

A Personal Word

Dear Friend:—

This booklet, contains a very important message, and prefacing the contents of this booklet, I wish to give my personal message.

We are all reaching out eagerly for that which concerns us all: Progress. We are all hoping to better ourselves spiritually, so that we may understand more thoroughly the conditions under which we work, and the brighter and happier conditions toward which we wish to progress.

God gave each of us brains—not to boast about—not to keep idle—not to use only to a certain point of self-gratification—but to EXERCISE.

Our brains are but material organs for our spirits—screens for our real thoughts. Study makes those brains better instruments.

This message pertains to study—to making the best out of ourselves **here and now**.

Very sincerely yours,

Mrs Cecil M Cook

Pastor and Medium,
The Wm. T. Stead Memorial Center

A COURSE OF HOME STUDY OF SPIRITUAL TRUTH

The human mind is not unlike a motor. It contains a great deal of power, but that power must be set into operation; it must be applied.

Everybody thinks continuously, because thought is a property of the spirit. But only when people think consecutive thoughts along a definite line, do they become learned and proficient.

Each mind has the power to think. That is God-given. But often it is necessary to set the mind to thinking along the right line. **Self-starter** thoughts are needed.

Education consists of the results of these self-starter thoughts.

If a motorist goes touring, he is soon in strange communities, and he must refer to his guide-book, which tells him about the signs that will keep him on the correct roads. As one after another of these signs appears, the motorist knows that he is traveling the right route.

At times, there are cross-roads, and then the guide-book must be consulted carefully. Perhaps the description reads like this:

"86.5. Three roads meet. Take one to extreme right, follow telephone poles painted white."

And so, in thinking, one arrives at cross-roads, and if the wrong road is taken, the wrong ideas result.

The motorist sets his speedometer at the starting point, and watches his speedometer readings as well as his guide-book. But at times, he must change his speedometer, because it does not read precisely according to directions. All speedometers do not register just the same number of miles and tenths of miles.

All experiences are not exactly the same, and if one depended on one's own experi-

ences, then one's line of thought would be at variance with the thought of others interested in the same thing.

The motorist has a guide-book, because others have gone that way before. They have studied the routes. They wrote down that which they have observed—and while the motorist may find that his speedometer readings vary at times with the printed instructions, at the end of the journey, he has arrived at the place which he set out to reach.

This is analogous with any study. The teachers say things at times that the students do not understand, or that are seemingly contrary to the experience of the students. But when the semester is ended, the pupils find that they have progressed very far toward the goal which they sought to reach.

In a study of spiritual truth, the student may not at all times accord in his views with those of the teachers—forgetting that the teachers have been giving the pupil “mental self-starters” to help him to do his own thinking, and arrive at the possession of knowledge not according to a set pattern, but according to that pupil's own experience and conception of that which he experiences. To all persons, life is not the same. We regard life as we live it. But back of all life there are certain fundamental truths, which we must possess in common if we are to exercise our own thought-powers to their fullest.

With this introduction—with the understanding that all that is said in this booklet is intended as a real **self-help** and not a dogmatic ruling—we shall introduce our Home Study of Spiritual Truth.

THE STEAD CENTER ORIENTAL CLASS

Those in spirit refer to their teachers as "orientals." This is a distinguishing title that means teachers; or, more specifically, higher teachers. Earth-life was more advanced for ages in the orient than in other parts of the world. The older spirits had the beginning of their earth-careers in the orient, and the term "oriental" therefore signifies those teachers who have had the longest earth-experience; who have had more reincarnations and certainly more progressive reincarnations than the majority of mortals.

Some years ago the Oriental Class was organized at the Stead Center, and at each class (held once a month), several Teachers came in and gave instructions in the Law of Life. These teachings were taken down in shorthand, and these shorthand notes were transcribed. These transcripts formed the foundation for "God's World."

For some months, the Oriental Classes were discontinued, but after the publication of "God's World" was well under way, many of the men and women who had purchased that book asked us if we could not outline some form of home study for them, so as to help them get the greatest value out of the Teachings in that text-book.

