

# The Higher Science

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[Page 1] SCIENCE, in the general acceptance of the term, deals with the *phenomena* of nature, with the laws which govern the material world as that is discovered to our physical senses; and she is generally accused, not without some reason, of being materialistic and atheistic, sceptical and agnostic, inasmuch as she does not recognise any power behind or superior to matter and force, the term *spirit* is to her an unknown and undeterminable quantity; it may exist outside of matter and force, but it is not a factor in those quantities. Religion, as commonly understood, is divorced from science. Every religion professes to teach, in a more or less practical manner, the way in which its individual devotees may attain to an ideal state of bliss, but all the rest of mankind, who reject its specific dogmas, are consigned to a state of everlasting misery. Religion looks upon Science with great concern, because Science is quite indifferent to its teachings, and threatens to make the majority of thinking men agnostic; and Science, on the other hand, is continually at war with those ideas of supernaturalism to which Religion so fondly clings.

There exists, however, a Higher Science, which is also Religion in its truest sense, and which deals with the hidden forces in nature at which Physical Science stops short, but which are more than suspected by the majority of mankind, because every form of Religion whatsoever is an acknowledgment of a *something*, which underlies, and is superior to, the phenomena of Nature.

Natural Science, so-called, takes a flower or an insect, classifies it, gives a name to every part, and registers its functions and actions. What more ? Nothing ! Where the flower or the insect comes from, what is the source of its vitality, who is the builder, the architect, what is it that gives it its functions, why these functions differ in thousands and millions of species, where the whole phenomenal world comes from or whither it tends, on these and all similar questions Science remains silent. [Page 2]

It may startle many to hear that these questions can be answered, have been answered by the Higher Science or, as it has some times been called, "Occult Science", ages ago; but the methods of this Science are so little known, are so essentially different from the methods of Physical Science, are so difficult of acquirement and involve such stupendous issues on the part of the student, that such an one finds his lips closed as to his own particular acquirements almost at the commencement of his initiation. The study of the Higher Science involves the development of physical, mental, and moral qualities to the highest degree of perfection; it involves the development of faculties about which Physical Science knows nothing whatever, and it is only when these faculties have been developed, and the student obtains touch with nature on a higher plane than that of the physical senses, that he finds the practical solution of those problems at which Natural Science stops short. In so far as it does this, occult science is itself strictly a *natural* science, but by training the super-sensuous faculties it obtains a practical knowledge of those so-called supernatural powers with which it is the supposed province of Religion to deal, and it embraces in one far-reaching generalization that Truth which is at the bottom of each and

every system of Religion or of Philosophy. It does not divorce Religion and Science, Physics and Metaphysics. Each of these it shows to be the complement of the other, a partial phase of the one great whole, which in its highest aspect we name God.

Where is the school of this Science, and who are its masters ? The school is nowhere in particular, it is the wide world; the masters are inaccessible to any but the most advanced and resolute students. To such an one a certain place, or a certain course of life may be indicated, but this is only essential after a comparatively high standard has been reached. At first the student is required to fulfil those duties which he may owe to those around him, to exhaust his old "Karma", to learn to know, and, above all, to be master of SELF.

That the masters, adepts, or mahatmas, as they have been variously termed, are inaccessible to any but those who diligently seek, stands to reason. These men are the custodians of the knowledge of the occult powers of nature. They are men who have advanced so far in front of the race, that the world in which they live, their moral qualities, and their knowledge and control of physical law, and of forces of which the modern world knows absolutely nothing, are so great as to place them on a height, which to our limited ideas appears to transcend altogether that of the human. So far removed are they from the reach of the curious, that many, who have for years endeavoured to follow the path which they supposed would lead to their acceptance as pupils, have come to deny their very existence. Were it otherwise, the lower intelligence would worship them as gods, the curious and the *dilettante* would seek mere amusement or sensation in the exhibition of occult powers, whilst many would consider [Page 3] themselves entitled to become pupils, who were totally unable to grasp even the first principle of occultism, which is the conquest of SELF.

