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The Secret of Happiness

L. S. Cooper

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THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Methods of Psychic Development
Reincarnation, the Hope of the World
Theosophy Simplified
Ways to Perfect Health

MANUALS OF OCCULTISM: NUMBER 3

The
Secret *of* Happiness

BY
THE RT. REV. IRVING S. COOPER

AUTHOR OF
Methods of Psychic Development
Ways to Perfect Health

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PREFACE

Sometimes when a weary pilgrim has journeyed for many days to reach a Shrine of great renown, he is cheered and strengthened by seeing the pointing finger of a guide-post reassuring him that he is near his goal. This little book—an offering from the heart—is intended to be such a guide in this world of pilgrims; it cannot bring happiness to its readers, but it does point out the Way to that gleaming shrine, by following which some have found true happiness. That Way is not so difficult if trodden with determination and with trust in the inner Self; but those who wish to succeed should not attempt it half-heartedly. When the nature of that Way is understood—for such is the magic of the secret of happiness—not only will the whole of life be transformed for oneself but, what is more important, the lives of many others will be blessed.

I. S. C.

*Villa Cevasco,
Cornigliano Ligure.*

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The Secret of Happiness

CHAPTER I

THE ETERNAL QUEST

Men who do not know work to gain wealth and power, but these are at most for one life only and therefore unreal. . . . The things which most men desire are not worth having; when this is really felt, not merely said, all desire for them ceases.

—*At the Feet of the Master*

THE SEARCH FOR HAPPINESS

All nature is engaged in a ceaseless quest—the search for happiness. Every living creature shares this yearning; it is of the essence of life itself. Each flower and shrub and tree rejoices after a refreshing shower and seems to radiate gladness when bathed in golden sunshine, and the joyous play of animals when free from hunger and the fear of man bears witness to the happiness inherent in nature.

Among human beings a yet more intense yearning is found, and though they follow many different pathways in their search, the goal is always the same. We are all seeking happiness, though our ideas as to how it may be gained are as varied as the characters of men themselves. The search is not confined to one class or time; all men of all ages have shared in it—~~the~~^{worker} and poet, artist and philosopher, scholar and scientist—all have sought and still seek happiness which, like an alluring, teasing sprite, tantalizes us with hopes, yet dances out of reach when we attempt to grasp it.

The ways in which happiness is sought vary also with the age of the souls who seek it. Child-men, those who stand upon the lower reaches of the long road of human attainment, try vainly to find happiness in coarse pleasures and indulgences—revels and orgies of sense and passion, while the more advanced seek by other means to gain the same prize. Some imagine that it comes with social position, or while mingling in the

company of brilliant men and women; others attempt to find it through the pleasures of travel or by the acquirement of wealth and power, fame and honor; some seek it through knowledge, through research, through investigation into the secrets of nature; some delve into the mysteries of music and of painting, while others believe that happiness can only be found by the aid of religious practices and ceremonies, by the following of a devout and contemplative life, or by withdrawal from the world and the practice of austerities.

Each man's conception of the source of happiness is peculiar to himself; the important point to remember is that *all* are engaged in the same eternal quest. None are exempt; the miserable beggar who crouches at the corner of the street is filled—even as we are—with the same longing. In this mankind is one. The most powerful motive spurring men to action is desire, and the heart of desire is this yearning for happiness. Whether it be distorted into sense gratification, physi-

cal content, emotional pleasure or mental satisfaction—all of which soon vanish like pricked bubbles—nevertheless the longing still endures and will continue to do so until the secret of happiness is known.

A TRUE INTUITION

It is a true intuition which tells us that happiness is our birthright, that causes us to shrink from sorrow and protest against suffering, to accept joy without question when it comes, as something akin to our own nature. An imperative instinct affirms that

The Soul of Things is sweet,
The Heart of Being is celestial rest.

Why is this so? If we turn to the great scriptures of the world we shall find the answer plainly given. It has long been proclaimed in the East that "Brahman is Bliss" and in the West we have been taught that "God is Love;" when the world is thus united in thought we may be sure that it voices an eternal truth. And to this truth we should

not forget to add another which has been told us many times by the Sages of old, and that is, the unity of the human Spirit and God.

We all recall the beautiful prayer of the Christ: "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us," and in the words of St. Paul: "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him;" while the lovers of the *Gita* will remember the statement of the divine Lord: "Nor is there aught, moving or unmoving, that may exist bereft of Me."

By inevitable logic we deduce from these premises that the human Spirit in its essence, which is one with God, shares the eternal bliss of that mighty Life which is the source and support of the universe. In this world of physical activity, where the power of the Spirit is dwarfed and limited by the bodies in which it is clothed, *(this inherent attribute of bliss manifests itself as the longing for happiness.)*

Have there not been moments in our lives

when, lifted out of our usual thought attitudes by emotional exaltation or spiritual self-surrender, there has swept over us an indescribable feeling of utmost joy and bliss, under the sway of which our daily worries and troubles seemed as unreal as forms assumed by smoke, and the much-prized plans and possessions of our small personal selves as trivial as the toys of a child? These flashes of the inner life, which can neither be commanded nor invoked, but must be awaited in the silence of the lower mind, tell us of what we are, reveal to us something of the viewpoint of the soul-consciousness to which our brains do not normally respond.

We are like people living and struggling amidst the phantasms of a troubled dream, believing that the vague forms about them are real, thinking that the sorrows and disappointments, trials, privations and griefs which visit them are verities. It is only when the life of the Spirit descends and floods the mind and brain, that we really wake and understand that all we have gone through and

may experience here on earth are but as the scenes and figures of a dream.

THE COILED SERPENT

Long ago in an eastern land an illuminated teacher taught that we would

find the blossoms of life,
But under each flower a serpent coiled.

How true this is of nearly all our efforts to find happiness! We are urged on and on by endless desires; no sooner is a goal attained, an object gained, than we find that the happiness which we thought dwelt there has flown, that as we grasped the desired blossom of life we felt only the sting of disappointment and dissatisfaction. Continually we seek the attractions of the world and yet somehow they do not satisfy. When finally we possess that which we have intensely desired and labored hard to gain, it loses its attraction, and we turn away from it to something else which we think will bring happiness, but in vain. For we are parched with

that thirst which makes the living drink
Deeper and deeper of the false salt waves
Whereon they float, pleasures, ambitions, wealth,
Praise, fame, or domination, conquest, love;
Rich meats and robes, and fair abodes and pride
Of ancient lines, and lust of days, and strife
To live, and sins that flow from strife, some sweet,
Some bitter. Thus Life's thirst quenches itself
With draughts which double thirst.

Men have toiled to gain wealth, they have endured terrible hardships, borne up under losses, faced the ugly side of human nature to win it, only to find that happiness did not come with money. With their wealth they could buy anything on the markets of the world save sympathy, true friendship and love; but what is life without these?