We recognize the fact that in all schools not only are there text-books, but there are teachers. The instructors help the students to understand the truths set forth in the text-books—and with these **self-starter helps** the pupils get their own individual value out of their studies.

The experiences of different people are different. One person succeeds in a certain city, and another fails. One loves that city and the other detests it. One man experiences satisfaction in dealing with another, and a third man finds only dissat-

isfaction in dealing with the same person. To the first man, the second is the soul of honor; to the third man, the second one is a terrible example of dishonor.

Out of our experiences and our studies (which are also experiences), we extract the good **which we need**. We do not all see the same meaning of the lesson, but we all grasp the same fundamental purpose. Each is helped accordingly.

In our oriental lessons, we did not all see the same lesson. Some members of our class saw the lesson of happiness; others the lesson of success; still others the lesson of patience. According to our needs and our development, we saw that which we needed most—but all of us secured the same lessons at the same time.

Our President, Mr. Lloyd Kenyon Jones, with his lifetime of experience as a writer, saw how these lessons could be compiled and given to the world in text-book form.

And thus, in any of these oriental lessons, each one must see according to his own needs and development—but while one point appeals most to one, and another point appeals most to another, all grasp these helpful truths because they have the same foundation of truth.

One hundred young men might study medicine, and all become physicians. Within a few years, one excels in one special branch and another in a different branch of specialization—and yet, all learned from the same instructors and the same books. Each applied that which he had learned according to his understanding, experience and environments.

A NEW ORIENTAL CLASS

So persistent became the requests for a Course of Home Study from persons who had purchased "God's World" that our Pastor and Medium, Mrs. Cecil M. Cook, wrote to several hundred of these men and women, who had now become real friends of The William T. Stead Memorial Center, and explained to them about our Oriental Classes. She suggested to them that, if a sufficient number were interested, these classes again would be started, chiefly for the benefit of out-of-town students.

The results were remarkable. They were really surprising. While we had looked for a small percentage to respond favorably, and had suggested a basis of contributions that amounted to one hundred and forty per cent. over those we later found we should really be obliged to ask for, there was a wholesome, spontaneous and heavy response in favor of these lessons.

But, in order to make the new class practicable, it was decided to devote it to these out-of-town members, as we shall explain.

Formerly this oriental class had from twenty-five to thirty members. Surprising as it may seem, it is difficult to get this number of persons together once a month. For one reason or another, a few are absent at each class. And it was necessary to hold the class during a stipulated evening each month—without respect to how our Medium might feel, or what untoward conditions might arise, such as inclement weather. Therefore, there were obstacles that were not overcome easily.

In the receipt of these Higher Teachings, it is manifest that the conditions must be just right. The larger the number present, the greater the likelihood of depressing conditions—such as one person with a headache, another worried over business matters, and so on.

Also, on a stormy evening, the weather conditions are depressing on mortals—and tend to produce more of the positive forces. These retard the finer vibrations through which the loved ones in spirit come to us, and particularly the teachers, whose natural state of being is far removed from our own gross vibrations.

In view of such conditions and circumstances as those which we have named, and others of like character, it is evident that these large classes were very severe on our Medium, Mrs. Cecil M. Cook. It was necessary for the Teachers to draw more heavily upon her to overcome the deterrents in the mortals present. These classes were very fatiguing to her.

The new Oriental Class that has been formed is conducted on a different basis. Only two persons besides the Medium are present: Mr. Jones, our President, and our Secretary, who takes down the Teachings in shorthand.

The purpose of this class is to carry these Teachings to many, and if numerous persons were present, they might ask many irrelevant and personal questions. This would be contrary to the purpose of this class, which is to transmit these Teachings to persons at a distance. It is a case of "the greatest good to the greatest number."

Mrs. Cook might be compared with the telephone system, and the two others with the switchboard operators. In this manner there is an unbroken flow of the Teachings from the Teachers to the out-of-town members, for whose benefit this New Oriental Class is being conducted. And instead of confining this class to one evening a month, it will be held as many times as necessity dictates—a process that would have been out of the question under the original plan.

