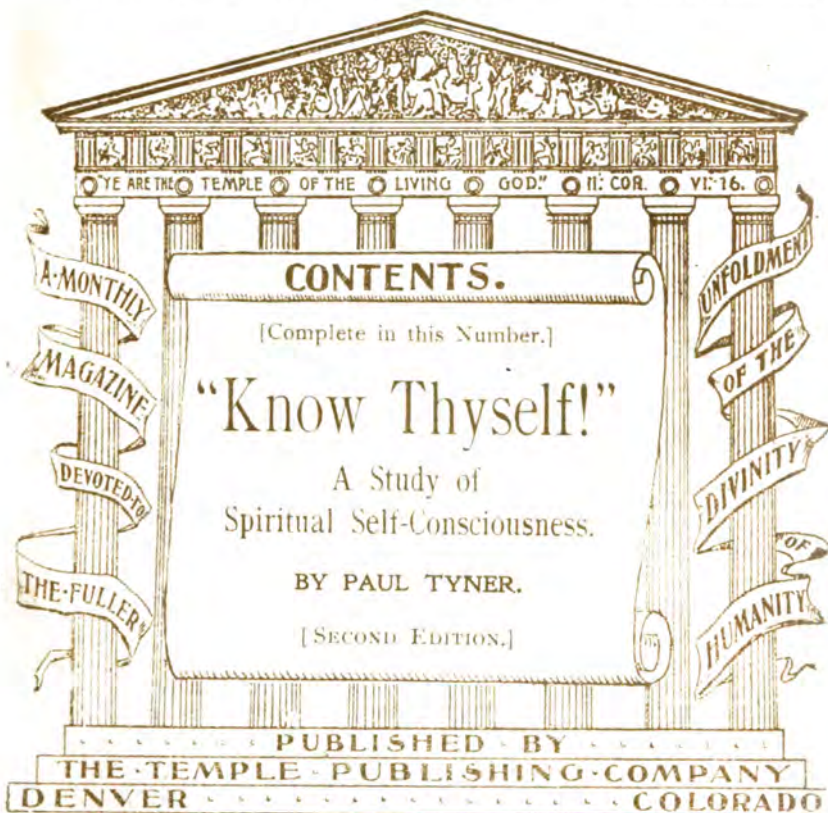


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“KNOW THYSELF!”

[SECOND EDITION.]

*An address delivered before the Fourth
Annual Convention of the International
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1898

By Paul Tyner.

“KNOW THYSELF!” *

“**K**NOW THYSELF!” the message of the Delphic oracle, is the ever-sounding call to the soul of man. It is the divine command, in obedience to which Life pushes onward through ever ascending forms into ever-expanding consciousness. It is a command and a promise,—an invitation to be partaker with Christ of the blessings and the glories prepared for us by the Father from the foundation of the world. Knowledge is power; but it must be self-knowledge before it becomes that knowledge of the Real, which is the only power for good.

“Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers”

the poet tells us. Is not the crying

need of our day a reform in educational methods by which the knowledge that is void of wisdom and of love,—the learning that is but as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal,—shall be given a soul of purpose and of use, substituting the living thought of living men for the dry bones and musty lore of the dead? We have learned professors in our colleges and scholarly preachers in our pulpits,—men who know so much that there is no room left in their brains for thought. Our children, for the most part, are taught a jumble of unrelated, disjointed facts made meaningless by lack of connection with anything in the heavens above, the earth beneath or the waters under the earth. They are put through a tedious and painful process of memory cramming,—but neither mind nor body is trained to think and act with promptness, accuracy and certainty. The pseudo knowledge which this so-called education furnishes becomes weariness instead of refreshment, weakness instead of power. We begin

with analysis, instead of with synthesis. The meat is made more than the life, and the body is lost sight of in raiment.

To know oneself is to know all that may be known. More, it is to *be* all that we may desire to be; to do, and to do perfectly, all that we want to do. A knowledge of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, for it means a realization of the One Reality, the One Life, within. Such realization should be made the beginning and the end of any rational system of education. What is more pathetic than the child's question: "What good is it?" She naturally demands that study shall have *good* for its motive, purpose and end; and that the good shall be apparent now, not in the dim and distant future. The child's question must be answered. It will only be answered honestly when we can make her feel that her studies are related at every step to good, to the All Good. With this knowledge of self for essential and primary motive man

would study man with new and eager interest, with unflagging devotion, with richest results, with ever increasing joy. That there are some signs of change in this direction in what is called the "New Education," is indeed cause for thankfulness.

