

FROM SELFISHNESS TO SELFHOOD (aka: SELF-FULLNESS)

IN proportion as we become self-centred by a recognition of the great importance of the "I," we come under the principle of attraction where our own comes to us. What is our own? Everything that we desire or aspire to in the process of true advancement. We often think we desire things that we do not really desire. What we do truly desire is happiness. Happiness is the ultimate of our every aspiration; it is the constant craving of the spirit of growth within us; it is the reaching out of the spirit of growth for a better recognition of its own power.

Suppose we desire that someone may die, who stands between us and an inheritance. This intermediate desire has nothing to do with the spirit of life within us; this spirit simply points to happiness; it does not suggest methods for attaining it; this suggestion comes from the intelligence of the person, and is liable to make mistakes—does often make mistakes—and has no other way of learning how to conform itself to the Principle of Attraction that holds the universe together than by making mistakes.

The true desire, that is always pushing its way into the observation of the individual, is really the very essence of love, always seeking greater expression and always aggregating to itself greater power.

Understanding at last that desire is the infusing spirit in man, it is plain to see that it is of greater importance than we ever before imagined, and that, instead of attempting to crush it out of our organisations, where it is really the breath of our lives, we must learn to direct it properly.

I wish to emphasise this point of holding for self. I wish to do so because the race has been filled full of false ideas regarding the virtue of self-abnegation.

Self-abnegation, or self-denial, is the most deadly and paralysing mistake ever made. It is the letting go of one's hold on the Life Principle, abandoning all one has gained in his previous growth through the ages, and drifting backward, as nearly as one can do so, into nothingness; and every bit of undue or unconsidered concession to the opinions of others partakes of the nature of self-abnegation, and should be promptly stopped. A man should ask himself if he has not as much right to his selfhood as another, and when he answers this question affirmatively, as he cannot help doing, then he should stand for himself boldly and manfully.

It may at first thought seem that men do, even now, hold for themselves with great firmness, but this is not so. The very opposite is so marked among the people that Emerson speaks of society as "a mush of concession." There is so little of true self-holding in the world that, where one meets a really individualised man or woman, it is an event never to be forgotten.

The opinion of the world is worthless. The majority of the people have no opinions of their own, but have simply accepted those that have been thrust upon them. In this way we are saddled with the beliefs of men ages dead, whose opportunity of knowing truth was a thousand times inferior to our own. Is it any wonder that such utterly negative creatures die? They ought to die. Life and its tremendous mission, involving such thought and such effort as they have never imagined, are not for them. The grappling hook of divine purpose passes through them as if they were made of jelly. They afford not the slightest obstruction to it. It is all self-abnegation with them, though partly of an unconscious character.

Unconscious self-abnegation, or the lack of intelligent self-assertion, is the bane of humanity at this time.

The belief in self-abnegation comes from the awakening intelligence that, in looking back, sees only the horrors of animal selfishness, and does not look forward to where this same selfishness is modified by justice, and through this modification can become the very essence of true manhood and womanhood.

The child is not polite. It grabs its toys and holds them firmly away from the little friend who has come to visit it. Later on it will value the happiness of its little friend more than it values the toys, and then it will give them up gladly. Nor will this giving be in the spirit of self-abnegation. It will be because the giving yields more happiness to self than the withholding. Self is forever at the bottom of all things, as it should be, for self is the individual centre, and the change from selfishness to selfhood, which is selfishness lifted to a higher plane, will come through a growing infusion of the love principle in the race—an infusion that makes the happiness of others our dearest happiness.

All of this comes under the head of evolution, and there is no logical interpretation of humanity except by the evolutionary theory; but even the most timid sticklers for Biblical authority need not be afraid of it. Darwin never taught the evolutionary theory half so strongly as the Bible teaches it.

I have now shown the selfishness of the animal as changed to selfhood in the man, by man's constantly increasing recognition of the Principle of Attraction within him. It must be remembered that this Principle of

Attraction, in its true essence, is pure love. As he recognises more of the Principle of Attraction, his power to love increases. Love always comes from a more thorough recognition of the infusing Life Principle, and will keep on increasing as this recognition keeps on growing. All this growth of the recognition of the Principle of Attraction is tending in the direction of universal brotherhood, which means a state of the sweetest harmony among the people, a condition of high and mighty and living restfulness, in which the seeds of new faculties, now lying dormant in the human brain, will take root and grow into undreamed power.