It has been written that "they who seek shall find, and to those who knock it shall be opened". This is something more than a promise, it is a fundamental law of our growth. Truth is a constant quantity, but the knowledge of it is only discovered to us in the exact ratio of our capacity for receiving it, and this again depends on the amount of effort which we put forth in the right direction. Truth is the unchangeable law of our being; it is written in every phase of nature and in each human heart in characters which never alter; but, like children learning to read, we require to have each single letter presented to our sight again and again before we can grasp its significance. When the characters have become familiar, words may be formed, and then sentences; at first we spell out letter by letter; finally, we read without effort, and our attention being relieved from the mere understanding of the symbols, we begin to inquire the meaning of what we read. Does the man remember his childish difficulties in learning the alphabet, or the tears which he shed over his copybook ? And if he cannot remember the particulars of such a recent part of his history, is it any wonder that he fails to remember the process by which his self-consciousness has dawned, and by which he acquired those instincts and predispositions with which he is born ? Indeed, he has quite forgotten that he had any past at all, and imagines himself a new creation. This process of acquiring knowledge — experience — is, however, the universal law of evolution. It is the effort on the part of the individual unit, from the lowest to the highest, to grasp its environment, to reach out on every side and obtain a fuller touch with those forces which are acting upon it, which develops through long ages those organisms in the physical world that are the manifestation of what we call Life. Man stands at the head of the list with the largest faculties for grasping his environment, but his faculties are not yet fully developed, nor are they physical merely; they are intellectual, moral, and spiritual. Man has a self-consciousness, a knowledge that I am I, and a feeling that the real I, the Ego, is something higher than, and independent of, the physical body and functions.

It is here that Physical Science stops short, and Occult Science takes up the problem. The mind, the intellect, the reason, the soul, these have no existence for Physical Science outside of the brain. Occult Science, on the other hand, knows that it is a mere matter of development to be able to separate the whole consciousness from the physical body. Spirit is a term not recognised by Physical Science, but Occult Science teaches that spirit is more real than matter, that it is the only real, and that matter, as we know it, is phenomenal and transitory, the manifestation on one plane of nature only of those forces which are the components and essence of nature itself. The material world is a necessary phase of that vast [Page 4] evolution, in which the whole life and history of such a globe as ours is less than the individual history of one single drop of water.

We have said that the methods of Occult Science are essentially different from those of Physical Science, and we shall now endeavour to elucidate this point a little further.

In the first place, Physical Science, as we have already pointed out, deals simply and solely with matter and force as manifested on the physical plane, and through the physical senses. When it seeks to aid the physical faculties in their functions of observation, it does so by skilful combinations and mechanical devices. Occult science, on the other hand, works by the development in the individual of certain faculties which enable him absolutely to transcend matter. The object of Occult Science is to penetrate the veil of matter, to raise the consciousness to a higher plane. It has been for the most part supposed that the veil of matter will only be penetrated when the soul is released from the physical body by the death of the latter; but Occult Science teaches that the object of LIFE is the evolution of our higher principles, and that the mere casting off of the lower ones cannot give an increase of consciousness to that which is for the present dependent upon the lower ones for its progress. It is only when our higher principles have been so developed that they can move, act, and think independently of the lower ones; only when the consciousness has been altogether transferred to the spiritual plane as a *voluntary* act, that life in the physical plane becomes no longer necessary. We do not now drop our material body voluntarily, or because we have no longer need of it. It wears out like an old garment, and we have still need of another so long as we are on the physical plane, so long as we are conditioned by matter, and have material desires and wants. But when we have completely developed our higher principles, when we have transferred our consciousness entirely to the spiritual plane, and our wills and desires are completely free from every taint of earth, then we obtain the victory over Death, because we have no longer any need to live as we name Life. Until then Death simply means re-birth, and both Death and re-birth are involuntary. How can we be said to have gained the victory over that which we are compelled to submit to, whether we like it or not? The mere conquest of the fear of Death is not a conquest of the conditions. Neither Science nor Religion know anything of these conditions, and where the latter has endeavoured to formulate and dogmatise, its conceptions are found to be grossly material. It is true, that when the physical body dies the soul is for the time being released from the conditions of matter, but it does not gain any sudden accession of consciousness or power thereby. It passes gradually into the state known as "Devachan", where it enjoys to the full those spiritual desires which it has developed. This, however, is not a state of growth, but rather of dream. It may last for thousands of years if the spiritual aspirations of the individual have been [Page 5] high. Time on the spiritual plane has no meaning such as we attach to it. But sooner or later the soul is drawn back to earth by those material desires which still cling to it, and which it has no means of gratifying on the spiritual plane, It is drawn back by those forces which it generated in its past incarnation, which have remained in a latent condition, but which sooner or later must, under the inevitable law of cause and effect, become potential. This is "Karma". It is sometimes known as fate; it determines the principal events of our lives, which we often feel instinctively have been moulded by some unknown agency quite independently of our own will.