Man is primarily and ultimately a conscious being. His state of consciousness at any time is an infallible index of his stage of development. Racial advance ever keeps pace with the expansion of consciousness in humanity as a whole. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so *is* he." We cannot, individually or socially, be more than that conception of self which we know, recognize and realize. We cannot be less. The mental science movement means an expansion of consciousness in the individual and in the mass—an expansion unexampled in human history, either in the rapidity of its growth, or in the far reaching importance of its effects on human life in every department. This is why the mental science

movement is significant; this is why it is one of transcendent importance.

The genius is he who reduces the ideal to the actual, who gives birth to the abstract dream in forms of concrete reality. Until now, nothing has been rarer than genius. Millions of men and women have lived and died on this earth in the last two thousand years, but the geniuses among them may be counted on one's fingers. Jesus, Dante, Michael Angelo, Shakespeare, Goethe, Napoleon, Emerson, Hugo and Whitman—do not these names exhaust the list? While worshipping the genius, we have somehow regarded his development as abnormal, miraculous, "akin to madness." The Archetypal Man has been held up to view, not as illustration, promise and prophecy of human development; but as an eccentric departure from the law of human development, an example of splendor forever denied and impossible to the rest of humanity. Now, we are at last learning the law of genius and of power,

and so opening our minds and bodies to all its glorious possibilities.

Spiritual self-consciousness may be compared to the ocean and all lesser forms of consciousness to the streams and rivers ever-flowing into it. Not that vastness, extension, space are the only qualities of spirit or of spiritual consciousness. The infinite is in the infinitely little, as in the infinitely large. It depends neither on size nor lack of size. The kingdom of heaven is within you and the kingdom of heaven is likened to a mustard seed. Does this not mean that the essential element of the universe, the Reality of the All,—the One Life which is more than all form, and, therefore, contains all,—may be found in the least atom, as in the solar system? Still, the human mind grows, as all else in nature grows, from the little into the large. No very clear or satisfactory conception of the inner soul can be gained if we ignore its outer manifestation. Side by side with the expansion of man's conscious knowledge,

—and helping in that expansion,—we find the One Life pushing for expression through ever varying forms on an infinitely ascending scale. All forms in nature are surely modes of motion. If motion, then life. And if *modes* of motion then conscious life. Everywhere we find Intelligence manifesting itself,—thought, purpose, design making itself known. What thought? Shall we not answer: the Thought inclusive of all other thoughts, the One Thought which finds expression in forms innumerable, the One Theme so rich and full that it permits of endless variations? Is not "the one clear harp" to which Nature sings in divers tones, the harp of Love?

Although consciousness,—even the universal consciousness of universal love,—is present in every form of life, self-consciousness is not found in any of these forms below man. Looking back, it is plain to us that self-consciousness must be the inevitable development of what is called the process of

individualization in nature. Being the natural consequence of this process, it must have been the purpose,—constant, active and marching steadily to its goal in the differentiation of species, and in the individualization within the species, in all life, through all time.

"First comes that which is natural, and then that which is spiritual," as the apostle tells us. Man is first Adam, and second, Christ. This order, of course, is the reverse of that by which the spiritual reality of Being takes outward form in matter. But it correctly describes the process of our development in consciousness. Self-consciousness is the natural fruit of this natural process of individualization through differentiation of form. Individuality is impressed more distinctly and emphatically on the ego at every step of its upward progress. So, it is only natural that the first stage of self-consciousness should be that in which the self is regarded as *separate* from all else. The utmost diversity in material forms having reached a culmination and

a unity in the human form, man's consciousness had still to pass through a similar evolution.