As all our past unconscious growing has been from the basis of self, so will our future growing be from the same basis, for there is no other basis of growth.

Harmony, universal intelligence, is not achieved by individual concession or self-abnegation, but by the assertion of self under the influence of the evergrowing idea that he who asserts self asserts the divinest of all possible power in humanity. To deny self is to deny this power in humanity, and thus to make as nothing—so far as such a thing is possible the work of organisation—that work which men have called the creation. Therefore, I say, stand by self, for in so doing you are standing for the Life Principle; you are standing for just as much of the Life Principle as you can recognise; and by holding firmly to this position, you will recognise more, until it will fill you and overflow in one broad and deep stream of life, that will embrace every living soul. And this will be your true self flowing forth. The same self that flowed forth in the animal in getting the most good will, by reason of your increased intelligence, now flow forth in *doing* the most good; but the doing shall also be the getting.

And thus the competitive systems of business, which are all animal in their origin, and all aim at getting the most good, are even now in process of becoming emulative systems, wherein each will try to excel the other in doing the most good.

On its own plane, competition is right. It is the unchecked development of individuality, and individuality is the one jewel above all price. When competition has ripened into emulation, heaven will be here, and that, too, without one particle of concession from any soul.

Concession, self-denial, self-abnegation, is ruinous. It is the denial of our own individuality; it is the direct road to nothingness; it is the resignation of that which alone makes the man or gives him, as a factor of any worth, to the world. An ignorant man, standing firmly on his selfhood, uneducated as yet in a true sense of justice, may be a very disagreeable member of society; but his position denotes strength, and there is hope of his learning; but the man who has entirely dropped down from the claims of self, who has resigned his individuality—who is he? A mere vagabond—listless, hopeless—a drifting scum, awaiting removal from human sight.

I have made the foregoing points with a purpose, and a strong purpose. The person who is afraid to stand for himself and to declare himself will always be looked upon as weak.

Looking within, you may perceive the self there, and you may conclude that it is a very selfish thing, a thing to be thrown overboard, while on bended knees you beg for a nobler self. This nobler self you are begging for is the very self you are misjudging. There is nothing the matter with you, except that your dull intelligence fails to recognise this beautiful vitality which is individualised within you. This fact explains why all religions are made to hang on the one word "believe," and why Jesus said, "When you pray, believe

that you receive, and you shall have"—showing that all truth is within, and that all a man has to do is to believe it.

Prayer is merely desire, or aspiration. We are asking or praying with every breath we draw. "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, unuttered or expressed." It is a tentacle of the Life Principle within us going out in search of what it wants. And prayer is answered from within.

I am now treating of the growth of the man, and not of the conditions he shall inaugurate afterwards. A man once builded in the knowledge of himself and of the power within him, conditions then build themselves about him; conditions become responsive to his own strength, even as they are now responsive to his own weakness.

To build institutions is not the first thing to be thought of. Institutions will seem to build themselves, after true men and women are built, and all by a natural law—the Principle of Attraction.

Every thought or belief in this Principle carries us more fully within the power of it; and in this condition our own comes to us. Everything that is related to our peculiar faculty, whether near or far, will come to us in acknowledgement of our ownership.

In man's operations from the central point or a basis of self, he is entitled to what he wants. And he need not beg for what he wants; it is his own under the Law of Attraction by inalienable right, and unless he take it as his own, he will never build his life up in the strength of true manhood.

All through the period of his unconscious growth, he took; he did not beg. He did this regardless of his fellows. What he took represented to him his highest ideal of happiness. Now his ideal is enlarged; it is so greatly enlarged that it raises him quite out of the physical realm into the intellectual one, and what he demands as essential to his happiness is the knowledge that will secure him health, strength and beauty.

Of these things he may demand what he will, and no one will be robbed; for he is now in the high place where the supply is equal to the demand, and where he is getting more and more into harmony with the Principle of Attraction, where his own comes to him because it is related to his needs. Therefore, men need not beg. A true analysis of things past and present will show us that there never was a beggar on earth until man came, and that beggars were never needed, neither were meant to have existence.