A NEW LESSON EACH MONTH

Each month a new lesson will be taken down in the seance-room of The William T. Stead Memorial Center. We do not know what each lesson will be until it is given to us. This lesson will be given not only by one Teacher in spirit, but by **a number** of them—each covering that special part which his own experience fits him to teach best.

These lessons will be reproduced, after they are transcribed, in multiple typewriting—occupying about four typewritten pages.

And accompanying the lesson each month, also in multiple typewriting, there will be about an equal number of pages that will point out the connections between the different parts of that lesson and the passages in "God's World." These references will give the paragraph and page numbers to be looked up, and will explain the connections.

This process gives a new usefulness to "God's World:" No longer is the student dependent only on the text-book, but has the **combined value of the text-book and the teachings.**

We see things differently when new light is shed on any subject. Sometimes we disagree because we interpret according to our own understanding. That is why so much dissension has arisen out of the study of the Bible. It is not that the Bible contradicts itself, but that different writers said things according to their own manner of writing, and in harmony with the style of writing of their periods—and that those who read the Bible interpret in harmony with their own understanding. That does not make the Bible less the Book of Truth. It only emphasizes the need of careful study.

The same great truths relating to the Law of Life are in the Bible that we learn in the seance-room. The teachers in spirit use today's language and the teachers of biblical times used the language of their day and time.

Each of us, as we stated in the beginning, can see according to our own understanding—our own experience—our own position in life. And each of us requires some “self-starters,” or we might not receive and recognize the truth as it pertains to our own vision.

And as these new Teachings come each month, they shed light upon the great truths from many different angles. Teachings that mean less to one person may mean more to another. The **push-button** that is pressed in the mind, through one lesson, might not be pressed through another.

Each lesson helps **all** the students, but some lessons help certain individuals more than they were helped by the other lessons. But as all members of the class study the same things, not only is each helped according to his or her own needs, but all are helped by **being drawn nearer to that common point** on which all are agreed.

Many roads may lead to a town, and as each person traverses a different route, he experiences different things—and gets a different view of the city which he approaches. Once in that city, all have experiences and views in common regarding it. That applies to teachings, also.

As we study in common, **we think in common**, while—at the same time—profiting individually according to our own needs. We drink at the same fount, but some are more thirsty than others on different days. The fount is the same—and the fount of knowledge should be sought by all, without respect to personal experience and views.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Perhaps, as you study "God's World," you will say, "I wish I could ask for an explanation of this particular point." You would like to ask a question that has been raised by a difference between your previous understanding of something, and the statement regarding that point in "God's World." You might wish to know how "God's World" harmonizes with different verses in the Bible.

We receive many questions, from many different angles of vision, and all of these merit answering. That is one of the basic purposes of these lessons.

In order to simplify the compilation of these questions, and the weeding out of duplicates, we supply sheets of paper, letter-head size, ruled into five equal sections. Each month each member of this class is privileged to ask ten questions, which must be written in the spaces on these sheets, which we furnish. Questions answered during the current month's lesson must be in our hands by the fifteenth of the preceding month. If they arrive later, they are cared for the following month.

These questions and answers necessarily will grow in number as time passes and more members are enrolled. YOU HAVE THE BENEFIT NOT ONLY OF READING THE ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS THAT YOU HAVE ASKED, BUT THE QUESTIONS OF OTHERS AND THE ANSWERS TO THOSE QUESTIONS.

If you wish to ask less than ten questions a month, that is all right, but you are limited to ten questions during any one month.

These Questions and Answers will be printed, and the page sizes will be the same as the pages of the lessons—all letter-head size. There will be many pages of Questions and Answers as time passes and the class membership increases.

SELF-EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

At the end of each month's Questions and Answers, there will be a number of Self-Examination questions. The paragraph and page references, showing where the answers may be found in "God's World," will be printed after each question. The student should first try to answer the question before looking up the references in "God's World." This also will help find new questions to ask the next month.

The Lessons are self-starters, and the Questions and Answers are self-starters, and the Self-Examination Questions and References are push-buttons that set your mind into motion, helping you to think along the most helpful lines.