The sense of selfness expressed in the declaration "I am" is at first a purely material one. It has reference to outer appearances rather than to inner reality. The outer appearances are the only reality it recognizes. The "I" contemplated is simply the personal self and, more particularly, the physical body, which is regarded as simply physical. By an easy gradation, this conception of the I as the person was extended to personal possessions. That which was peculiarly mine became part of me, of the I, so to speak. The whole body of our civil and criminal law and the principles and practice of political administration in all countries are to this day, largely pervaded by this idea. Not only material possessions, but peculiarities of action and thought, personal and family history, class, station, rank, etc., are still not only connected with the man, but identified with him. You will

remember Buffon's apothegm: "The style is the man." Still every expansion of the thought of personality called forth by the increasing complexity of associative life and effort modifies the sense of separateness, of isolation and exclusiveness in the idea of self. The *unity* of the family, the tribe, the clan, the nation, even the creed,—although limited,—was still unity—a development in enlarging degree of that sense of oneness with all, in which the spiritually self-conscious man at last finds his real self.

Man's conquest of consciousness finds instructive analogy in his conquest of the earth's surface. He changes the map of self, as he changes the map of the world, with extending knowledge. This exploration and conquest in both cases is full of surprises. The spiritual world has its Columbuses, its Cabots, its Hudsons, its Stanleys and its Nansens. The spiritual explorer, tireless in the search for Truth, when at last he comes, through steadily enlarging vision, into

the realization of spiritual self-consciousness, stands, like Pizarro,

"Silent upon a peak in Darien."

As there is a consciousness before self-consciousness on the material plane, so there is a spiritual consciousness before spiritual self-consciousness. The thought "God is," follows closely on that of "I am." Man's first conception of God is that of a power outside of man, because his first sense of the "I" is of something apart from all other men and from God's world. The recognition of God through this "sense of separateness" leads naturally enough to a contemplation of all spiritual powers and principalities as forces or beings outside of man, powers with passions like his own, acting upon him, often at enmity with him, and to be placated by sacrifice and self humiliation. So we have superstition and priestcraft and, through their excesses, a revolt of human reason against any and every authority that would shackle the human mind.

Out of this new freedom a new and stronger faith is born. Man rises to a larger sense of his inherent dignity. He finds a self that must be related closely to something more than personality. There are many stages still to be passed through, but the mind of man finds no stopping place short of the absolute recognition and realization of the Creator in his Creation, and the identification of the I which reaches this conscious realization with the God of which it is conscious.

Quite apart from the idea of a Supreme Being outside of man, spiritual consciousness is also a product of the ethical evolution which must begin with self-consciousness, even on the material plane. A sense of moral responsibility is almost inseparable from the self-identification of self-consciousness. The fact that "I am," means choice of conduct, and consequent responsibility for the results of such choice. There can be no right or wrong for a being without freedom of will. The responsibility

attaching to a state of self-consciousness is in nowise dependent on the prescription and enforcement of laws by an outside authority, ecclesiastical or political. As Aristotle said, "The good man needs no laws to compel virtuous action." In fact, there is grave danger in any substitution of other authority for that of conscience, individual or collective,—for the self-conscious man's own Director and Critic in his own soul. It is the danger of giving more heed to the letter than to the spirit of the law. This is the tendency Jesus denounced in the Pharisees, and which is illustrated in our own day by the conscienceless dishonesty so common in business, professional and social life, among people who yet stick closely to the letter of the law,—who "pray thrice a day and give alms to the poor." Even the fool who saith in his heart there is no God,—even the atheist at all sensible of the responsibility to self attached to self-consciousness,—is apt to have a surer and sounder standard of morals than is

the man in whom this consciousness is clouded by forms legal or religious. He is truthful and honest, because to be otherwise would be to be unworthy his manhood—an abdication of the prerogatives conferred by self-consciousness.

Step by step, we learn that the deepest self is not simply physical, not even intellectual. We see through the physical and the intellectual, as through a glass darkly, that the real self is spiritual. True, what we call the physical and the intellectual lead to the spiritual and in a sense *are* spiritual. But they do not become so consciously until man reaches the plane of spiritual self-consciousness. Struggling ever upwards to completion, the soul at last learns the meaning of the divine trend in all life and, ceasing to resist this God movement, moves consciously with it. A readjustment to life bringing more freedom and power to soul and body is the first result of this larger consciousness. For man's soul finds

better expression through the body here and now when he finds himself. As the illumined author of "The Power of Silence" says: "Experiences in the flesh are soul experiences and demand, not punishment in the flesh [or in the spirit] at some distant time, but better and truer conduct in the eternal now."

