind is simply a functioning of the brain, just as digestion is a functioning of the stomach. The mind is inseparable from the brain, just as digestion is inseparable from the stomach. That functioning of the mind which we call memory is simply a storing away of sense perceptions. Innumerable images, or thought-pictures, are stored away, as it were, to be used when needed or even desired. The process might be likened to the storing away of countless words on phonograph records to be reproduced when wanted. Phonograph records are silent until connected with the machinery that reproduces the words through the speaker (the horn). Your memory is silent until connected with the mental machinery, which you have the power to set in motion and give expression to your stored-up sense perceptions, through speech, or in writing, etc.

There is no thought-picture in the brain but what its counterpart exists somewhere without. In other words, all thoughts, no matter how complex or mysterious they seem to be, can be traced to their material sources, and they must be material in their origin. Thought can not spring from anything but material. It can not spring from nothing. Even an imaginary thing, Santa Claus, for instance, has its material source in the body of a kindly looking old man with a long beard. Or as Josef Dietzgen points out in relation to the belief in angels, the thought is but the combination of the body of a young woman with the wings of a bird. Both are material, the wings and the woman.

A good story is told of one of the great medieval painters who had painted a beautiful angel on a church wall. One of the priests of the church laughed and pointed at the picture with the remark: "Who ever saw

an angel with sandals on?" The artist promptly met the question with the retort: "Who ever saw an angel without?"

If you have the nightmare and you dream of pink elephants with green wings, or other such monstrosities, no matter how fantastic, you can trace all these composite thought-pictures to material sources. In fact, it is impossible to think of anything that does not have a material source. There never was a thought in the mind of any man but that its origin could be traced back to nature itself. You can not think about nothing. Just try it and see how far you will get.

There are still some people who believe that thought is inherent, that when we are born our minds are already a storehouse of knowledge. Such a notion is sheer nonsense. The doctrine of innate ideas is now completely discredited. Other people, while not believing that knowledge is inherent, cudgel their brains in search of what is not there. They think that if they close themselves in a room that they can draw knowledge from the "depths of their minds," somewhat like drawing up water from the depths of a well.

What is not put into the mind can not be brought out. If we wish to have knowledge on a certain subject we must go to the material sources and observe through our senses, or we must go to books or other mediums to acquire knowledge that others have gathered through the use of their senses.

It should be quite clear to anyone who is not stupid or prejudiced, that the material environment is the source of all ideas. Out of all these conceptions or theories, the dominant chord of Immortality sounds forth. Is there any life after death? Does the soul live on? I do not think there is any question but what this Immortality theory sprang from a keen desire in man to live. This desire to live creates belief in life after death.

I think dreams also contribute much toward this belief. Consider the savage of the forest in contact with nature. He is faced with questions that he must try to answer. His shadow, his reflection in the pool when he stoops to drink, echoes, dreams. These all demand an explanation. He finds the answer as a child would; these things are a part of him, yet not of him. Take for example the American Indian. When he lies down to sleep at night, he may dream of going on a long journey--a hunting trip which takes many days. He probably takes someone else with him and they kill many animals. But, when he awakes and looks around, he finds no dead animals there, but in his dream the animals were perfectly real and one can

truthfully say that the dream world through which he went was an entirely different world from the one in which he found himself when he awakened; yet the dream world must have been of his own creation.

Now, throughout this entire course of study, in everything I have written, I have consistently held forth the existence of the Life Principle. Religious substitutes have been thrown to one side and I have dealt with life as I find it. I have shown you how this Realm of Spirit, of invisible life is perhaps the only real realm there is. You will remember that a few months back, I took you to the very door of this unseen realm and left you there, telling you that I would return you to it later. As a result of these teachings, tens of thousands of people are living today in the knowledge of the existence of this great God Realm. It isn't a theory to them, it is an actual fact, it is supreme in the lives of most of my students. Different troubles arise, certainly, but through knowing the existence of the unseen Realm of Life, these troubles, like the dream of the American Indian, vanish and he finds himself in an entirely different realm from the one in which he thought he lived.

My students have found as they have followed me carefully in these studies that a new and strange life has seemed to take hold of them. They have found that material desires and things of the old nature drop off. As they become more and more entranced with this great God Realm, their ideas have changed. Instead of worrying about this and worrying about that, they have been content to accept each day as it came and as they have progressed in the knowledge and power of this great unseen Realm, they have found more and more all thoughts of Immortality leaving them. You can take my students anywhere in this world and you can ask them about eternal life or Immortality and they will tell you that they are not interested in it. They will tell you that being in possession of the Spirit of Eternal Life now, thoughts of a future life or Immortality have left them entirely. I think my students will agree with me that this is a marvelous attitude of mind to be in. If we can live so that thoughts of the future never worry us and if we can live so that life to us is a continuing thing, with the thought of death never entering into it, then, have we not reached the plane upon which everything the Spiritual Realm has for us can manifest to us. I think so.