It is very difficult to explain to the ordinary reader, to those who have not studied the subject, or who have not come in contact with people who can actually exercise the super-sensuous faculties, what these faculties are, and how they may be used. There are, however, many phenomena which are looked upon with suspicion or absolute incredulity by modern science, but which give a clue as to the direction in which we may look for the more immediate development of these faculties. The phenomena of mesmerism, spiritism, clairvoyance, thought transference, and many others, are for the most part tentative and involuntary manifestations of certain occult faculties and powers. Occult Science has been well acquainted with these phenomena for ages, and not merely familiar with the phenomena, but with their meaning and the laws that govern them.

Let us take clairvoyance for instance. There are more people gifted with this faculty than is generally supposed, but the faculty being in an embryonic and undeveloped state, and not under the control of the will of the individual, it is for the most part exercised involuntarily and in an arbitrary and irregular manner, and consequently what is seen does not appear to have any connection with the ideas of the person, and is as often as not set down to "illusion" or "unconscious cerebration". Nevertheless there is a faculty of sight which is quite independent of the physical eye, and does not act through the medium which conveys the reflected light of the sun from material objects and by means of which we see these objects. There is a medium which is known as the "Astral Light", and it is in this medium that clairvoyants see. The Astral Light is the register of every event that has ever taken place on the physical Plane; it is, so to speak, the sensitive plate which receives an impression or picture of every event, and it is no uncommon thing for a clairvoyant to see in this light events, persons, or objects, which have long since had their existence on the physical plane. You may meet with people who see faces, flowers, or animals, or other objects, in the Astral Light, as plainly as they see material objects on the physical plane. The doctor tells them that it is an illusion, a derangement of the functions of the brain, and, perhaps, believing this to be so, they discourage and fight against their "illusions", with the result that in time [Page 6] these become less frequent or cease altogether. Others, however, have sought to understand and cultivate this faculty, and in doing so have presently found that they possess a most valuable gift, and one which, used in a proper manner, opens out a wide range of observation beyond the reach of the physical sight, but which many are vainly endeavouring to penetrate, with the aid of that faculty alone. Now Occult Science is perfectly familiar with the constitution and functions of the Astral Light, with the faculties by which this is perceived, and with the means of developing these faculties so that they can be exercised at will.

We may take one more illustration, that of mesmeric phenomena. These phenomena have been too clearly demonstrated of late years for the scientists to ignore them, or to cover them with ridicule as they did when they were first propounded in modern times by Mesmer. Still, however, they seek their explanation in the mere physical constitution of the brain, they cannot admit that mind can act independently of the brain or nervous organisation. The student of Occult Science, on the other hand, knows that it is a mere matter of development for the whole consciousness to be separated at will from the physical body, and move, see and act on a higher plane than that which conditions the senses. Occult Science gives to man a sevenfold constitution, of which the physical body is the lowest, and in point of time the least permanent. Each lower principle serves as the vehicle of the one immediately above it, serves as the mechanism, so to speak, through which the higher principle can act and re-act on that plane of nature to which the lower principle belongs. It will thus be seen that the physical body is the necessary complement, the gross counterpart on the material plane of those higher principles which constitute the Ego. To manifest on the plane of matter the Ego must have a material body, just as electricity requires matter in certain forms, and an arrangement of parts in the instrument in order to manifest itself to our senses and perform certain functions. So long, therefore, as we confine our