Others have sought power, to become leaders of men; but is not Bismarck credited with having said: "During the whole of my life I have not had twenty-four hours of happiness?" Those who rule men and govern affairs are so often cramped and thwarted in their efforts, they are so suspected, envied and slandered, are fought with such dishon-

orable weapons, that they are often oppressed with a sense of failure, of isolation, of hopes unfulfilled.

There are many who seek happiness through knowledge, who are eager to make new discoveries in science and win the appreciation of their fellow workers and the respect of the world. And yet, whatever discoveries they may make, there is always a feeling that all they have done is paltry compared to that which remains to be accomplished, that no matter how far they have hewn their way towards the frontier of research, there are greater realms beyond; so even here the sting of the unaccomplished is felt. Especially is this true of one who has sought recognition and fame, and yet after years of labor and exertion, remains unrewarded and unrecognized.

How many an author has offered his books to the world—as precious to him as children to a mother—confident that through them he will win happiness, personal comfort and the praises of his fellows; but how many have

been overwhelmed by barbed criticism, lack of appreciation, misunderstanding and empty honors.

Some strive for social position and a high station in life; they spend years in courting the favor of others in order to gain some fancied rank, some prize, and in the end—a vision of fleeting victories, memories of faithless friends, satiety, weariness, and an overpowering sense of nothing gained.

People have sought to ensure happiness for themselves in some future existence—to acquire merit or make good karma, as the Easterns say; to lay up treasures in heaven in the Christian phrase—by living a life of religious formalism, ceremonial strictness, and puritanical avoidance of worldly pleasures. Some are even so eager to secure a pleasant time for themselves in the world to come that they forget to spread happiness among those round them here, not realizing that he

Who seeks for heaven alone to save his soul,
May keep the path, but may not reach the goal.
Such a religious life is too often one of outer

observance and not of inner attitudes, and sometimes in hours of trial, of bitter pain and suffering, such people find themselves unsupported by their un-lived beliefs, and left therefore without consolation. When thus cast adrift they are often victims of despair and anguish.

So all the world over, as we turn from man to man, we find each one engaged in the quest for happiness. Yet only a few ever gain it. Why this failure, this heart-ache, this disappointment? Surely the trouble must lie with ourselves and not with God's universe, which is surrounded with His boundless Love, and filled with His perfect Life.

CHAPTER II

THE CAUSE OF UNHAPPINESS

Selfishness has many forms, and when you think you have definitely killed it in one of them, it arises in another as strongly as ever. But by degrees you will become so full of thought for the helping of others that there will be no room, no time, for any thought about yourself.

—*At the Feet of the Master*

THE ENTHRONED PERSONALITY

Our thoughts and desires nearly always center round ourselves. We think of people and events as circling round our personalities like planets round a sun, instead of looking upon ourselves as small units in a greater whole. Indeed, one of the easiest ways to capture a man's attention and win his regard is to let him talk about himself and listen sympathetically to what he has to say.

Our affairs are to us of primary importance, and we continually judge everything which happens in the light of *our* own needs,

our likes and dislikes, *our* feelings and prejudices. Theoretically we may regard the welfare of others as more important than our own, but practically and oftentimes unconsciously we place ourselves first. When another man tells us of his troubles, do they ever seem as arduous as our own, and when he speaks of his plans and hopes, are they really as interesting as those which we have in mind?

This self-centering tendency may easily be observed if we are attentive to the little thoughts and questions which float about in the back-ground of our minds. Do we not often say to ourselves: "I think I can do better than that! I don't like that at all. I wonder why that person doesn't use more common-sense. Does he mean me? How much money can I make out of that? Why didn't I think of that before! How nice I should look in that dress. I believe they are talking about me." The stream of such little thoughts constantly running on bears witness to the self-centered attitude of the

thinker, because, if we carefully analyze the nature of these thoughts, we notice that they are always tinged with a sense of superiority, and animated by a feeling of personal like or dislike.

We are miserable when our affection is not returned by another; we brood over fancied slights and are furious about imaginary injuries and wrongs; we resent lack of appreciation, nourish pride, harbor jealousy, display conceit and meditate revenge—often-times without actually realizing the true nature of the emotions which dominate us. If our attitude of mind is questioned, we are able instantly to justify it to our own satisfaction, and we consider ourselves wronged and misunderstood people if anyone suggests that all the fault perhaps may not lie with the other person.

This unfortunate habit of enthroning one's personality is universal, and none, except those who are approaching the stature of the Perfect Man, are entirely free from the tendency. To be self-centered, and therefore

selfish, is apparently necessary in the early stages of a soul's development, because by thinking continually of self, being spurred to effort by ambition and burning desire, and sustained by personal pride, a strong individuality is gradually formed. When, however, the soul is more mature as a result of hundreds of incarnations on earth, these barriers of selfishness must be leveled in order that the more spiritual qualities—helpfulness, devotion, love and compassion—may have opportunity to manifest.

THE ROOT OF THE TROUBLE

If we dispassionately study the nature of the desires which fill us, the motives which cause us to act, we shall find that we are always seeking something for ourselves, either some physical possession, some pleasure or gratification, some advancement or honor, some praise or recognition, some friendship or love. In all of them some element of *self* creeps in, some tinge of selfishness. We may

sincerely believe ourselves to be thinking and working entirely for the good of others, yet—all unconsciously—we secretly long for commendation, recognition and success, and when these do not come we feel unhappy, sometimes without realizing why.

So long as our happiness is dependent upon what the *outer* world can give us, either in the way of possessions or applause, of pleasures or successes, it is impermanent, and will sooner or later fade away into discontent and disappointment. So long as we are ourselves the objects of our first consideration, true happiness is impossible. We may strive for and gain all the attractions the earth can offer, we may lift ourselves to the highest pinnacle of fame, the whole world may bow in homage at our feet, and yet happiness will not be ours.

The root of the trouble is selfishness, the *seeking* for personal gain and advancement, for pleasure and comfort, for praise and honor. Only when we learn to toss all such

longings aside and devote ourselves unselfishly to the welfare of others, to the service of humanity, shall we receive an insight into the nature and source of happiness.

THE INNER ATTITUDE

Temporary satisfaction alone comes from external things; happiness is born from our inner attitude towards life and events. To gain it we need not change our outer life, it is not necessary to take up another occupation or move to a distant city or land, it is needless to enter society, to obtain power and position—*all these things have nothing to do with happiness*, and all our efforts to invoke happiness from *without* will only leave us exactly where we were before.

But when we learn to change our inner mind, the whole aspect of life is transformed; it becomes beautiful and wholly attractive, because it is instinct with the Divine. When we learn to ask nothing for ourselves but fill

our hearts with thoughts of others, then as has truly been said, we shall have no time to think of ourselves; this once accomplished, happiness is ours.

