

LESSONS IN TRUTH

HARRIET EMILIE CADY





This is an excerpt from the book.

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etc.**

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STATEMENT OF BEING WHO AND WHAT GOD IS—WHO AND WHAT MAN IS

FIRST LESSON

In entering upon this course of instruction, each of you should, so far as possible, lay aside, for the time being, all previous theories and beliefs. By so doing you will be saved the trouble of trying, all the way through the course, to force “*new wine into old bottles.*” If there is anything, as we proceed, which you do not understand or agree with, just let it lie passively in your mind until you receive the entire course, for many statements that would at first arouse antagonism and discussion will be clear and easily accepted a little farther on. After the course is completed, if you wish to return to your old beliefs and ways of living, you are at perfect liberty to do so. But, for the time being, be willing to become as little children; for, said the Master, in spiritual things, “*Except ye become as little children ye can in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven.*” If at times there seems to be repetition, please remember that these are lessons, not lectures.

1. When Jesus was talking with the Samaritan woman at the well, He said to her, “*God is Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*” (The A. S. V. reads, “*God is a Spirit,*” but the marginal note is, “*God is spirit,*” and some other versions render this passage, “*God is Spirit.*”) To say “*a spirit*” would be to imply the existence of more than one spirit. Jesus, in His statement, did not imply this.

2. Webster in his definition of spirit says: “*Spirit is life or intelligence conceived of entirely apart from physical embodiment. It is vital essence, force, energy, as distinct from matter.*”

3. God, then, is not, as many of us have been taught to believe, a big personage or man residing somewhere in a beautiful region in the sky, called “*heaven*,” where good people go when they die, and see Him clothed in ineffable glory; nor is He a stern, angry judge only awaiting an opportunity somewhere to punish bad people who have failed to live a perfect life here.

4. God is Spirit, or the creative energy which is the cause of all visible things. God as Spirit is the invisible life and intelligence (according to Webster’s definition of spirit) underlying all physical things. There could be no body, or visible part, to anything unless there were first Spirit as creative cause.

5. God is not a being or person having life, intelligence, love, power. God is that invisible, intangible, but very real, something we call life. God is perfect love and infinite power. God is the total of these, the total of all good, whether manifested or unexpressed.

6. There is but one God in the universe, but one source of all the different forms of life or intelligence which we see, whether they be men, animals, trees, or rocks.

7. God is Spirit. We cannot see Spirit with these fleshly eyes; but when we clothe ourselves with the spiritual body, then Spirit is visible or manifest and we recognize It. You do not see the living, thinking “*me*” when you look at my body. You see only the form which I am manifesting.

8. God is love. We cannot see love, nor grasp any comprehension of what love is, except as love is clothed with a body. All the love in the universe is God. The love between husband and wife, between parents and children, is just the least little bit of God, as pushed forth through visible form into manifestation. A mother’s love, so infinitely tender, so unfailing, is the same love, only manifested in greater degree by the mother.

9. God is wisdom, or intelligence. All the wisdom and intelligence which we see in the universe is God—is wisdom projected through a visible form.

To educate (from educare, to lead forth) never means to force into from the outside, but always means to draw out from within something already existing there. God as infinite wisdom or intelligence lives within every human being, only waiting to be led forth or drawn out into manifestation. This is true education.

10. Heretofore we have sought knowledge and help from outside sources, not knowing that the source of all knowledge, the very Spirit of truth, is lying latent within us each and every one, only waiting to be called on to teach us the truth about all things—most marvelous of teachers, and everywhere present, without money or price!

11. God is power. Not simply God has power, but God is power. In other words, all the power there is to do anything is God. God, the source of our existence every moment, is not simply omnipotent (all-powerful) ; He is omnipotence (all power). He is not alone omniscient (all-knowing) ; He is omniscience (all knowledge). He is not only omnipresent, but more—omnipresence. God is not a being having qualities, but He is the good itself. Everything you can think of that is good, when in its absolute perfection, goes to make up that invisible being we call God.

12. God, then, is the substance (from sub, under, and stare, to stand), or the real thing standing under every visible form of life, love, intelligence, or power. Each rock, tree, animal, everything visible, is a manifestation of the one Spirit—God—differing only in degree of manifestation; and each of the numberless modes of manifestation, or individualities, however insignificant, contains the whole.