attention to the material plane, we cannot do more than discover the laws which condition matter; but why electricity, light, heat, vitality, or mind, manifest themselves through matter, or why indeed matter exists at all, must remain a hopeless problem so long as we have only our physical faculties to help us. Here, indeed, is the blank wall, the sheer face of the precipice rising into the mists above, and up which there appears to the human eye to be no way, though still humanity will strain its vision to catch perchance some rift in the clouds, some glimpse of the Divine glory into which it hopes, but with many a doubt and many a fear, to enter some day through the Gates of Death. But the entry is not through the Gates of Death; it is through the Gates of Life. That which we call Death is the disintegration of the molecules of our physical body, and when this is accomplished, and the spirit can no longer look through the window of the physical senses upon the external world of form, what [Page 7] then ? A dream of Heaven, or it may be of Hell, that is as we have made it for ourselves. But our spiritual faculties, where are they? Let each one answer this by asking himself how far he has succeeded in transferring his perceptions and desires from the physical to the spiritual. Let him inquire how much the "I am" is merely the sense of form, of personality, which is attached to the physical body, or whether he has succeeded in any degree in developing a spiritual self-consciousness. Let no man deceive himself here. Nature works through the lower to the higher, from the lower form to the higher, and from the lower Consciousness to the higher, and so to the highest which is Absolute Consciousness. Nature works through form, through three dimensional space to that which is above form, which includes all form, all space, and also all time, and which we name God.

If with our limited ideas of time we are unable to grasp the vast eras which physical science discloses as having been required to evolve this little speck of cosmic dust which we call the Earth, which, however, is such a big thing to our physical consciousness, how shall we realise the time required to evolve the human soul, which is what nature is endeavouring to do *through the physical world*? If we believe anything at all we must believe our spiritual nature to be superior to the physical world, otherwise how shall we survive the day which will surely come when that world shall utterly vanish, shall perish, as all forms perish sooner or later. Shall we not rather begin to be *conscious* of the fact that one day in God's sight is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. Here is a test which each one may apply as to the measure of the fulness of his spiritual perceptions. The aim of nature is to unite us with the Divine power of the Universe. It is the root-idea of every Religion that we may become "one with God". To do this we must become one with the Divine *consciousness*. We must realise that which is realised by the Divine. How far have we realised this statement of the relation of time to the Divine consciousness ? How far are our ideas of time disconnected from our mere physical consciousness and transferred to our spiritual perceptions ? "God is Love", "God is a Spirit", these and similar texts written by men who *knew*, may be to us merely the heading of our copybook, which we are required to write over and over again down the page of life, and during many many lives, before we begin even to guess that there is something in the matter besides the mere characters which we are forming with our physical faculties, and if we have not yet succeeded in transferring our consciousness from the material to the spiritual, we have not yet accomplished the purpose for which we live. The real Ego, the spiritual monad, not having attained to self-consciousness, has no perception on the higher plane of nature, and since it can only reach the higher through the lower, it has again to seek a *form*, and developing a new physical body it is again disciplined in the school [Page 8] of life. Like children learning to read, we may find the lesson hard, and many a tear may be shed over the page, but Nature is only a hard taskmaster to those who set their will in opposition to her laws and methods of working. That which we are today is the result of our past living, of the opportunities gained or wasted. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked; that which a man soweth he shall also reap; he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth unto the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting". Men vaguely hope to become perfect and happy when they have cast off this mortal coil, and to leave all their sins and the dragons' teeth they have

sown for others to reap. They hope to obtain a knowledge of God before they have learnt to know themselves. How can we understand the greater if we do not comprehend the lesser ? How can we attain to a knowledge of the Maker if we do not understand that which he has made ? Medical Science is a ghastly witness to the poverty of our knowledge of the physical constitution of man, and as to any higher constitution he may have, of this science, so-called, knows less than nothing. And yet we say again that this knowledge has been obtained ages ago, is now in the possession of living men, and can be obtained by all who earnestly and perseveringly seek. This knowledge will in time become universal through the natural process of evolution. The race, as a whole, is advancing, because the individual units are advancing; the individual units of today being the individual units of past generations, they advance in virtue of the experience already gained. Experience is the only tutor. A man can have no real knowledge of that which he has not experienced. But to those who desire to step out in front of the race, who have the will and the courage to advance singly, to those who thirst for the truth, and press forward towards the prize of their high calling, their Divine birthright as Sons of God, there is a path which leads direct to the Light. It is rugged and precipitous, and all too hard for any but the most resolute. It involves the sacrifice of all that this world holds most precious. It involves the conquest of every fond delusion which is the product of our earth-born faculties. It involves in the first place the complete conquest of self. The will must be absolute master of the physical body, absolute master of the emotions, thoughts, and desires. We cannot attain to the highest, to the permanent, until we have learnt to recognise what is the lowest — the impermanent. What are those things which men most desire now ? — wealth, fame, power, physical enjoyment, and material well-being. And yet they know well that these things will not last for ever, even if they last to the end of one little life-time. Then, when that on which our consciousness is centred is removed by Death, or otherwise, what have we to fall back upon; what is it that is permanent and cannot fade away ? The mere indifference of satiety must not be confounded with the absence of desire. It is, perhaps, only when some of these things are removed, that we find how much our life [Page 9] was centred in them. But if our life is centred in that which is permanent, the removal of the impermanent will be a matter of no moment. Men truly look for a miracle in nature when they expect that, at death, the spirit shall suddenly acquire that which it is the object of Life to attain, a knowledge of and unison with the Divine, that which nature is patiently accomplishing through ages and ages of evolution. Shall eighty years suffice for the spirit, the higher principles, when thousands and thousands of years have been required for the development of the physical, the lowest faculties ?

