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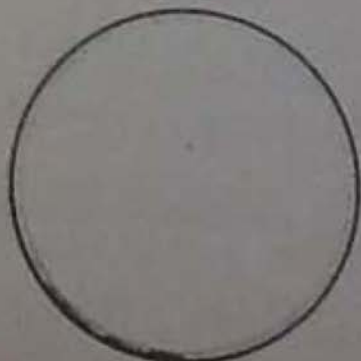
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## *Common Sense Talks*

*With  
Love*

### KNOW THYSELF.

*"What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculties! In form and moving, how express and admirable! In action, how like an angel! In apprehension, how like a god! The beauty of the world! The paragon of animals."—Hamlet.*

Know thyself, oh man, for in thyself is all knowledge and all power. Through the divine in man, the true part of himself alone, can he recognize the divine apart from himself and bring himself into oneness with it.

It is not always a pleasant exercise to study one's self—but it is the only true way of attainment. This nibbling at things is so weakening. It is far better to let occult study entirely alone than to nibble a bit here and a bit there trying to find the easy places. If you are going to live and work in the atmosphere of truth commence right now and analyze yourself. Stop all this self-deception. Realize yourself as you are, and not as you have deluded yourself into thinking you are. Do this without the slightest self-condemnation; just be broad enough to recognize the truth; that is all and in all, and see yourself in the light of that truth.

It seems sometimes as though we have two sets of feelings—two kinds of desires. One set clinging to earth, and the other lifting us into heavenly realms. Most of us cultivate the earth desires; we are a little afraid of being considered a bit sentimental, or perhaps flighty, if we allow what we call our imagination any expression. But when once the man has a glimpse of the true part of himself, when he realizes his power and the possibilities within himself; when he perceives sufficiently to cultivate the desire of the soul, there is no turning back. He has entered the realm of the spirit, and therein finds a peace and happiness no earthly power can give.



Just think of yourself as the center of a universe, as having within yourself every force contained in the universe; in fact, as the microcosm of the universe. Think of your relation to universal forces and how you are manifesting the power that is yours. Is there anything lacking in that manifestation? Are you experiencing any kind of poverty—of purse, of mind, of love? If so, it is your own fault, because you have within you all power, and everything needful is yours if you will only recognize it and take it.

All mistakes and so-called sins are merely the result of ignorance of the law. The law of the within is exactly the same as the law of the without. It is all one. When we do not understand the law of our own nature, how can we expect to understand any of nature's finer forces? How can we take advantage of opportunities which are always within our grasp when we have not the capacity to perceive them? After all, that is the great thing—to recognize the capacity and then cultivate it.

What we want to know is the truth for ourselves. It is of little use to study other people's thoughts. They are all right for a time, when we need the inspiration of those who have walked the path, but when we become conscious, when we know ourselves,

we will draw our knowledge from the universal energy for ourselves.



Did you ever hear anyone say: "Oh, how I wish I could go back with my present experience a few years and live my life over; wouldn't I do great things?" Why not commence now and take advantage of that experience? It is never too late to attract the constructive forces and do great things. The fact is, it takes great souls to do great things, and great souls have no time for regrets or griefs. They do their work in the ever-present now, with no thought of personality or ambition, and no thought of the passing moments.

It is just as well to free ourselves from old Father Time. When we think too much about him, and allow him to come too close to us, he places the prints of his fingers upon our faces, and blows his white breath upon our hair. He loves to remind us that we have been here a long time and have placed ourselves in his power. It is all a delusion of the mind. We are only in his power when we think we are. When we live in the truth of the ever-present now, we are free, and nothing so delusive as the imprint of time can affect us.

It is a beautiful thing to remain a long time upon this planet. There is much to be done here—so much that is beautiful to experience. Life is so delightful when you live because you love to live, and work for the sake of the service you are able to render the world. Then comes the consciousness of the youth of the spirit manifesting in the body, instead of the disintegration called age.