13. One drop of water taken from the ocean is just as perfect ocean water as the whole great body. The constituent elements of water are exactly the same, and they are combined in precisely the same ratio or perfect relation to each other, whether we consider one drop, a pailful, a barrelful, or the entire ocean out of which the lesser quantities are taken; each is complete in itself; they differ only in quantity or degree. Each contains the whole; and yet no one would make the mistake of supposing from this statement that each drop is the entire ocean.

14. So we say that each individual manifestation of God contains the whole; not for a moment meaning that each individual is God in His entirety, so to speak, but that each is God come forth, shall I say? in different quantity or degree.

15. Man is the last and highest manifestation of divine energy, the fullest and most complete expression (or pressing out) of God. To man, therefore, is given dominion over all other manifestations.

16. God is not only the creative cause of every visible form of intelligence and life at its commencement, but each moment throughout its existence He lives within every created thing as the life, the ever renewing, recreating, upbuilding cause of it. He never is and never can be for a moment separated from His creations. Then how can even a sparrow fall to the ground without His knowledge? And *“ye are of more value than many sparrows.”*

17. God is. Man exists (from ex, out of, and sistere, to stand forth). Man stands forth out of God.

18. Man is a threefold being, made up of spirit, soul, and body. Spirit, our innermost, real being, the absolute part of us, the I of us, which you and I know has never changed, though our thoughts and our circumstances may have changed hundreds of times—this part of us is a standing forth of God into visibility. It is the Father in us. At this central part of his being every person can say, ***“I and the Father are one,”*** and speak absolute Truth.

19. Mortal mind—that which Paul calls *“carnal mind”*—is the consciousness of error.

20. The great whole of, as yet unmanifested, Good, or God, from whom we are projections or offspring, in whom *“we live, and move, and have our being”* continually, is to me the Father—our Father; *“and all ye are brethren,”* because all are manifestations of one and the same Spirit. Jesus, recognizing this, said: *“Call no man upon the earth your father, for one is your Father which is in heaven.”*

As soon as we recognize our true relationship to all men, we at once slip out of our narrow, personal loves, our “*me and mine*,” into the universal love which takes in all the world, joyfully exclaiming: “*Who is my mother? Who are my brethren? Behold, these are my mother and my brethren!*”

21. Childlike, untrained minds say God is a personal being. The statement that God is principle chills them, and in terror they cry out, “*They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him!*”

22. Broader and more learned minds are always cramped by the thought of God as a person, for personality limits to place and time.

23. God is the name we give to that unchangeable, inexorable principle at the source of all existence. To the individual consciousness God takes on personality, but as the creative underlying cause of all things, He is principle, impersonal; as expressed in each individual, He becomes personal to that one—a personal, loving, all-forgiving Father-Mother. All that any human soul can ever need or desire is the infinite Father-Principle, the great reservoir of unexpressed good. There is no limit to the Source of our being, nor to His willingness to manifest more of Himself through us, when we are willing to do His will.

24. Hitherto we have turned our hearts and efforts toward the external for fulfillment of our desires and for satisfaction, and we have been grievously disappointed. For the hunger of every one for satisfaction is only the cry of the homesick child for its Father-Mother, God. It is only the Spirit’s desire in us to come forth into our consciousness as more and more perfection, until we shall have become fully conscious of our oneness with All-perfection. Man never has been and never can be satisfied with anything less.

25. We all have direct access through the Father in us—the central “*I*” of our being—to the great whole of life, love, wisdom, power, which is God. What we now want to know is how to receive more from the fountainhead and to make more and more of God (which is but another name for All-good) manifest in our daily life.

26. There is but one Source of being. That Source is the living fountain of all good, be it life, love, wisdom, power—the Giver of all good gifts. That Source and you are connected, every moment of your existence. You have power to draw on this Source for all of good you are, or ever will be, capable of desiring.



THINKING

SECOND LESSON

1. We learned in the first lesson that the real substance within everything we see is God; that all things are one and the same Spirit in different degrees of manifestation; that all the various forms of life are just the same as one life come forth out of the invisible into visible forms; that all the intelligence and all the wisdom in the world are God as wisdom in various degrees of manifestation; that all the love which people feel and express toward others is just a little, so to speak, of God as love come into visibility through the human form.