The spiritual develops by, with, and through the material. The material is the counterpart, on the lowest plane of nature, of those processes which are taking place simultaneously on the higher plane. Where in nature do you find a miracle — a break in continuity ? This is the true “natural law in the spiritual world”, the one working through and with the other. Search the whole realm of your experience and find, if you can, the counterpart of such a miracle as you expect to be wrought at death, when you think to free yourself from those forces and desires you have nourished and brought into action during your stay on the material plane. The evil you expect to drop away from you, while the good is supposed to go along with you, and even to be intensified and reinforced a thousand-fold! The law of the conservation of energy on the physical plane might teach us a little better than this.

How then can we obtain this knowledge of and mastery over self, how learn to recognise and follow the promptings of our higher nature, and effect the transfer of our consciousness from the personal and illusive to the higher and spiritual Ego ?

This is the science we are endeavouring to elucidate, the Higher Science, the knowledge of spiritual

forces, Occultism. It is the science of Religion as well as of matter; it is the highest science of all — the science of LIFE.

Each and all can study in the school of this science with more or less success. Each one is compelled by the nature of his being so to do, but whether he shall push his way to the head of the classes, or grind slowly and painfully through the routine, depends upon his own individual efforts. There is only one object in what is taught, one curriculum, and one law of progress. We build up our *spiritual* self molecule by molecule, even as the physical body is built. It is a growth from within outwards, and never contrariwise: exactly analogous to what takes place on the physical plane. Imperceptibly our physical body drops the actual atoms of matter of which it is composed and assimilates new ones, developing functions and faculties in some directions, or losing them in others, according as it conforms or otherwise with the law of physical growth. There is a physical regeneration continually taking place, and there is also a spiritual regeneration, working with and through the physical. The spiritual body [Page 10] is nothing vague and shadowy; it is governed by laws as inflexible as those which condition the physical existence and consciousness. Occult science teaches what those laws are.

It is not our purpose here to recapitulate certain of the doctrines which have recently been given to the world through the medium of the Theosophical Society as more or less accurate representations of what Occult Science knows of the constitution of man, his origin and destiny. Those teachings should be studied in the light of our own individual experience, and in no case accepted as dogmatic or authoritative. There is a great mass of Theosophical literature from which we must extract the essence by using the touchstone of our inner consciousness. We are more concerned now to point out to such as seek for more Light than either Religion or Science can give what is the direction in which they must look for that Light. Those who, resting upon dogma or creed, are carried easily along in the conventional and orthodox *rut*, and find religion a comparatively easy matter, being able to enjoy this life to the full while giving just enough attention to the affairs of the next to enable them, as they imagine, to escape the penalty of their sins, and enter at death into an exalted state of happiness for ever and ever; to such as these — and they are only too numerous — any notion of a Science of Life, of the working of natural law in the spiritual world must be utterly foreign. They live and move in a small ideal world of their own creation, nursing the illusion of the senses, and fondly imagining that their own little world of ideas is the *raison d'être* of all the rest of creation, and that what does not correspond with their own individual ideas must be false and atheistical. It is these people who are the real A-theists. There is more hope for the man whose intellect denies the existence of a personal God, than for him who, not knowing himself, whence he comes or whither he goes, will yet postulate for such a God all the attributes of arrogance, jealousy, hatred, and revenge which exist in the unregenerate and sinful human heart. If they know not their own life, how shall they know the source from whence that life is derived? God is revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures and in the person of his Son, they will probably say. Yea, truly, he is so revealed if they had but eyes to see and ears to hear. But we may read the Scriptures every day of our lives, and yet be as ignorant of their real meaning as on the day we were born; nay, even more so; for it is written that unto babes and sucklings such things are revealed; while to the Scribes and Pharisees of today, the Bible is nothing more than chapter and verse for the accumulation of doctrine and dogma — of ecclesiasticism and the superstition and rubbish of centuries. It appears to us almost a hopeless task to endeavour to illuminate the mind of the self-satisfied religionist. We may focus the light of truth with the strongest lenses we possess, and yet we shall hardly be able to penetrate [Page 11] the gross materiality of their spiritual conceptions, the mists of illusion with which they have surrounded themselves.