No man can serve two masters. The master truth demands all. It demands that we give up the delusions of the self and cultivate the true self. It demands that we have faith in ourselves—recognize our own greatness—and at the same time recognize that we are one with all, no greater than every other one with ourselves. We are to increase our capacity by thinking positive thoughts, not only about ourselves, but about everyone else. Then we shall grow and express ourselves in conscious strength.

It is the true self which is mighty. The false self is the one thing to overcome. We shall come into the universal understanding by understanding this true self, and by casting out the self which does not belong, for selfishness is the greatest barrier in the way of all progress. It has no place in the life of the growing soul.

Look within and find your own strength. Let no

one delude you into thinking he has any more power than you have or any more claim upon truth. Touch the universal mind for yourself, and know that you have the power within yourself to do and to have anything and everything your true nature demands. Truth is absolutely free. It is only necessary that we become conscious of the things which are so abundantly provided for us. Then we can take possession of all that is required to make life free and joyous. Truth is beautiful, and all the gifts of truth are beautiful, and so free if we will only take what is really our own.

It is time now to come into our birthright. It is time to act understandingly. Life is too real, too great for us to lightly pass over its experiences. We cannot ignore facts, and the fact is that every man must choose his own path in life, and if he would walk upright and in the spirit of truth, he must understand the Divine in himself and come into the love-vibrations of the universe of which he is the microcosm.

Spirit is absolute over all things. When we are in harmony with the spirit, we are beyond the plane of doubt and fear. We come into the understanding of faith. That pure, sweet faith which is the foundation and strength of all truly great minds.

THE ESSENCE

*JUST A LITTLE CHILD.*

O, let me keep the child-heart,  
So long as I may stay.  
Let there be youth within my soul,  
Although my hair is gray.  
I'd be as trustful as of old,  
As happy and as free;  
And as a little one I'd come  
Unto my Father's knee.

I'd keep my mind as open,  
My heart as undefiled,  
My thought as pure, my hope as high  
As when a little child.  
I'd keep the faith, the sweetness  
And eagerness of youth,  
A soul as willing to receive,  
As hungry for the truth.

I'd keep upon my spirit  
The freshness of the dew;  
And every morn should bring to me  
Some revelation new.  
I'd thrill as in the old days  
To listen to the birds.

## THE ESSENCE

The robin's song at dawn should stir  
A chord too deep for words.

I'd keep the inspiration  
I knew when I was young,  
The songs I heard within my soul  
That never have been sung.  
The sunshine on the meadows  
Should charm me as of old,  
With summer gleams along my dreams  
That never can be told.

I'd miss the hardened feeling  
That comes in later life,  
And with the childlike innocence  
I'd keep my spirit rife.  
I'd hold the equal bearing  
I had for others then,  
And childhood's gift to see but good  
Within my fellow men.

The child-heart is the poet.  
With wide and happy eyes  
It looks on beauty. All the earth  
It greets with glad surprise.  
The child-heart is the prophet.



THE ESSENCE

Beyond the Future's gates  
It sees the wonder and the hope  
Within the time that waits.

The child-heart is the mystic,  
For there are nameless gleams  
From out some world beyond the sense  
That flash along its dreams.  
The child-heart is immortal.  
A deathless heritage  
It leaves of love and life and light  
Within the shell of age.

So let us keep the child-heart,  
To make the world seem bright,  
To cheer the way and every day  
To fill with new delight.  
And when at last beam on me  
My Father's features mild,  
In truthfulness I'd look to Him  
Just as a little child.

J. A. E.



## SPECULATIVE PESSIMISM.

A certain sort of dilettante calamity howling has become fashionable. In intellectual haberdashery rose color is no longer so popular as gray and black. People affect to believe that the world is going on a comfortable jog toward perdition and that they might as well keep up with the procession, you know.

Along with this, the iconoclastic knocker is also in vogue. The hymns our fathers loved are called doggerel. The sweet and moral poetry of Longfellow and others of the same school is pronounced suitable only for children. William Tell is a myth, Homer never existed and Shakespeare was probably written by somebody else. According to these complacent critics, Milton was somewhat highfaluten, Luther and Wesley made a great amount of fuss over nothing and Washington was very much overrated. By the time these hammerers are through with it, ancient heroism will look like six badly worn nickels. The modern critic cannot understand martyrdom. In fact nothing is quite worth while that has not the dollar mark blown in the bottle.