"No man saveth his life unless he lose it." The meaning of this seeming paradox is made clear in the development of spiritual self-consciousness. Edward Carpenter, the English poet and mystic, tells us how his illumination and its splendid outworking in "Chants Towards Democracy" and "Love's Coming of Age," began in a sense of absolute oneness with nature. He felt himself in every growing and living thing. An absolute community of sensation with light of sun and stars, with the wash of the waves on the shore and the song of the nightingale in the moonlight, was the experience that made him conscious in every nerve and fiber of his oneness

with Universal Consciousness. Horatio Dresser describes this state of spiritual self-consciousness, in so far as it can be described, in words which it may be helpful to quote here:

"One's personal thought is lost in contemplation of the Universal. One is lifted above the present, above the world of human life, into the life of worlds, of the universe,—yes, the very life of God, of which one seems to contemplate but one of its infinite phases. . . . One communes with the Essence itself, the All-thing, the Spirit, the Love. Matter seems like a mere symbol as compared with this, its real meaning. The Life which manifested itself so long ago in the primeval history of the earth returns to consciousness in man, and recognizes through him its own transcendent source. The soul knows the great Unity henceforth, whatever be the phase of it contemplated. It habitually turns from the universe to God and from God to his great world of manifestation."

Pythagoras long ago demonstrated for the few what this new thought of our's is demonstrating for the many, *i. e.* that the objective and the subjective are evolved *together*. "That soul is Form and doth the Body make." We are learning that we cannot grow in

knowledge of the real self, without expressing that knowledge in the more perfect growth, nurture and training of all the powers of all the man—soul and body. We are finding, and we are showing the world, that man cannot be led of the spirit to know himself without coming into constantly increasing enjoyment of more life, more light more strength, more beauty of body quite as much as of soul, and of beautiful expression of soul and body made one. Pythagoras talked with the birds and the trees, we are told,—understood their speech and was understood by them. I once knew an illiterate old Bavarian gardener who communed with birds and bees as easily and as naturally as he communed with his own children. Yet Pythagoras and the gardener were at almost opposite poles of consciousness. Wagner, the greatest of musical composers, listened to the running brooks and the rustling leaves, the birds' warbling and the wind in the forest, for the themes of his wonderful

operas. And so it is always with poet, painter, musician, or actor. Only by a surrender of the personal self,—only by the swallowing up of the personal self in the All Self,—is the power and the glory of the real self recognized and realized.

Self-consciousness means realization. As the world-system is God's realization of Himself, so the ideals of the spiritually self-conscious man push forward through him for actualization. But this, I am convinced, does not always mean an instantaneous process. Self-assertion plainly defeats one's object. Realization is born out of poise,—spiritual poise, the peace that passeth all understanding. This poise, obviously, cannot come through effort or striving. It can only come in the silence, in quiet, in the rest that means "resting in God;" the stillness in which we know that we are God. "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." We need not reach out after the ideal, as though it were far off. We may wait

and let it come to us. Let us understand that it is sure to come; that the ideal is always *immanent in the real*.

"Consciousness is concentrated wherever we send our thought," Mr. Dresser tells us, "and if we reach out or pray to God as a distant Being, the thought is sent away from its proper sphere. It were better not to have ideals than to strain after them, and assert that they shall become facts at once."

The realization which always follows self-consciousness is a natural process. And all nature's processes are gradual, measured and evolutionary. We shall find wisdom and health in recognizing this law.

The natural is divine,—just as divine as the spiritual. This is the burden of all Walt Whitman's soul-illumined songs for the America of the nineteenth century, as it was of the Greek nature-worship and of those glories of Greek art and literature that grew out of it.

To properly relate the natural and the spiritual in men's minds,—I might

say to identify the natural with the spiritual,—is, I take it, the mission of this mental science movement. Perception and recognition of the truths of the spiritual world mean for us the possibility and the power to translate these truths into the facts of life here and now in the natural world. More than this, it means a demand upon us for the demonstration of these truths in dominion over all conscious or unconscious denial of them—over any and every condition negative to Eternal Life—even to the destruction of the last enemy, which is Death. If Freedom is the law, then Fear has no foundation! If love is the fulfilling of the law, then it is Lord of Life! In the realization of Love's lordship, avarice and anger, suffering and sorrow, with all their hosts, must flee and fade away as darkness disappears before the light. Man is endowed with dominion over all things. "All things are yours." All things that are true, that are lovely and of good report wait upon your command.

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