Let us turn to a more hopeful class, to those who take a wider survey of life, and seek for a solution of its problems on a broader basis than that of sectarian Religion or dogmatic Science. Recognising to a certain extent the unity of creation, and that each individual is a part of the great whole, they feel that unless they can explain the connection and show that whole to be good, then creation must be a pandemonium, a chaos, a horror, and a curse. And yet they cannot believe this. There is that in their hearts which whispers God is Love; and seeking ever for more light, they come sooner or later to find themselves in possession of a real faith, an intuitive knowledge of the good, and the strength and will to obtain it. Faith we must have, no man ever made a single effort to obtain that which he did not realise as having an existence. But what we require is that our faith may be changed into sight. A man who is born blind may have faith in the existence of a world of form and colour, he can have no real knowledge of it; but, learning from those who have the knowledge, he may form some ideas concerning it, and believe in its existence. In the same way with our spiritual sight; unless we believe in the existence of the spiritual world and listen to the teachings of those who have cognizance of that world, we shall never make any effort towards its realisation. If we wish our faith to become sight, we must develop our spiritual faculties. We may so develop our spiritual nature that it shall become more real to us than our physical nature; the world of sense and matter shall become less tangible and real to us than is the vague idea we now attach to the term spirit.

The aim of occultism is identically the same as that which is expressed in more or less imperfect language in every exoteric religion. It is union with the Divine. This can only be accomplished in one way, and that is by working with and for the Divine purpose in creation, and since that purpose is good and not evil, is life and not death, is unity and not division, we can only progress according to the energy we exert on the side of those forces which make for righteousness. Our progress depends upon a knowledge of the laws by which we are conditioned, not in a mere faith in the existence of law. There is no means of separating a cause from an effect, and whether that cause is set in motion in ignorance or in knowledge the effect will be the same. There is no caprice in the physical world, and there can be no caprice in that higher world which conditions the lower. Our spiritual evolution is dependent upon laws which are as inflexible as those which operate on the physical plane, and are indeed the counterpart of those laws. We are only saved by faith in so far as our faith suffices to lead us to a knowledge of and conformity with law. Mankind advances in proportion as men come to know and understand natural law. Our physical well-being is recognised as dependent upon a knowledge of [Page 12] and conformity with these laws. If we disobey them, nature crushes us. Sin is a transgression of the Law. Not the law of a personal God; every Religion has a different set of such laws which it regards as infallible, and to which it attaches purely human conceptions of authority and penalty. The fact of the existence of Sin in the world is as *natural* as the existence of disease. We can only free ourselves from the one or the other as we come to a knowledge of the laws which condition us, and which are the only Divine laws. Being yet imperfect and ignorant beings, we suffer for our transgressions, and through suffering are led to a knowledge of that which produces suffering.

The knowledge of the higher includes a knowledge of the lower, and, therefore, we are not surprised to find that those who have become adepts in the higher science have a knowledge of and control over physical forces which are utterly unknown to the world at large, and which indeed it would be disastrous to make known. The entrance to this knowledge is therefore guarded with jealous care, and none of its secrets are ever imparted until the student has by the most severe tests proved his moral qualities, and placed himself without reserve and without possibility of blacksliding, on the side of the powers of goodness. His work must be for humanity and not for himself. So long as there remains in him one particle of selfishness, one single personal desire, it will act as a deterrent to the attainment of the



highest perfection of his being. He must sacrifice everything to the attainment of that purpose. This is that part of the teachings of Christ (the only *practical* part) which modern Christianity finds all too hard, and quietly ignores, endeavouring to accomplish a compromise between the good things of this life and the Kingdom of Heaven, to get the best of both worlds. And yet if there is one thing more than another that Christ taught in the plainest of language it is that no such compromise is possible. The hardest sayings of Christ are those which touch our pocket, and yet our pocket must be empty, and there must be no desire to fill it before we can obtain our final emancipation.