A mild sort of skepticism is also quite the thing. To believe in the Bible is out of date. The miracles are discredited. According to the drawing-room

philosopher, Christ is probably a myth, and even if he lived he was only a dreamer who was not at all up to this enlightened age. If religion is indulged, it is only as a sort of business fad. Church is a Sunday club in which to show dresses, listen to semi-operatic music and hear short lectures which do not get too close to the pet sins of the pew holders.

In keeping with these ideas go certain easy notions of morality. Marriage is a matter of business and matrimonial partners can be changed to suit the convenience or whim of the contracting parties. In the accommodating opinions of the day all these are accepted as a matter of course. Life is not looked on seriously, but the world is regarded as a sort of immense pleasure resort. Nothing is much worth the while unless it furnishes a sensation.

What wonder that in such a soil the noxious weed of pessimism grows and flourishes? The present social hot-house conditions are peculiarly adapted to its cultivation. Its roots go deep into the vices and its leaves draw sustenance from the poisons in the atmosphere. It thrives best in luxurious surroundings. It is not a natural plant. In an air of plain living and high thinking it languishes and dies. Spirituality blights it and before a noble and earnest purpose it withers to the ground. A real religion, a wholesome

truth, a lofty ideal, these beget optimism. Pessimism is only another manifestation of the materialism of the age. No soul that really believes in God can be pessimistic. Only that mind is without lasting hope which cannot look beyond the things of the sense.

This attitude of thought claims to be founded on modern science. But it only takes the half-truths of science and does not look beneath to discern the fuller meaning. It is in a superficial vein. It is the doctrine of negation.

Science is optimistic. It teaches evolution, which is the law of unfoldment, growth, development, progress; which is the prophecy of more perfect life; which ever points toward better things. Science relates to the physical, but is full of suggestions of a world that is not physical. In dealing with life, it ever indicates the undiscovered forces behind life. In treating of mind it ever treads on the borderland of the wondrous and mysterious realm of the soul.

Modern pessimism is a mental mania which will pass away with the spiritual stagnation that gave it birth. It is a fad that only exists because of the absence of sincere and earnest purpose. It is the philosophy of the heathen and stifling rooms, not of the open air and sunlight. It goes with late suppers and all-night balls, not with moral living and wholesome

work. It sees only the evil, not the good that lurks behind. It sees the relative, not the ultimate. It is the doctrine of despair, the manifestation of intellectual ennui; and its logical end is suicide.

The thing to dispel it is to be enthusiastic—which, by the way, means God-filled. The existence of one earnest, high-minded, soul-inspired human character is enough to refute the arguments of all the pessimists that ever lived.

Heroism and nobility are real. Despite the wails of the weaklings and the denials of the doubters, these qualities existed in the past and will exist in the future. They grow in the heart of the optimist as naturally as the flowers in the rain and sunlight.

J. A. E.



The mind unenlightened by Divine Mind can see little beauty and order in this world; the spiritualized or sane and orderly mind is filled with beauty and order, and hence sees the glorious world and the universe with its perfect sequence of cause and effect. "Where the materialist sees nothing but endless death, the mystic sees pulsating and eternal life." Beauty is everywhere! "God is in His universal!"—*Magazine of Mysteries.*

## GREAT EXPECTATIONS.

One lovely September day, not so very long ago, a dear friend of mine and I were driving through the parks of one of our beautiful western cities with the Swami Abhodenanda. Suddenly my friend turned to the Swami and asked him this question: "Swami, what do you do with terrible disappointments?" The serene Swami, looking as though he never had an emotion in his life, calmly replied: "You should never have any expectations." Yes, but having had great expectations, having builded for years on a gigantic hope which almost amounted to faith, you find that your hopes are crushed and your work of years seems a horrid blank, what shall you do with the forces which you have generated in your mind and the consequent unreal conditions which you find surrounding you, and which must be mastered?