When we thus change our motive for action, and substitute thought of others in place of desire for ourselves, there will gradually dawn within our consciousness a clearer understanding of the nature of the secret of happiness. Its nature can only be suggested, never imparted; each man must fathom the secret for himself. He may gain hints from the speech of others, from the study of books, from meditation, but the secret will not be mastered or even understood until he commences to live a life of service. Walt Whitman glimpsed a great truth when he wrote:

No one can acquire for another—not one;
No one can grow for another—not one.

But when once mastered, this secret bestows upon its possessor the understanding of many other secrets such as may only be spoken of in the Holy of Holies itself.

THE TWO PATHS

All men are not yet ready to serve others; they have still to learn by actual experience that service of self and any number of possessions do not bring permanent happiness. The pangs of disappointment and dissatisfaction which inevitably follow every selfish desire, alone can teach a man to turn his thoughts from a self-centered to a God-centered world, and to learn to see in every man the Life of Him that pervades all nature.

The intensity with which the ideal of brotherhood appeals to us, and the sincerity with which we try to make it manifest in service, indicate our soul age. For we, as souls, did not commence our evolution at the same time; some souls are old in experience, having gathered the harvests of wisdom of many lives on earth; others are only in the kindergarten of life, and must incarnate many times before they can master the greater lessons taught by the world.

In certain Eastern Scriptures mankind is

said to be treading two paths; the path away from God-knowledge on which the hard lessons of life taught by self-seeking and ignorance are learned, and the path of return on which those mature in worldly experience may learn to love their fellow-men, and through that love gain God-knowledge. Our interests and attitude toward our fellows indicate whether we are upon the path of forth-going or the path of return.

If our thoughts turn chiefly to our own welfare and advancement, and only incidentally to the needs of others, if our day-dreams have nothing in them of the magic of altruistic feeling, then we are upon the path which leads away from knowledge of our divine origin, and have still before us many lives of strenuous physical experience which will teach us those lessons that we come here to get.

But if we are glad to assist another whenever there is an opportunity, if we work more for our families than for ourselves, if in the struggle of daily life we try to do what

is right and just despite personal loss, if we feel our responsibility for the wrongs society commits and strive to alleviate them so far as lies in our power, then we have turned our steps into the path of return and are ready to search for the secret of happiness.

We should not expect all men to be stirred by the same ideals which inspire us, and if the thought of service leaves untouched another to whom we voice it, we should be big enough to see that he is treading the path which is best for his growth, and that in some future life he will understand and follow the ideal of service which now to him seems so barren and unattractive. The acceptance of an ideal as a rule of life is the response of the soul to that which it knows to be true; the older the soul, the more the life led on earth is that of an idealist and altruist.

CHAPTER III

THE HEART OF THE SECRET

You must be active in doing good. You must be so filled with the intense desire of service that you are ever on the watch to render it to all around you—not to man alone, but even to animals and plants. You must render it in small things every day, that the habit may be formed, so that you may not miss the rare opportunity when the great thing offers itself to be done.

—*At the Feet of the Master*

THE WISH TO SERVE

The dreams of childhood and youth are oftentimes the thoughts of the soul. How many a youth and maiden, while walking in the forest or musing upon the shore, has dreamed happy dreams of helping the world, of performing valiant deeds of heroism, of righting wrongs and bestowing vast sums of money upon the needy poor. Of course, each dreamer is the modest hero or heroine of every exploit, but still the dreaming tells of

the existence of an inward aspiration, which all too soon is quenched in the hurry and struggle of daily life.

Even after we reach maturity there often lingers in us the wish to serve, to help those around us in their trials, to make life for others easier, happier, and freer from care and heart-ache. But we sigh when we think of our duties, our insufficient means, our toil-filled hours, and put all such thoughts away as impracticable. We say to ourselves that if our conditions were only otherwise, we would gladly spend every hour in serving mankind, but as things are, it is impossible.

This attitude is based upon an entire misconception of the meaning and scope of service. We need not modify our outer life to serve others; it is not necessary that we should take part in altruistic movements, for service is not confined to slum work, to prison reform, to religious activities, to the founding of schools and the maintenance of hospitals. If we will, we may serve anywhere and at any time with our existing abilities

and environment; all that is needed is to take advantage of every opportunity that offers itself.

OPPORTUNITIES

If we are attentive to the needs of others, if we are eager to seize every opportunity to serve, no matter how trivial it may be, then we shall find that each moment of the day can be used for the helping of others, and therefore filled with true and abiding happiness. The degree of our happiness is determined by our ability to forget ourselves and turn our attention outwards to the needs and happiness of others.

Service is not to be gauged by the size and importance of the act; it matters not whether it attracts attention and applause or whether it is performed unseen and unknown. *All* work is service when done for the sake of others, and no act is too small to be worthy of our attention when through it we can make another's pathway smoother and easier. And

when we thus work we should have in mind not only our human brothers, but also the plants and animals which surround us, for they too are living creatures, learning lessons from life; and by learning to regard ourselves as their elder brothers, and seeking to stimulate their growth, we shall find that the world is better for our presence and that we are happier for the service.

Let me tonight look back across the span

 'Twixt dawn and dark, and to my conscience say—
Because of some good act to beast and man—

 “The world is better that I lived today.”

A TRANSFORMATION

What potency there is in this ideal of service, this earnest wish to help those who surround us! The whole mind becomes so attuned to the thought of others that no thought of self can find an entrance, because self no longer interests us. Since we are not seeking something for ourselves, there is no

personal disappointment if nothing is received. The welfare of others becomes far more important to us than our own, and after a time we learn to consider as wasted any time that is spent in worrying over our own difficulties and trials, and in rejoicing over our small successes. We quietly accept each situation when it comes, study it, if possible master it, and under all circumstances try to utilize it to the best advantage of all whom it affects.

If we are fully occupied with the needs of the people around us, if we are planning and working to make others happier, wiser, healthier and stronger, then whatever sorrows come to us *seem* insignificant compared to theirs, whatever losses we may sustain are as nothing when placed side by side with the losses which they have experienced. In this way, by eliminating the sources of unhappiness—self-regard and self-seeking—we find that the heart is untroubled, that the sting is taken out of life.

Because we think of others and not of our-

selves many unlovely traits of character, such as anger, jealousy, envy, hatred, greed, can find no place in us. We are freed from depression, because depression is born of self-regard; we transcend ingratitude, spite, gossip, lust, thoughtlessness, discourtesy, because they are the progeny of selfishness, and when all our thoughts are turned away from self, selfishness withers and dies from lack of nourishment.