In the last lesson, we saw that the Bible story offers us little hope for eternal life. We find that the Bible story is only an old allegory containing nothing much of enlightenment, but my students know that a Realm of Spiritual Law exists, far removed from the Realm of materialism. Now this consciousness we have of Spiritual Law and Spiritual Power is the con-

sciousness which answers the problem of Immortality. I can only speak personally--I cannot speak for others, but the thought I want to leave with you (in Lessons concluding this series) is that there is a latent life, a spiritual life which is the life of God. To date, no religious organization has ever grasped the truth of this life. I do not know that until this course was released, the truth of the Realm of God was ever given to people as this teaching has given it. It is true that we have upset all religious tradition and every church dogma and we have found after upsetting these things, Spiritual Truth as it exists.

Nature does not die in the fall and come to life again in the spring. The flowers that bloom in the spring are not the same flowers that died the preceding fall. If human longings and desires were all by the very nature of things fulfilled, what a different world this would be.

It would be a pity if the Universal belief in Immortality proves nothing beyond itself, as other errors, such as the flatness of the earth had long been just as generally accepted. I am sure that the long process of evolution that has produced man will very carefully take care of his future. It may erase him with no more compunction than it erases every other form of life. The beautiful rose blooms for a few months and then is allowed to wither. Shall the human soul be allowed to wither?

At the end of this lesson, I find myself unwilling to give you my personal conclusion. I am afraid some of my students might misunderstand me. I am afraid others might pity me, yet I can truthfully say that without any belief in Immortality, death has lost all of its terrors for me. If I felt that I were to wake up in a new and strange environment, concerning which I had not the slightest knowledge, I might have some misgivings and dread this new experience, but feeling as I do that after death it may be the same with me as before birth, there is absolutely nothing to fear, and yet in the background of it all, there lurks the lingering desire for this thing called Immortality, although why it lurks there, I confess I do not know.

Take the ordinary person's life and it is none too overflowing with pleasure. All of us have perhaps more of pain than we do of peace and I am not so sure that I would care to live forever in any state of earthly existence that I have had any experience with.

Is there a Realm beyond this? Is there a long, long trail awinding? Perhaps there is. I hope so, but whether there is or not, you may depend upon one thing, that is, that the soul in tune with the Infinite need not

worry, for the spirit that sustains life now is perfectly able to sustain us in whatever future life there may be, providing, of course, there is a future life. Personally, I do not believe that I am very much interested in that, but I am interested in knowing all that can be known of this great Life Spirit as it exists now.

There are those of my students who may draw from this lesson the idea that I have no belief in a future life. This is not a fact and if any should glean from these last two lessons that I am skeptical of a future life, let me say to those students that to be honest with myself and them, I must say, I do not know.

Even though not knowing, shall we turn back? We couldn't do that. Shall we be discouraged? No, certainly not. Then shall we lose heart? Never. The only safe road I see lies in continuing this present life in harmony and in communion with the Spiritual Realm as this great Realm exists. As I have often said, the Light from the Spiritual Realm invariably leads those who will be led.

You ask me where it is leading and I am frank to say to you, I do not know. Of course, I have my own inner Spiritual convictions but for the present, we shall keep those convictions a secret. The thought I want to leave with you here is this, that whether there be Immortality of the soul or not, whether there be a future life or not, whether there be a continuing of this life or not, the only safe ground lies in forging ahead with the great Life Spirit. Entering into personal contact with this realm of God as my students have, they need not worry over the future nor need they worry over the past for that matter, for just as long as they are alive, the Light will lead.

I have closed many a lesson with the following three beautiful verses and I am going to close this lesson with the same three verses. They were written by a Cardinal of the Roman Catholic church and this man knew God. So let my students learn this beautiful hymn and let them allow it to become the desire of their entire life and if they will do that, they will know the Truth and the Truth will set them free.

LEAD KINDLY LIGHT

Lead, kindly Light, amid th' encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on:

The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead Thou me on!
Keep Thou my feet! I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou
Shouldst lead me on;
I loved to choose and see my path; but now
Lead Thou me on!
I loved the garish day; and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will: remember not past years.

So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone;
And with the morn those angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

Sincerely your friend and teacher,

Frank B. Robinson

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