How often have I thought of that scene! The woman suffering from a disappointment which seemed the unjust culmination of years of effort, and which threatened to engulf the remainder of her life and force, and the sweet, dark face of the teacher as he endeavored to show her through eyes of faith the way, the truth and the life.

"Have no ambition, yet live and work as though you



were full of ambition." Did the Swami say that or did it reverberate from out the universal thought? Never mind. It matters not where or from whom it comes. It is truth. You know from within. Learn by the things which you have lived and suffered that you can depend on no person and no thing outside of yourself.

We seem to live in expectation. It is our *future* work we are counting on, and we so forget to-day that we weaken the whole future work. Hope is of the future—a beautiful image—but Faith is the substance, the living, constructive substance of to-day. Nourish it with all the force you can bring to it to-day, and the present of to-morrow will be strong, vital result instead of disappointment.

The great mass of people never touch the real reason for living. They seem to think the chief object of existence is to have a good time, whatever that means. They are usually waiting for something to come in the future, and so they underestimate true value of present profound things. Thus most lives lack the tone which comes from the appreciation and use of daily opportunity. There never was a time of such present opportunity. The law is *build now*. Develop from within the powers of the soul. Expect nothing, but live and

work as though you expect everything and everything must come.

"He who loses his life gains it."

G. M. B.



### APPEARANCES.

WRITTEN FOR THE ESSENE

BY FRANK NEWLAND DODD, M. D.

Material conditions are given the names mortal evil, non-intelligent, non-existent, dead matter, etc., etc.

This is very well for words, but to you and me, what do they mean? They have some place in the great plan, but mere calling them names does not solve it for us.

It is perfectly plain that there is nothing in the material world on which to base our lives. All the universe is shifting and changing. We cannot even base our lives upon the noblest lives around us, for everyone that comes into our life must go. Even if friends and lovers, husbands and wives, grow closer to our hearts, there comes a time when the ties are torn out of their hearts and ours.

What, then, is the meaning of life, and where in our despair shall we rest?

If we solve the great riddle of material or visible things, we would have the key that would carry us over the threshold of appearances into the realm of reality, into the chamber of eternal peace and omnipotent power.

If we should surround a globe of light with mirrors we could see hundreds of thousands of globes, seemingly as far as the eye could reach it would be reflected back and forth, growing more and more complex.

If the mirrors were irregular in shape, the reflections would appear distorted. If the mirrors were removed or broken it would have no effect on the globe. If the globe was broken, all the images would disappear.

What, then, is the material world but the mirrors reflecting the ONE reality.

Every molecule in a human body, animal, plant, rock, grain of sand, drop of water, or atom of existence, reflects something of the ONE REALITY.

No two of these living mirrors are alike, and no two are at the same angle of observation. No two people, animals, plants, or atoms even, reflect the same.

The whole material world, and all personalities, are then the reflection and not the REALITY. They are good because they reflect the ONE. He who follows reflections, who mistakes the reflection for the reality,

is certain to feel that he is in a world of uncertainty and delusion. He will in time realize that he has builded upon that which is as nothing.

Yet it is all good; but the part is not greater than the whole.

There comes a time when the soul cries out to know God, and desires to feel and know that which is real, eternal.

God, Spiritual Being, is omnipresent, is Presence. All there is dwells in every atom of the universe. The ONE PRESENCE is the same in the atom or sand or animal or man. The expression differs with the recognition, the mirror.

Man can only feel the God, the Reality, within himself as the presence; but this presence that is within is reflected unto an infinite panorama of solar systems, motion and life, so that he may become conscious of the greatness, grandeur, sublimity, intelligence and love of that which he could otherwise only know as presence.

What, then, is the way? How are you and I to live? What do these principles and truths mean to us now?

The first great lesson would be, let no reflection appear to you greater than the REALITY.

Realize that every incident or condition that is reflected into your life belongs to you, and is a re-

flection of your own peculiar consciousness or mirror—that there is no high nor low. There is but the ONE, and you cannot become conscious of that ONE until you can see the God of Presence in every reflection.