It is often extremely difficult for us to maintain our faith in human nature, experiencing as all of us do, ingratitude, disloyalty, baseness and sourness from those with whom we have dealings, unless we forget ourselves in service and ask for no reward. We are offended and hurt when others do us some ill-turn, only because our love for self is greater than our love for them. "Love asks for nothing but the right to give." Of course, it is natural to regret the base actions of others for their own sakes, but we may always be supported by the knowledge that the Divinity within them must ultimately triumph.

THE ENDING OF SORROW

Sometimes though the heart desires to serve, yet it is still torn with sorrow and anguish over the loss of some loved one, whose absence leaves a sense of emptiness everywhere, and memories of whom come with overwhelming force as we go to familiar haunts or take up the duties of the day. How can happiness come to those who have such cause for sorrow, and think that never again on earth will they meet those, the sound of whose very foot-falls was dear?

Though we should speak the truth gently, yet it is necessary to say that the cause of such sorrow is ignorance—ignorance which may be removed with a little study. There is ample evidence now available to prove that death does not end all, that it is but the desertion of the physical form by the consciousness, which in the process gains liberation, not annihilation. Those who have studied the discoveries of psychical science know that belief in a life after death need not rest now upon pious

faith or upon statements made in ancient books; it may be solidly based, if we take the trouble to examine the evidence, either upon first-hand knowledge or upon the verified statements of those living among us to-day who can see where we are blind.

Millions of people through all periods of history have had dreams and visions hinting at the existence of a vast unseen world surrounding us. In modern times, because of the scientific spirit of the age, statements of many hundreds of reliable people have been gathered together and published by societies existing for such research. In addition to these collections of invaluable data, there are thousands of sensitive people more or less consciously in touch with the unseen world who, though their statements are fragmentary and often inaccurate, nevertheless all agree with the conclusion that death is purely physical and does not affect the human mind and emotions.

Evidence of still greater value is to be found in the published researches of Theo-

sophical experts, who have been able after years of careful training to fully contact and study the conditions and laws of this unseen realm, with the same precision and care that a scientist uses in his investigation of the physical world. What such experts have written is of the utmost importance, and they all state emphatically that death is a mere incident and not a tragedy, that the consciousness can never be destroyed, that those we love are near us after their death separated from us only by barriers erected by our insensitive brains, that when we go to sleep at night we leave our slumbering bodies and are with those whom we mistakenly think we have lost.

The knowledge we gain through carefully studying this evidence is sufficient, even in the absence of any personal experience, to rob death of all its agony, its sting, its heartache. Trust in the divine Wisdom and Goodness replaces doubt and blasphemy; insight drives away ignorance; joyousness reigns in the place of sorrow.

CHAPTER IV

THE FRUIT OF ACTION

You must do right for the sake of the right, not in the hope of reward; you must work for the sake of the work, not in the hope of seeing the result; you must give yourself to the service of the world because you love it, and cannot help giving yourself to it.

—*At the Feet of the Master*

A PRACTICAL IDEAL

To direct one's actions according to the ideal of service does not incapacitate one for daily life; rather it increases one's efficiency, power and usefulness in the world. A man need not change his occupation in order to serve humanity; his work may be exactly the same as it was before he tried to live this ideal, for we serve not by what we do, but by the way in which we do it. Any work is transmuted into service by the alchemy of motive; perform your daily duties for the sake of others, and the labor becomes service. A man

animated by such a motive labors harder and with greater effect, he puts more energy and thought into what he does, he seeks perfection and skill in every action, not for reward, the fruit of action, but because in doing his work he is serving mankind.

Thy business is with action only, never with its fruits; so let not the fruit of action be thy motive, nor be thou to inaction attached.

Civilization as a whole is intimately connected with every one of us, and in it each man has his part to play. If a single person shirks his duty or performs unfaithful work, the wheel of human progress is retarded a little, even as in a factory the turning of a giant wheel is rendered less perfect and efficient if a single cog breaks or cracks. Each activity is part of a great scheme for the development of humanity, for from the hidden side of things, civilization is seen to be an elaborate system of schooling by which souls learn lessons needed for their growth.

Thus a clerk, working unnoticed and unknown in the simple routine of an office, may

rightly feel in his heart that if he does his work well, he is making civilization more perfect and is thereby serving humanity. If he takes up his work with this ideal in mind, he works with renewed vigor because he is inspired by the thought of service; he thinks no longer of how much will come to him in the way of salary or promotion, but of how well he can do the work which has been entrusted to him. He seeks perfection in every detail, he aims at skill in action. Obviously a man animated by such an ideal will be of far more value to his employer than another who is thinking all the time of his salary and is careful to do no more work than is actually required of him. Which of the two is more apt to be promoted? Is it not evident then that the man who is seeking service and not reward will be the most successful?

If later on in life such a clerk rises to a more important position and acquires wealth—as he is bound to do if he is devoted to his work—he will instinctively regard himself not as the owner but as the custodian of the

money which he has earned, and he will use it as wisely as he can to assist those with whom he comes in contact.

So even into the business world the ideal of service may be carried, and it does not in any way conflict with efficiency; on the contrary, it increases it a thousand-fold, because it turns a man's *whole* attention to the details of his work and fills him with an earnest desire to be skilful in everything he does. Also when a man regards his work as service, he will do a thousand times more than one who is always figuring how much he may gain by every action.

A teacher in a school or college may think of the salary which that position brings, or may joyously regard the work as service, because through teaching, souls inhabiting youthful bodies may be helped in their growth. With such a motive in mind—that of preparing boys and girls to be noble men and women—no effort is too great, no sacrifice too heavy to be made for them. Thus a teacher who carries in his heart the ideal of

service to humanity, becomes far more valuable to the race, far more a power in the moulding of human life, than one who works for the little financial return which is offered and does not put his heart into the teaching.

An author or artist who labors not for profit or fame, but to express in his art high aspirations and a touch of the eternally Beautiful, will inspire the world in countless ways undreamt of by one to whom art is a commercial enterprise. For if we approach the Shrine of the Spirit, seeking its imperishable treasures in order that we may give them to others, our hands will be filled to overflowing; but if we go there asking for some gift for ourselves, we shall go away empty-handed.

Paradox as it may seem, it is nevertheless true that Nature pours her treasures at the feet of those who, though not seeking them, yet work as those do who desire them. So long as we desire and hunger for possessions, just so long must we struggle and battle to obtain them; when we desire them no more

and only use them when they come for the helping of others, they flood upon us from all sides.

A farmer tilling his fields, an artisan handling his tools, are serving humanity if they labor to provide for others and not merely to get the profits of their industry. The scientist who seeks not fame and recognition but the enrichment of the world, the priest who loves his flock, the King who guards his people, are all serving, and the fullness of their happiness will be proportionate to the extent to which they are able to forget themselves and their own desires.