We have stated previously that the methods which Occult Science employs are essentially different from those of Physical Science; that Occult Science subordinates the physical and seeks to develop the spiritual, but this cannot be done, as many have supposed, by allowing the physical body to fall into dilapidation and disuse; by mortifying the physical members in order *that* the spiritual ones may develop. That which we have to mortify is the physical *desires*, but the physical organs and functions must be perfect and healthy, because the higher principles are dependent on the lower ones for their development, in our present stage of evolution; and there are certain organs in the human body which are directly concerned in this process. If the bodily functions are weak or diseased they react upon the higher ones. The spiritual faculties must be developed by [Page 13] the subordination of the physical faculties. The will must be absolute master over the physical body; every merely animal passion must be subdued and led into its proper channel.

This is a work of the greatest difficulty, yet it is the first step towards an increase of spiritual life. It can seldom be accomplished in one lifetime. He who has ever tried to conquer one desire, one besetting sin, knows the magnitude of the task. No effort, however small, is ever lost; and though we may appear to make little or no progress, because the goal is still far off, and our sight not strong enough to estimate distances, yet we must know that every time we succeed in subordinating one fond desire we have made a forward step on the path.

We see, then, that as students of the Higher Science we are required to do something more than merely acquire book learning, or the manipulation of the occult forces of nature.

It cannot be too often reiterated that the knowledge we are to acquire is the knowledge of self, and the power we are to exercise is the mastery over self. The macrocosm is contained within the microcosm. If we cannot command ourselves, our lower nature and desires, we are utterly unfit to control those forces which we should be able to use as powerful aids to our own selfish ends, or to oppress or destroy our fellow-creatures. When, however, by working for the Divine purpose in humanity instead of for our individual ends, we league ourselves with those powers which make for good; when we have purified our wills, our minds, and our bodies, then we shall acquire those faculties which now lie dormant within us, unable to act because of the grossness of our physical organization and conceptions. We shall then come to a real perceptive knowledge of the truth, we shall see not as in a glass darkly, but face to face.

Writing in a Christian country and for the most part for those who are familiar with the teachings of Christ, we have endeavoured to show how the Christian ideal must be realised to the full by those who desire the highest spiritual attainments. But it is not in the Bible alone that these truths lie buried. The fundamental truth of every religion is the same, but we have to clear away the human conceptions which have accumulated round the central truth, before we can get at the real esoteric meaning which underlies

the letter and the form. The ancient Wisdom Religion, Secret Doctrine, or Theosophy is the source of each, and every Exoteric Religion, and we cannot do better than study at the fountain head. The Initiates taught the mysteries in allegory and fable, which the outside world accepted as literal and true, but the real meaning was only disclosed to the student, to those who had the courage to enter the portals, which were guarded with jealous care, and with terrors which it required a bold spirit to face. It is still so. The kingdom of heaven must be taken by force. It is vain and idle to try and reconcile the external forms of religion, to [Page 14] dispute about the text and the literal meaning. When we have penetrated ever so little beneath the surface we shall find a startling resemblance between one religion and another.

The great founders of religion were Initiates, who, having a knowledge of Cyclic laws by which the race as a whole progresses, proclaimed at certain periods of the world's history that truth which has always existed and always been known. They proclaimed it in the manner best calculated to be received by those who had advanced sufficiently far to apprehend it. In order that the universal truth may be perceived by the finite mind, it must be manifested in some *form*, but the ultimate truth is as formless as the ultimate cause.

The great central truth of the unity of Nature, and the interdependence and correlation of all forces, physical, mental, and spiritual, together with the existence of the Divine Spark in man which will enable him ultimately to merge his individuality in the Divine Nature, and become the conscious creative power of the Universe, is that which was taught alike by Buddha and by Christ. We cannot perceive it so long as our attention is directed to the external form, and our energies wasted in the endeavour to reconcile those theories or dogmas with which the Church has overlaid the original teachings. The Church has lost the key to the "Mysteries", but that key is still to be found, and with it we may unlock one by one every secret in the Universe. Much may be learnt if we will but have the courage to throw overboard our preconceived notions; and without any very great effort we may come to understand much that will remain an insoluble riddle unless we have the key which Occult Science supplies.