As you realize, the universe is reflecting only that which is within yourself.



### PRAYER.

WRITTEN FOR THE ESSENE

BY VICTOR E. SOUTHWORTH.

Why should I pray,  
Since all things far and near  
But answer to my spirit's inmost need?

Why should I ask for more,  
When all of life but waits to fill me with its wealth  
of love and light?

I cannot find the need  
Life does not satisfy.  
I hold my open heart up to the sun,  
And as each globe of dew reflects the light,  
So is my life made full and radiant.

Why should I make appeal for help from some far  
source,

Since life is mine, since I am one with Him,  
Who is the life?

I ask not any gift or grace  
Save what already crowns the passing day.

I bring my joy, my gratitude, my love;  
I enter into life fearless and confident,  
I cleanse myself from every hateful thought,  
I make my daily toil a song of praise,  
I love the earth and feel its very life is part of me.

My only prayer is gladness that I live,  
That it is mine to share with all  
The light and love that floods the universe.  
My life shall be more than my words can tell—  
Gladness and gratitude and love.



It has taken thousands of years to bring human institutions to their present state. Those who would wipe out all these ages of labor and reduce everything to original chaos are enemies of mankind.



## THE GENTLE LIFE.

WRITTEN FOR THE ESSENE

BY EMMELINE T. RUNDEL.

I cannot tell when first these words came to me, with all their beautiful meaning, but of late they have been with me so constantly I want to give unto you, dear hearts, wherever you are, their message as it speaks to me.

The Gentle Life! We all have in our memories the sweet pictures of those who have touched our lives so strongly and still so gently. And herein lies the secret—gentleness and strength. To be gentle does not mean to be weak; indeed, it seems to me that from its very nature the gentle life may be the strongest life. Conserved force—not energy frittered away on this and that little circumstance—is what makes strength. Every moment of life is an important moment, and it is well that we have at our command all the strength we need; but how much sweeter and better if we can gently use that strength.

To me there can be no thought of the Christ without His gentleness. In all His life, no matter what his trial, the gentleness of His spirit is ever manifest. Oh, if we might only see the beauty, the sublimity,

the majesty of that within us like unto the Christ—our inner selves, if you wish to speak of it thus—we might be gentle always. We are all sweet and beautiful at times, but it is the continuance of these moments upon the very mountain tops when we are alone with God that all of us want. We are not satisfied with the beauties of yesterday. We want fresh beauties and glory added unto glory; and all this cannot come without gentleness.

Oh, this beautiful opportunity of living! The grandeur of soul-development! The rooting out of that which does not make for peace! The implanting of that which makes earth heavenly and all life beautiful, so that we may say with the poet:

*"For the world is full of roses, and the roses full of dew,  
And the dew is full of heavenly love that drips for me and you."*

Then, too, gentleness is the expression of the peace of the soul. If we could but fully realize that from one's heart are all the issues of life, how diligently would we watch and care for our innermost thoughts. No other work would appeal to us so strongly as the beautifying of the soul; but here and now we give our time and attention to less important things

and take little time for the essentials. Rest assured, with the making holy of our inner thoughts every other problem will be solved. Know the beauty of your own dear selves and all the strength that is within you this very moment, then keep that knowledge before you forever, and all life will come to you with different meaning. If the struggles have been hard, there will come to you the assurance: "I can do all things through the Christ which strengthens me." If there have been misunderstandings, it will not matter; the Universal Mind understands, and your soul is at peace. No matter what vacancy there may have seemed to be in your life, it is all right now. You know you are one with all and that is the most beautiful, the most holy and the most enduring—and really this is all that we need make our concern. Then, as natural as the perfume from a flower, will the gentleness of spirit be manifest—gentleness born of Divine love and sympathy.



A genius is said to be a man who says something that everybody else had thought but failed to express. On this basis, John Dillon, the Irish member of parliament, who called Joseph Chamberlain a "liar" is certainly a genius.