“Man can only be happy when he ceases striving to be happy,” was the profound conclusion reached many centuries ago by a school of philosophers. So long as we seek happiness for ourselves we do not find it; when we seek to make others happy, the long-sought treasure is found. Nature is churlish of misers and ever baffles them in their efforts to get something for themselves; this is the way by which we are taught, this the means

by which we grow from soul-childhood to soul-maturity. Once the lesson of unselfishness is learned, and our sole aspiration is to serve and help, then Nature utilizes us to distribute her bounties to her children. Most men have not yet glimpsed this possibility; when gifts come they regard them as their own and hold them selfishly, not realizing that Nature's intention was to have them act as agents through which she could give her blessings to the world. The more we learn to act as channels the greater the opportunities offered by Nature for service. And remember, Nature is God in manifestation.

LIFE'S LESSONS

No matter what occupation a man may have, no matter in what station of life he may stand, if he works for the sake of the work and not for its fruit, if he works because he wishes to help others and not for any rewards which may come through his efforts, then he is serving loyally and well. This is especially

true if he seeks for perfection in his labor and is content to do his own duty, not wanting always to follow the occupation or activity of some one else, but doing successfully the work which comes to him to perform. Each human being is marked by his capacities, his limitations, his aptitudes, for a certain line of activity, and true service is to do as faithfully as possible the duties and labors connected with that line. As is written in a scripture considered of hoary antiquity even by those who built what are now crumbling ruins :

Better one's own duty, though destitute of merit, than the duty of another, well-discharged. Better death in the discharge of one's own duty; the duty of another is full of danger.

If this attitude is adopted, happiness is inevitable, and it all comes about, not through any change in outer life, not through divine favoritism or caprice, not through ease or luxury, position or honors, but solely through the way we regard the world, our neighbors and our work.

Do not complain because other men hold

higher stations in life, do not blame destiny for the portion allotted, but strive to realize that each one of us is now living in the environment which can best and most quickly teach us certain lessons which we must acquire before we can go further along the pathway leading to Perfection.

It is a fundamental teaching of occultism, that destiny is the product of human effort; that a man's character, environment and opportunities—the three factors which make up destiny—are determined, not by an inscrutable Providence whose workings may not be questioned, but by the thoughts, desires and actions habitual to that man during the earlier years of this life and during previous lives spent by him on earth in other physical bodies.

So instead of grumbling at the conditions in which we find ourselves—which after all are of our own making—we should seek to discover the lessons of life taught by our environment. When these lessons are once mastered the environment changes for a better one, where greater and more important in-

struction awaits us, for this world-school is guided by divine Wisdom. Do not shrink from the storms of life; use them to advantage. A vessel, which during a calm lies idle with lazy, flapping sails, can make swift progress—in a storm—if a skilful and daring hand is at the helm.

CHAPTER V

THE POTENCY OF THOUGHT

Use your thought-power every day for good purposes; be a force in the direction of evolution. Think each day of some one whom you know to be in sorrow, or suffering, or in need of help, and pour out loving thought upon him.

—*At the Feet of the Master*

THE THOUGHT ATMOSPHERE

There are many ways by which we may help people around us, but the most potent of all is the service we can do by means of deliberate and powerful thinking. In the eyes of the world, which judges only by outer things, the feeding of the hungry and the assisting of the poor are the most praiseworthy ways of serving, but those who know something of the inner side of life, realize that physical actions are feeble in their results compared to the lasting and wonderful effects of thought.



It is important to remember that the thoughts which fill our minds send waves of vibrating force rippling out from us in ever-widening circles, which distinctly influence for good or ill all who come into our neighborhood. We do not think unto ourselves; our thoughts wing their way to the minds of others, bearing their message of joy or sorrow, courage or depression. In the subtle world a thought of anger is a blow, a thought of love a caress.

Thus we are all immeshed in a web of interweaving thought-currents. Many ideas which come to us, feelings which stir us and passions which trouble us, first arose in the minds of others and are only reproduced in our consciousness.

1. This fact, that our thoughts do not influence ourselves alone, is of great importance, because it forces us to realize that we have a grave duty towards others, not only with regard to the thoughts we generate, but also 2. in connection with the images and feelings

which we permit our minds to reproduce from the mental currents round us. It is possible to train our minds until they respond only to that which is best and noblest, and until they instinctively throw off any influence which tends to degrade or coarsen.

This purifies the thought atmosphere which we carry round with us—for each human being is surrounded with a cloud of his own thought-images, desires, moods, feelings and passions—and when we come near another person we powerfully influence him for good, even though we may not have this intention in mind. What we are is much more important than what we say. If we desire to serve, it is imperative that we should understand something at least of the possibilities and nature of mental forces.

THE NEED FOR CONTROL

If we are really in earnest we ought carefully to study our habitual thoughts, our

pet likings and dislikings, and ask ourselves squarely why we should continue to criticize others and make ungracious comments on them, why we should dwell upon their failings instead of their virtues, why we should ever permit ourselves to send out hateful and spiteful thoughts, when every mental force so generated works harm upon its object. Should we not train ourselves to become so alert and self-collected as to be aware instantly of the nature of our thoughts, and be able to substitute a good wish and a loving greeting for every budding tendency towards anger, impatience, dislike, or jealousy?

When we learn thus to control our thoughts we avoid practically all risk of ever injuring another, because mastery of thought implies also the control of speech and action, both of which result from thought. Without such control, we may unconsciously push a hesitating man over a moral precipice on the brink of which he is standing, but over which, if we had not given him that little mental push, he would not have fallen. In such a

case we are partially responsible for the result of his acts.

The thoughts that we think should be cheerful, calm and unruffled, free from prejudice and irritability, and above all true. If we only could take men as we find them, instead of imagining that they ought to fit themselves into our preconceptions of what they should be, we would then never do them an injustice. When we cast off a person because he does not come up to the ideal which we have made of him, we do him serious wrong, for we can never be disappointed in another if we have estimated his character correctly. We should not make others bear the penalty of our inability to judge character.

WINGED MESSENGERS

It is a great privilege to think strong, beautiful and helpful thoughts; and when deliberately practise the sending of thoughts along useful channels for the helping of others, we actually create a host of winged

messengers which speed to those about whom we are thinking and encourage or comfort according to the nature of the thoughts that gave them birth.

It is related in an Eastern tale which tells of the life of the Lord Buddha that "as the day began to dawn, rising from his couch he would seat himself, and calling up before his mind the folk in the world, he would consider the aspirations which they, in previous births, had formed, and think over the means by which he could help them to attain thereto."

It would be well for us to help others in a similar manner, to think each morning of the welfare of others, to recall to mind those whom we know to be in need or in trouble, and deliberately to send, with all the power we possess, thoughts of encouragement, consolation and good cheer. We might watch for the tired and worn faces among the people whom we pass upon the street, or who sit near us as we ride in a street car, and send to them in physical silence, but with mental intensity, winged messengers that will lift

from their shoulders something of the care and anxiety which burdens them.