A study of Theosophical literature, and more especially of certain teachings which have recently been given to the world through the medium of the Theosophical Society, will, in many cases, throw a flood of light into minds which have long been groping in the dark, and will show the possibility of advancing along certain lines which may be in harmony with religious instincts, but which conventional religion has failed to demonstrate. But in order that we may advance, we must make a real effort to develop our spiritual nature, to assist Nature in the evolution which she is endeavouring to accomplish. It is something to understand the theory, and to clear up our intellectual difficulties. This is the first step, but those who would use the key to unlock the higher mysteries of their life must not stop short at intellectual acquirements. The possibilities which lie before us are as boundless as the Universe itself. We cannot realise those possibilities with our mere physical or intellectual faculties. The higher Wisdom is foolishness to the world. It must first be intuitively perceived. The man must have faith in his Divine Nature, otherwise he will never rise above those things which belong to the world of matter and form, and which are therefore temporal and perishable. Is not even this the teaching of Christ? and yet how [Page 15] little it is practically applied, because Theology takes the place of Religion, and a belief in certain doctrines and dogmas is made the essential part of spiritual regeneration. This must inevitably be so as long as the spiritual man has not awakened to consciousness, and the spiritual world is regarded as a thing vague, shadowy, mysterious, and supernatural. The term supernatural is a fit one to hide our ignorance, but it is utterly false in its first meaning. We may fitly use the term super-sensuous, but the further we progress the more we discover that Nature is one in every part, the expression in an endless

variety of forms of the one central invisible cause. Even physical science is now able to explain on perfectly *Natural* grounds many things which were formerly regarded as manifestations of a supernatural agency.

But why should the spiritual world remain a mystery and a blank? The answer is very simple, and is contained in the idea which most people have — that at death they will enter that world. Men recognise, to a certain extent, that it is the physical which throws a veil over their spiritual sight, but having no real knowledge of their spiritual nature, and of the relation which exists between the spiritual and the physical, they draw a sharp line of demarcation between the two. Not knowing that the spiritual world is already within them, and is the *raison d'être* of the physical, they relegate the operation of spiritual laws to a supernatural sphere. If a man find not God or the kingdom of Heaven within him, where else shall he find it ?

It is only real *knowledge* gained by practical *experience* which can clear away the mists of superstition and dogma which cloud our intellectual vision, and it is only by the exercise of our spiritual faculties, and the subordination of our physical ones that we can gain a real perception on the spiritual plane.

Nature is an open book for us to read, and the page is only blank because we have not the necessary powers of sight to distinguish the characters. We are for the most part colour-blind, and cannot even tell black from white, good from evil. Yet there have been men in all ages who have seen with open eyes the world of spirit, and understood the operation of spiritual laws. But how to communicate their knowledge to those who had not sight, that was the problem. It could only be done by symbolism and allegory, with the certainty that the symbol would be mistaken for the real, and the allegory for the truth. Eighteen hundred years of "Christianity" have shown us what can be done in this way.

Those who have apprehended the central truth will recognise it, whatever may be the allegorical form in which it is expressed, and will never mistake the form for the substance. Therefore it is that there is no religion (as that word is commonly understood) possible for him who has recognised the Truth, because there is no religion higher than Truth, and when that is worshipped in the inmost sanctuary of the heart there is no [Page 16] longer need for the external form of worship. This also Christ taught to the woman of Samaria.

We say again that Occult Science possesses a knowledge of the constitution of man — a knowledge of the laws of the universe, spiritual and physical, which are not ever dreamt of by Theology or Science; that this is not merely an intellectual knowledge, but a direct perception, and that that perception may be obtained by all who have sufficient faith and sufficient courage to lay claim to their Divine birthright, and who will not sell this for a mess of pottage. It is not easy to accomplish, but Nature is infinitely patient, and what cannot be accomplished in one lifetime may be done in the next.

This is but a sketch of the region which lies open to the bold explorer. It is the region through which each and all must pass sooner or later to obtain that which is the end and aim of his existence. It is the region towards which the race, as a whole, is progressing through cycle after cycle of experience and evolution. It lies before us, yet also behind, and all around. It is only before and behind to our limited ideas of time and space. That which has been, is, and will be.

Many will deny the existence of this Higher Science, but others will find in it the possibility of that which their intuition teaches them, but which hitherto they have been unable to formulate.