PREPARED FOR A PERMANENT BINDER

The Lessons and the Questions and Answers, and all other sheets included in each month's lessons, will be perforated for a loose-leaf binder.

Each month the date will be printed at the top of each page, and there will be serial numbers, so as to help one keep all these papers in sequential order.

We will supply loose-leaf binders at cost price where they can not be secured at a stationery store.

Remembering that, as the class grows, the volume of the Questions and Answers must also increase, it is plain to see that these lessons will be most helpful, and will form not only the foundation for deep study, but a source of most interesting reading. They will never grow old. They will remain as sources of continuous inspiration and help. They will be comforters in times of trouble—and real helpers at all times.

MANY BEAUTIFUL HELPS FOR ALL STUDENTS

It is immaterial what commands our energies; we can all be helped by a broader and better understanding of the Truth.

The more we work in harmony with the great Law of Life, the more we should succeed materially. There is no sin in material progress that is clean and honorable. Nor are there many limitations to material gains that are in harmony with natural law.

The person who knows more about the great basic Law of Life should be a **healthier and happier** person.

Truly, the benefits are not all hereafter. Some of them must be **here and now**, or of what practical value are our studies? **This earth-plane** is as much a part of God's World as the spirit-world—and natural law pertains to us in the flesh **the same** as to our loved ones in spirit.

Ignorance is not always lack of "book-learning," but it is a want of clearer and brighter understanding. **As we know better, we do better.**

Into this class are coming men and women in all walks of life—men and women who have passed through a vast variety of experiences. But as they study the Great Truths in common, they help themselves accordingly.

So warm a welcome did the idea of this class receive at the hands of the readers of "God's World" we required no other indication of how much these Lessons are needed.

We feel that this class must pay its way, because this organization is not for personal profit, and manifestly no part of our work could be continued for long at a loss.

We wish to reach everybody who needs help, and do so in a co-operative manner.

YOU BECOME AN ASSOCIATE MEMBER

In addition to securing the Lessons, as we have described them, for a period of one year (meaning twelve monthly lessons), including the Teachings, and the letter explaining the connection between the Teachings and "God's World," and the Questions and Answers, and the Self-Examination, you will also receive an Associate Membership in The William T. Stead Memorial Center, as provided for by our By-Laws.

We feel that the greater the harmony that can be produced, the greater the good which will be received.

If you feel that you are one of a large number interested in the same studies, you should receive more benefit from the pursuit of those studies. That is **the strength of unity.**

The world hungers and thirsts for greater knowledge—and there must be food and drink to satisfy this desire.

The world wishes to realize more fully that the loved ones who have passed out of the flesh are as near and as dear as ever, and closer harmony with this great truth will bring that realization.

As we learn, we can reach out and help those who grope in the darkness. As we help others, we ourselves are helped proportionately.

Contemplate these truths, and you will read the accompanying letter with a new understanding—and will arrive at your decision with greater anticipation of the real benefits that will follow your sincere and continued study. Unless we set out to study over a period sufficiently long to permit us to learn, we can not expect to learn. If certain prolonged study is necessary in medicine and law, why should less study be sufficient in the **greatest of all knowledge**—that which pertains to **Life?**

AN EARLY RESPONSE IS REQUESTED

In this brief presentation of facts, we have given you merely a condensed conception of the value of this study. Your own desire to progress must shape your answer.

Often, only those benefits which come through a struggle, or through deprivation, help us. Without the effort, how can we say that truly we wish a thing?

We shall be glad to have you study with us. We shall be pleased to bring you every possible benefit. We believe that the world is searching more and more earnestly for the Truth, and that as those who wish the Truth **band themselves together**, they help themselves and the world most.

We ask you to read the accompanying letter, and let us hear from you as soon as possible.

The decision is yours, and also the **benefit** is yours.

If we do many things for our bodies, let us do a few things for our **souls**. Our bodies we shall have but a short while, but **our souls will be ours forever**.

If our bodies are worth so much to us now, how about our spirituality—our **never-ending** existence?

TODAY we decide much that relates to our progress later. The days count, and the effort counts.

How do **you** decide?

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