This work will be unnoticed, it will be done without thanks, but if we observe we shall find that it inevitably produces its result, and that those whom we thus seek to help are encouraged and become more cheerful and therefore better able to face their problems than they were before. What greater happiness than thus to serve a fainting brother, unthanked, unknown!

The thoughts and feelings which radiate from us should be pure, serene and full of kindness, love and compassion. If we meet imperiousness with courtesy, harshness with gentleness, indifference with thoughtful regard, worry with optimism, suspicion with candor, haste with deliberation, we shall truly be serving with our thoughts.

LEARNING TO THINK

Our usefulness will be greatly increased if we learn *how* to think. Many people's

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thoughts are hazy and vague, cloudy in outline, uncertain in meaning, wavering in intention. If we wish a thought to produce a powerful and immediate effect, we must think it distinctly and intently, formulating in our minds exactly the idea we wish to express or convey, and then send it with deliberate intention to the person for whom it is intended. If we let the mind wander or permit irrelevant thoughts to creep in, our efforts are thereby rendered much less effective.

If we have once learned to think, much good may be done by turning our concentrated attention for a few minutes each day upon some great ideal of life and thinking about it intently, dwelling upon its inspiration and attractiveness as well as upon its value in daily life and its influence upon character. The clear thought-images produced by such thinking are potent agents for widespread good, because their vibrations continue for a long time, and tend to reproduce themselves in receptive minds, thereby affecting many people who come in touch with

them mentally. The more ideals we are able to generate within our minds and express in our lives, the quicker will be the advancement of the world.

CHAPTER VI

THE ALCHEMY OF LOVE

Of all the Qualifications, Love is the most important, for if it is strong enough in a man, it forces him to acquire all the rest, and all the rest without it would never be sufficient.

—*At the Feet of the Master*

A POWERFUL MOTIVE

The most powerful motive for service is love which, if even partially realized, quickly forces a man to forget himself and inspires him with the wish of serving perfectly. Love is not sentimentalism, nor is it to be confounded with that imitation which so many profess, that is felt only when it is appreciated and returned. Love is that deep-rooted yearning to help others, that all-compelling emotion which makes others dearer than oneself, which impels us to feel that the welfare, happiness and well-being of others are infinitely more important than our own. It makes the thought of others our greatest

satisfaction, work for them our greatest joy, service of our brothers our greatest privilege.

Such an emotion persists amid storms and trials, it is unchanged though the object of its affection remains indifferent, it asks nothing in return, it only longs to give; it does not require gratitude for its sustenance, nor appreciation for its growth, for such love is its own justification for existence. It radiates from the heart without a thought of receiving anything in return, and its priceless quality lies in the fact that its essence is forgetfulness of self.

Love divine, through all things flowing, thou through
us dost ever flow—

Little channels, larger growing as we learn to love
and know,

As we learn the joy of giving, finding as the days
go by

Love is life, the only living; when we love no more,
we die.

THE REALM OF LOVE

At first, perhaps, love is felt only for an individual and is tinged with passion, with

selfishness and the longing for possession, but as life after life on earth unfolds its experience to the growing soul, ever deeper and more universal emotions are felt, and the love emotion becomes slowly purged of these unlovely tendencies. Its realm extends, and includes no longer one only, but many—an ever-increasing number; first, the nearest and dearest friends, then one's companions, and finally the whole of humanity. When this last stage is reached the longing for possession drops away, for the greatest joy lies in serving the object of affection, not in ownership.

THE NATURE OF LOVE

If we would understand the nature of love we must look into the depths of the human consciousness until we find the Divine that is concealed there. It is the inner man that we love, not the mere outer personality with its weaknesses and failings; it is the Divine within each one which calls forth the Divine

from us, and in friendship and love we see the workings of a consciousness which transcends the mind and its limited capacities. In the words of a poet:

God nods to God when friend meets friend.

It is helpful to learn to distinguish between the higher self within us, the soul consciousness, which endures and grows ever wiser during the long pilgrimage, the milestones of which are the lives we live on earth, and the rather petty, personal consciousness that is all the soul is able to express in the brain during any one life. The personal consciousness is that which is interested in stock reports, baseball, the dinner table, dress, and gossip; the higher consciousness is that which inclines us to humanitarian movements, to the study of science, art, philosophy, and religions, to the search for truth and love, and to the practice of a noble life. The personality is only a useful instrument by means of which the soul takes part in the activities

of the world and gains the experience it needs for its growth.

Oddly enough, however, the personality, limited as it is by the comparatively unresponsive brain, often regards itself as the whole consciousness, and denies the existence of that larger soul-consciousness of which it is but a part. But when we learn to live here on earth a useful life moulded along spiritual lines, the limits of the personality slowly widen until in time we become consciously aware of the existence and interests of that higher self, the soul, which is the root of our life.

If in meeting men and women we try to disregard this outer personality, and strip away all the little traits and mannerisms, all the peculiarities of thinking cultivated by environment and education, we shall find that behind each human consciousness is a substratum of Spirit which is the same in all. Mentally and physically we differ from each other, but spiritually we are one. In the physical world this inner unity manifests as

love which is, therefore, the truest expression of the Divine in us.

When we go among men let us strive to let the indwelling Divinity shine forth in undiminished splendor, by pouring out love from our hearts to all about us, and let no one pass by without some touch of its transforming power, without some gift from our spiritual treasury. Give your service to the world because you love that world and all the creatures in it. Do not restrict your love to humanity alone, but let it encompass both plants and animals as well, so that you may walk along the ways of life as the lover of every creature, as the servant of all that lives.

It is our duty to remain always calm and joyous, and never to permit depression to darken our thoughts; it is a privilege to carry happiness with us wherever we go—for this world is full of sorrow—and to act as channels for the divine Love, that it may pour outwards to all who suffer and bring consolation and peace.

THE MAGIC GLOW

When thus we move amongst mankind, regarding each human being as our brother, to be loved and if need be, protected, sheltered, and guided, we shall find that all unkindness vanishes, that it is impossible for us to think uncharitable thoughts about another or to hold him up to ridicule or criticism. How can we do so if we really love? The welfare of a brother is too precious a thing to be lightly subjected to scathing words or disparagement. Rather we shall strive to find his loveliest traits of character and dwell upon them, rejoicing in the fact that he possesses such qualities. We shall shrink from exposing him and speaking of his mistakes or weaknesses to others. Our hearts would cry out against such an act, and besides, we know that the thoughts we should generate while thus speaking of him would injure and drag him downwards, while the thoughts stirred up in those who listen to our gossip would likewise retard his growth and make his

striving for a better life doubly hard. So love dictates silence with regard to the failings of those who are dear to us—and all men are dear if we have learned to love. How much happier this world would be if only a little touch of brotherly love silenced the lips of every gossip and tale-bearer!