2. When we say there is but one Mind in the entire universe, and that this Mind is God, some persons, having followed understandingly the first lesson, and recognized God as the one Life, one Spirit, one Power, pushing Himself out into various degrees of manifestation through people and things, will at once say: “*Yes, that is all plain.*”

3. But some one else will say: “*If all the mind there is, is God, then how can I think wrong thoughts, or have any but God thoughts?*”

4. The connection between universal mind and our own individual minds is one of the most difficult things to put into words, but when it once dawns on one, it is easily seen.

5. There is in reality only one Mind (or Spirit, which is life, intelligence, and so forth) in the universe; and yet there is a sense in which we are individual, or separate, a sense in which we are free wills and not puppets.

6. Man is made up of spirit, soul, and body. Spirit is the central unchanging I of us, the part which since infancy has never changed, and to all eternity never will change. That which Christian Scientists call “*mortal mind*” is the region of the intellect where we do conscious thinking and are free wills. This part of our being is in constant process of changing.

7. In our descent, or outspringing, from God into the material world, spirit is inner—next to God; soul is the clothing, as it were, of the spirit; body is the external clothing of soul. Yet all are in reality one, the composite man—as steam at the center, water next, and ice as an external are one, only in different degrees of condensation. In thinking of ourselves, we must not separate spirit, soul, and body, but rather hold all as one, if we would be strong and powerful. Man originally lived consciously in the spiritual part of himself. He fell by descending in his consciousness to the external or more material part of himself.

8. “*Mortal mind*,” the term so much used and so distracting to many, is the error consciousness, which gathers its information through the five senses from the outside world. It is what Paul calls “carnal mind” in contradistinction to spiritual mind; and he flatly says: “*To be carnally minded [or to believe what the carnal mind says] is death [sorrow, trouble, sickness]; but to be spiritually minded [i. e., to be able to still the carnal mind and let the Spirit speak within us] is life and peace.*”

9. The Spirit within you is Divine Mind, the real mind, for without it the mortal mind disappears, just as a shadow disappears when the real thing which casts it is removed.

10. If you find this subject of mortal mind and universal mind puzzling to you, do not worry over it, and above all things do not discuss it ; but just drop it for a time, and as you go on with the lessons, you will find that some day an understanding of it will flash suddenly upon you with perfect clearness.

11. There are today two classes of people, so far as mentality goes, who are seeking deliverance out of sickness, trouble, and unhappiness, by spiritual means. One class requires that every statement made be proved by the most elaborate and logical argument, before it can or will be received. The other class is willing at once to “*become as a little child*” and just be taught how to take the first steps toward pure understanding (or knowledge of Truth as God sees it), and then receive the light by direct revelation from the All-Good. Both are seeking and eventually will reach the same goal, and neither is to be condemned.

12. If you are one who seeks and expects to get any realizing knowledge of spiritual things through argument or reasoning, no matter how scholarly your attainments or how great you are in worldly wisdom, you are a failure in spiritual understanding. You are attempting an utter impossibility—that of crowding the Infinite into the quart measure of your own intellectual capacity.

13. *“The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”* Eventually you will find that you are only beating around on the outside of the “kingdom of heaven,” though in close proximity to it, and you will then become willing to let your intellect take the place of the “little child,” without which no man can enter in.

14. *“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath [not will] prepared for them that love him.”*

15. *“But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.”*

16. *“For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.”*

17. For all those who must wade through months and perhaps years of this purely intellectual or mental process, there are today many books to help, and many teachers of metaphysics who are doing noble and praiseworthy work in piloting these earnest seekers after Truth and satisfaction. To them we cry: *“All speed!”*

18. But we believe with Paul that “the foolishness of God is wiser than men,” and that each soul has direct access to all there is in God, and we are writing for the “little children” who, without question or discussion, are willing at once to accept and to try a few plain, simple rules, such as Jesus taught the common people, who heard Him gladly—rules by which they can find the Christ (or the Divine) within themselves, that through it each man for himself may work out his own salvation from all his troubles.

19. In other words, there is a short cut to the top of the hill; and while there is a good but long, roundabout road for those who need it, we prefer the less laborious means of attaining the same end—by seeking directly the Spirit of truth promised to dwell in us and to lead us into all Truth. Our advice is: If you want to make rapid progress in growth toward spiritual understanding, stop reading many books. They only give you some one's opinion about Truth, or are a sort of history of the author's experience in seeking Truth. What you want is revelation of Truth in your own soul, and that will never come through the reading of many books.