*A PICTURE FROM LIFE.*

Many years ago there lived a reformer. He loved humanity and his heart was full of sorrow for the poor. He had rosy dreams of the future of the world. He saw a vision of equality and brotherhood, an altruistic commonwealth. He thought the millennium only a little way ahead and pictured the human race stripped of its baser passions and glorified by the divinity within.

All these, however, were the dreams of a young man. Fired with a noble resolve, he dedicated his life to the work of making the world better. He vowed that he would labor, so long as he should live, to bring about the ideal state he had pictured. So with all the enthusiasm of youth he went about his work. Wherever he saw a wrong he resolved to overthrow it. He would preach the gospel of Love and show the true mission of the Christ. He would plead the cause of those who toil. He would lift the downtrodden. He would help lighten the burdens of the poor. He would make his life a labor of love to teach the brotherhood of man.

This, as I said, was when he was young, before the currents of his dreams had been muddied by the impurities of the world. So he went into the fight. But he was poor. He found the world little ready for his dreams. Every one was intent on selfish ends and had

no time for utopian visions. Occasionally a rare and unselfish soul would bid the reformer Godspeed, but for the most part he met only indifference, ill-concealed sneers and pity. But he toiled on. He taught his doctrines and sang his songs. He threw himself into the currents of the world's movements and took the tools at his hand. He learned much that saddened him, but he never lost his ideals and he never ceased to strive toward their fulfillment.

There was much to discourage and dishearten, but he would not give up. He identified himself with humanitarian causes, helping those that seemed to offer the most speedy results. He pictured the golden age ahead, but he saw that the world was moving toward his goal slowly, O so slowly. But he was not discouraged. If he could not go at a bound, he would advance step by step. If the world would not heed him, he would still teach the truth and trust to time.

But the world was full of strife and contention. It had no time for ideals. He would help the toiling poor, but he found they had little conception of the doctrines of love he taught. They were struggling with their employers for petty advantages. Many were indifferent. Some scoffed at the idea of equality. Others sold their suffrage. Only a few were ready to listen to the new gospel.

He had dreamed of an industrial democracy. But he found the world divided into classes. The rich were striving to become richer and were building a barrier of caste between themselves and the poor. And the members of this, the ruling class of the world, wherever they deigned to notice him at all, frowned at his teachings, and called them "anarchy" and "socialism."

The church, from which he had hoped so much, looked coldly on him. The ideal state could come in another world, not in this. The poor should be contented. They should attend the church, even though it seemed allied with their oppressors; and they should be submissive to authority.

Such were a few of the obstacles met. But the reformer toiled on. He was not discouraged—he would not be discouraged. He would not grow embittered. He would keep the sweetness and the dream. He was still poor and in time others depended on him. He must labor in those ways that he could to support the ones he loved. But he still taught the truths and sang the songs of a better day. He was yet without fame, but he cared not for that—only if he could teach the new gospel and the world would listen!

At last he died. At the last he was not disheartened or discouraged. He was still unknown and still poor, but he had kept true to his ideals. He had retained the



sweetness and the dream. His heart was yet warm with the love for humanity. He had been loyal to the visions of his youth. The world mourned not for him, when he had gone. It built no costly monuments in his memory. He was only a soldier fallen in the cause of Truth.

But the Truth marched on to conquer the world.

J. A. E.



#### PHILOSOPHY OF MRS. WIGGS.

"Well, I guess I ain't the best by a long sight, but I may be the happiest. An' I got cause to be: Four of the smartest children that ever lived, a nice house, fair to middlin' health when I ain't got the rheumatiz, and folks always goin' clean out of the way to be good to me. Ain't that 'nough to make a person happy? I'll be fifty years old on the Fourth of July, but I hold there ain't no use in dyin' 'fore yer time. Lots of folks is walkin' 'round jes' as dead as they'll ever be. I believe in gettin' as much good outen life as you kin—not that I ever set out to look fer happiness; seems like the folks that does that never finds it. I jes do the best I kin where the good Lord put me at, an' it looks like I got a happy feelin' in me 'most all the time."

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