To get the things he needs in the present transitional stage from animal to human, each human being is forced to become as aggressive as any warrior. Everything he attempts to take out of the mental world, the world of unorganised intelligence, is denied him, and

and its very existence disputed by a thousand race beliefs that rise up before him and threaten him with destruction.

This fight for mastery, being at this time entirely in the realm of the intellect, we must begin, not by begging our way, but by claiming it. Discard every thought of humility; make a statement of what you want, and hold it as your due. Take this one fact into consideration, that man has no God-given place in the universe, and no natural sphere, except that which he has wrested from the universe by his own intelligent demands. Remember above all things, that man is man-made, and not God-made.

Individuality is of such tremendous importance that we are not trying to lose it in God. We are trying to bring God forth and establish Him in these personalities. I speak the word "God" as if I accepted it in its present meaning, which I do not, although it is sometimes very convenient to use.

Mental Science, unlike Christian Science, believes in the present and in the personal, the visible and audible. It believes in the evolution of the Life Principle into the personal and the present, through the intelligent recognition of men and women, and it is in this way we will banish disease and death and establish heaven on earth—for the more of the Life Principle a man recognises in himself, the stronger and more positive he is; and thus will disease and death be overcome, for they are simply the negations or denial of man's power to conquer. They are nothing in themselves, and have no power, except the power men confer upon them by believing in them; and as men believe in their own selfhood more and recognise the God-hood of selfhood, the fear of disease and death will be effaced, and life, with health and happiness, will become the heritage of the race instead.

I say to every human being—assert your desires and prove your noble nature. The desire, which is the voice of life in you, does not include any methods your brain may suggest as being the right way to attain the desire. The desire is the essence of your being, and it asks for happiness, and nothing less. It will be your individual mistake, and not the mistake of the vital principle, if you seek happiness by methods that will wrong others. Therefore, as we are still so ignorant, the proper thing to do is to ask for happiness simply, or rather to claim happiness as our right.

Of course, every idea of happiness includes ideas of health, strength and beauty, and it is these things that make the real man. After man is established in such glorious health, strength and beauty as makes every moment of his life a joy to him, he may then turn his thoughts outward towards the building of new and better conditions for himself and fellows; for man is the Builder, and when he has built himself, he will begin to build externally in a stronger way—yes, in a thousand stronger ways, for man's sphere is here on earth, and he will build outward from the earth, until the space between the planets will show forth the wonders of his inventions and discoveries.

Once more I say — stand by self. Self is not a sinful or dreadful thing. It is the glorious basis of everything that is visible in the universe. In each individual thing, whether crystal, tree, animal or man, it is the wresting from negative by more positive expression that brings the mastery. Therefore, let no one be horrified because I have rescued selfhood from the mistakes that have so long overlain it.

The truth seeker is the image breaker, and no one need be grieved to see his pet hobbies fall before him. It is time they all fell. It is time for us to turn our backs on the past and accept the instruction given to Lot's wife, never to look behind; for now that the dreadful old charnel-houses where we have been entombed alive for such a long time are falling, we must escape from them forthwith.

From now on, I ask every seeker after the truth to keep up the investigation of self; and when by much thinking, he learns to stand up for it, and to hold it sacredly above the old-time beliefs that have made a devil out of it and prepared a hell for its future reception, he will begin to realise a strength he had never dreamed of before. Therefore, I say — stand by self. Magnify it if possible; but, indeed, no one can magnify it, for no one's conception of it can do it justice. But a person can magnify his ideas of it, and thus conquer the race beliefs concerning it.

And this is the battle that will have to be fought by the truth seeker. The battle is between the new truth that Mental Science brings and the old crucifying belief born of an age of rankest ignorance, that has so long held the people in darkness concerning their own strength and worth. No one can stand too strongly for the right. Each one of us should make his or her own statement of personal goodness and power, and reiterate it in the face of every old-world belief as rapidly as it shall confront them. He or she should say, "I am here for myself, to build myself up in health, strength and beauty, by claiming my own. Nothing is too good for me. I claim the best and I shall get it."