If we really love others nothing we can do for them seems too much; and if we are free from selfishness we shall not mind whether they appreciate what we do or remain indifferent. We have loved and acted for the sake of that love and not for the sake of anything that the loved one can do in return. When this attitude in life is once gained, when love is the motive force for action, when there radiates from us true affection for mankind with all its weaknesses and failings, then a most wondrous glow transforms the world in which we live. It no longer appears grey and commonplace; it is tinged with a mystic radiance which endears to us all things, all living creatures. The sting of disappointment, of discouragement

and despair is utterly and wholly taken away. It is as if we realized for a moment something of the stupendous meaning of that oft-repeated phrase: "In Him we live and move and have our being." For when we learn thus to love and act and serve because of our affection for humanity, we are drawn closer to that great divine Heart in whose immeasurable Love we are ever bathed.

CHAPTER VII

THE APOTHEOSIS OF SERVICE

If you yearn to be one with God, it is not for your own sake; it is that you may be a channel through which His love may flow to reach your fellow-men. He who is on the Path exists not for himself, but for others; he has forgotten himself, in order that he may serve them.

—*At the Feet of the Master*

THE RAZOR'S EDGE

No better description can be given of the Path of occult development than that it is the apotheosis of service. This Path has been described in ancient scriptures as being as narrow and as difficult to tread as the edge of a razor, and the description is a graphic one, for those who walk along it need poise above all else. We have also been told that there are many who seek but few that find it; and this again is borne out by experience, because so very few have the insight, the

wisdom and the balance to tread it. The nature of its aims and methods have often been misunderstood, not only by unlearned outsiders, but frequently by the aspirants themselves.

The "Path" is a poetical term, descriptive of the gradual change which must take place in the consciousness of a human being before he can attain to Perfection and become one of Those who guard and guide the world. Advancement along this Path does not imply a movement in any direction, but only a change in the aspirant's attitude towards life and his fellow-men. While treading it, great power must be developed, true wisdom gained, unselfish love awakened, but the end of it all is not the glorification of the individual, but the moulding of a perfect servant of humanity.

Those whom Occultists call the Masters—those Perfected Men who have reached the goal of human evolution—remain in touch with the world and assist earnest and determined aspirants to reach Their spiritual level,

not for the sake of the aspirants, but because such pupils, working as apprentices under the direction of the Masters, can greatly assist in hastening the evolution of the race as a whole. Although humanity, taking it in the mass, is slowly evolving towards spirituality, not all of its members will become what is meant in the strict sense of the term by "Occultist."

WHAT CONSTITUTES AN OCCULTIST

An Occultist is one who, becoming aware of the fact that the whole evolution on this planet is governed and controlled by a mighty spiritual Organization of Perfected Men, has decided henceforth to forego all personal ambitions and, by gaining a knowledge of the laws of nature, to co-operate *intelligently* with the plans of this Organization.

The name "Occultist" has been terribly degraded of recent years by those who have prostituted their psychic faculties to selfish

and commercial ends. In popular opinion, an Occultist is a wonder-worker, a producer of phenomena, a somewhat unpleasant person of doubtful reputation who professes to be in touch with things unseen and to be able to read the past, present and future with unerring accuracy.

In real life, a true Occultist—of whom there are as yet *very* few—is a man of noble character, distinguished by his ideals and ability, whose dominant trait is his intense desire to help his fellow-men—the will to serve. He may be psychic, but many times he is not, for the leading of the occult life does not necessarily imply any effort to awaken psychic powers; in all cases, however, he is a power for good, a lover of mankind.

THE LIFE OF THE OCCULTIST

Naturally, a would-be Occultist's first effort is directed towards the purification of his character and the awakening of every latent

capacity of mind and heart, but he should never forget—as too many do—that he is seeking to become a Servant of humanity and that, therefore, his training will primarily consist of serving others *now*, with his existing opportunities and abilities. He must develop strength and self-initiative so that he does not need to be constantly directed like a child, yet he must not become headstrong and egotistical, thinking that his own plans are the best, and refusing to co-operate with those who may be his superiors either in experience or by virtue of the offices they hold. The young Occultist must above all else learn to obey as well as to command, for it oftentimes takes greater strength to be a reliable and trustworthy follower than it does to be a leader independent of all exterior guidance.

The aspirant should also learn to work for nothing in return for his efforts, to expect nothing in the way of reward; should advancement come, it is far better that it come as a surprise than as something for which he has been yearning; indeed, advancement

does not come so long as he expects it. Those who are always expecting favors are exactly those who do not advance; those who are continually aiding their fellows to go forward are precisely those who go forward themselves.

The aspirant will do well to develop within himself the qualifications of a pioneer, to be willing to hew his way into unknown regions, to teach an unpopular doctrine, to stand opposition, to be undisturbed by ridicule, to labor without honor, recognition, or thanks. He ought to be willing to endure hardship, nay, even harshness and open enmity, for the sake of the truths which have been entrusted to him to give to the world.

If we would become disciples of a Master we must acquire the courage and hardihood of the pathfinder, since the lessons which such a Teacher has in mind for the instruction of humanity are always a little in advance of the popular point of view, and those who advance any idea, no matter how true, which is ahead of the thought of the time, are sure

to meet with opposition and condemnation. The "mad fancies" of one age become the wisdom of the next.

A fatal weakness that must be overcome is the common tendency to place one's personality first and the work second, to become depressed with failure, proud with success, vain with applause, conceited with flattery, and to regard the doer as of more importance than the work done. The greatest barrier to spiritual progress is egotism, even as the greatest aid to it is the ability to forget entirely about oneself, one's predilections, one's desires and even one's aspirations, and to throw oneself whole-heartedly into the work which has been assigned.

Power must be developed—the power to do and accomplish what is seen to be right. So many aspirants have the best wishes and aspirations in the world, and their minds are filled with many good thoughts—and yet somehow they seem unable to put them into effect in their own lives, to *live* them, as well as dream over them. Their thoughts, often

rather vague and unformed, remain aspirations only, because of the lack of power to crystallize them into qualities of character. This state of things may be overcome by continuous effort and dogged determination.

But with the effort to acquire power, care should be taken not to fall into the error of domineering over others and seeking to force them along a certain line which we think to be right. We should give to each man the freedom we demand for ourselves, and strictly follow the advice to "mind our own business." In truth, we have enough to do in guiding our own footsteps along the razor Path of Occultism without trying to urge others to tread it in our way. It is well for us to bear in mind the words of a Master, that "the power which the disciple must covet is that which will make him appear as nothing in the eyes of men."