20. Do not even discuss these lessons with others. Go alone. Think alone. Seek light alone, and if it does not come at once, do not be discouraged and run off to some one else to get light; for, as we said before, by so doing you get only the opinion of the intellect, and may be then farther away from the Truth you are seeking than ever before; for the mortal mind may make false reports.

21. The very Spirit of truth is at your call—within you. *“The anointing ye have received abideth in you.”* Seek it. *Wait patiently for it to “guide you into all truth about all things.”*

22. *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”* This is the universal mind, which makes no mistakes. Still the intellect for the time being, and let universal Mind speak to you; and when it speaks, though it be but a **“still, small voice,”** you will know that what it says is Truth.

23. How will you know? You will know just as you know that you are alive. All the argument in the world to convince you against Truth which comes to you through direct revelation will fall flat and harmless at your side. And the Truth which you know, not simply believe, you can use to help others. That which comes forth through your spirit will reach the very innermost spirit of him to whom you speak.

24. What is born from the outside, or intellectual perception, reaches only the intellect of him you would help.

25. The intellect, or false mind, which is servant to the real Mind, and as servant (but not as master) is good, loves to argue; but as its information is based on the evidence of the senses and not on the true thoughts of the Divine Mind in us, it is very fallible and full of error.

26. Intellect argues. Spirit takes of the deep things of God, and reveals. One may be true; the other always is true. Spirit does not give opinions about Truth; it is Truth, and it reveals itself.

27. Some one has truly said that the merest child who has learned from the depths of his soul to say, “*Our Father*,” is infinitely greater than the most intellectual man who has not yet learned it. Paul was a man of gigantic intellect, learned in all the law, a Pharisee of the Pharisees; but after he was spiritually illumined he wrote, “*The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*”

28. It does make a great difference in our daily lives what we as “*mortal minds*” think about God, about ourselves, about our neighbors. Heretofore, through ignorance of our real selves and of the results of our thinking, we have let our thoughts flow at random. Our minds have been turned toward the external of our being, and nearly all our information has been gotten through our five senses. We have thought wrong because misinformed by these senses, and our troubles and sorrows are the results of our wrong thinking.

29. “*But*,” says some one, “*I do not see how my thinking evil or wrong thoughts about God, or about any one, can make me sick or my husband lose his position.*”

30. Well, I will not just now try to explain all the mental machinery by which bad results follow false thinking, but I will just ask you to try thinking true, right thoughts awhile, and see what the result will be.

31. Take the thought, “***God loves me, and approves of what I do.***” Think these words over and over continually for a few days, trying to realize that they are true, and see what the effect will be on your body and circumstances.

32. First, you get a new exhilaration of mind, with a great desire and a sense of power to please God; then a quicker, better circulation of blood, with sense of a pleasant warmth in the body, followed by better digestion. Later, as Truth flows out through your being into your surroundings, everybody will begin to manifest a new love for you without your knowing why; and finally, circumstances will begin to change and fall into harmony with your desires, instead of being adverse to them.

33. Every one knows how strong thoughts of fear or grief have turned hair white in a few hours; how great fear makes the heart beat so rapidly as to seem about to “*jump out of the body*,” this result not being at all dependent on whether there be any real cause for fear or whether it be a purely imaginary cause. Just so, strong thoughts of criticism will render the blood acid, causing rheumatism. Bearing mental burdens makes more stooped shoulders than does bearing heavy material loads. Believing that God regards us as “miserable sinners,” that He is continually watching us and our failures with disapproval, brings utter discouragement and a sort of half-paralyzed condition of mind and body, which means failure in all our undertakings.

34. Is it difficult for you to understand why, if God lives in us all the time, He does not keep our thoughts right instead of permitting us through ignorance to drift into wrong thoughts, and so bring trouble on ourselves?

35. Well, we are not automatons. Your child will never learn to walk alone if you always do his walking. Because you recognize that the only way for him to be strong, self-reliant in all things—in other words, to become a man—is to throw him on himself, and let him, through experience, come to a knowledge of things for himself, you are not willing to make a mere puppet of him by taking the steps for him, even though you know that he will fall down many times and give himself severe bumps in his ongoing toward perfect physical manhood.

36. We are in process of growth into the highest spiritual manhood and womanhood. We get many falls and bumps on the way, but only through these, not necessarily by them, can our growth proceed.

**editor and graphics editor
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