Another qualification it is most advisable to acquire, because of its usefulness, is that of adaptability; for the aspirant who is entering a life of unselfish service and longs

to help his fellow-men with all the intensity of his nature, may be sent if he is willing, to any part of the world to do any kind of work—whatever task most needs to be done at that particular moment. If we are set in our ways, if we think to ourselves that we will help in this way and in this way only, we often throw away priceless opportunities by our lack of adaptability, which in itself implies an intrusion of the personality.

If we have the spirit of the true Occultist within us, we shall always hold in our minds the thought that we are willing to go anywhere and do anything at any time for the service of others. Of course, circumstances of daily life may often make this impossible, but the thought should dwell with us nevertheless, for in the end it will bring freedom to realize the ideal.

In our efforts to serve others, we should be careful not to intrude our own feelings to the extent that we are unwilling to help those whom we dislike, or of whose character we disapprove. It has been said by one who is

old in the experience of the world, that if we labor only with those few friends who are dear to us and decline to assist those to whom we do not feel attracted, we shall always remain in the lower ranks of workers.

We should not forget also that gentleness and courtesy are never incompatible with a vigorous spiritual life; rather, that those who are most truly the embodiments of the Divine are most gentle, thoughtful and courteous in all their dealings with their fellows. Steadfastness also is a virtue without price, for if we have made it our own, we cannot be swayed from the path we have chosen by any undesirable influence from without; and when we have offered our devotion to a leader whom we trust, that devotion will remain unchanged, no matter what may happen, and our loyalty will remain unshaken through every storm and trial.

If we are steadfast in our endeavors, loyal to our ideals and leaders, persevering in our attempts to develop character; if we seek to advance the welfare of the world, to bring

light and help to others, to give wisdom to those who are in darkness and consolation to those who sorrow; if we earnestly strive to put the needs of our fellows before our own, and to love humanity so much that we are willing to sacrifice our pleasure to give happiness to our brothers, we shall then be able to tread that Path, as narrow as the edge of a razor, which leads to the Masters and the Light Eternal.

THE WORLD-PLAN

As we gain knowledge through careful study and observation, and as our intuitions slowly become more active with our growth, we shall begin to realize, truth by truth, fact by fact, that all evolution is proceeding along the lines of a mighty plan, and that nothing, however trivial, is happening by chance, but that all things great and small are guided to their fulfilment by superb Intelligence, and that every event takes place for the final good of every living creature.

We shall also learn more of the great Masters who are guiding the workings of this plan, the mighty spiritual Teachers—so marvellous in Their wisdom, so irresistible in Their power, so perfect in Their divine manhood—who are helping the race in order that its evolution may be quickened, its progress unimpeded. Later on, as we progress still more, and become eager to be taught, we shall learn of the conditions upon which these Masters have accepted pupils in the past, and will accept promising people today as apprentices to assist Them directly in Their beneficent work.

The life which They lay down as a preliminary step to apprenticeship is governed by the noblest ideals, yet balanced by excellent common-sense; and the results, even so far as the character alone is concerned, are wholly desirable. But the aspirant must be willing to practise unselfishness in all his daily duties; it is useless to attempt the occult life in order to gain some personal advantage, for the locked door which leads to the

Sanctuary cannot be opened without the key of love, nor will the sentinels without permit one to pass who cannot give with his life, and not merely with his lips, the password of service. But on this Path is found the greatest happiness of which the human heart is capable, for happiness is born of self-forgetfulness, a quality without which spiritual progress is impossible.

OCCULT PROGRESS

In order to progress intelligently it is essential to have a knowledge of things unseen as well as seen, not necessarily gained by direct vision of the invisible realm which surrounds us, but through careful study of the teachings of those who know and do not speak from theory alone. Many aspirants have taken this to mean that they must study all the time, and so their leisure hours are spent in the gathering of facts, in the building up of a scheme of knowledge in their minds. All this has its value which should

not be underestimated, but study alone is not enough, and will not lead one to the feet of the Master.

Emphasis has also been laid on the need of meditation, of devoting daily a certain portion of time to inward-turned contemplation, to the endeavor to grasp spiritual verities, facts too lofty and subtle for our brain consciousness normally to respond. We find many earnest people who, misinterpreting the nature and purpose of meditation, spend hours in practising this kind of mental and spiritual gymnastics. While some supplement their efforts with study, others spend all their spare time in meditation. Meditation is undoubtedly of great value in the cultivation of character and for disciplining the consciousness, but stress must be laid on the fact that meditation alone will not lead one to the Teacher.

Nor should it be thought for a moment that progress comes from longing for personal advancement and stature, nor does it follow that those who are anxiously intro-

spective and are heart-broken over every little fault they find in themselves, will soon become accepted as disciples.

Study aids us because it gives us knowledge to guide our lives and actions; meditation is of assistance because it strengthens the mind, as gymnastic exercises build up the muscles; self-knowledge is of value because it reveals our weaknesses and assists in character-building; all these things are good, but unless supplemented and dominated by forgetfulness of self and service of others, we shall "mark time" instead of marching forward. The keynote of spiritual and occult progress is *service*, and he who aspires should engrave this word deep upon the tablets of his heart.

We must do each piece of work that comes to us as perfectly as we can, and when we serve we should throw our whole heart into that which we do, not making a task of it, not thinking how hard it is to give time and energy, but rejoicing that we are making each day more radiant and beautiful, that we

are helping mankind to become more happy by the work which we are privileged to do. If we bear this ideal with us, if we strive to apotheosize service, we are on the road to becoming Occultists in reality, and we are approaching the time when we shall be permitted to work directly and consciously with Those who are in charge of evolution.

SPIRITUAL CHANNELS

As we go about our duties from day to day—no matter how simple and uninspiring they may be—as we endeavor with steadfast earnestness to take our place among the helpers of mankind, our efforts are bound to attract the attention of some great Teacher—to whose spiritual vision the minds of all men are as visible and plain as the pages of an open book—and when His thought once rests with approval upon us, we shall become channels for spiritual forces which have their source in the changeless love and infinite compassion of the Master. Then we shall be-

come as suns among men, radiating out to all we meet, influences that console and bless, energies that encourage and strengthen.

So let us turn our faces toward these Great Ones, toward the ideal of service which we are told is the Way to Them, and with child-like sincerity and singleness of purpose serve our fellows earnestly and eagerly, ever taking advantage of the many opportunities about us, never intrusive, yet always attentive. If we fill our hearts with the thought of others, if we replace selfish desires by unselfish aspirations, then it may be that one of the great Masters of Love and Compassion will see fit to accept us among His chosen band of apprentices. And if that comes to pass, then happy will the day be, and happy the life that shall follow, though filled with labor and with many trials, for it will be a life of service, and service is the secret of happiness.

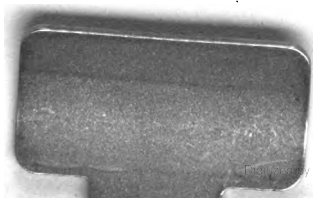
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