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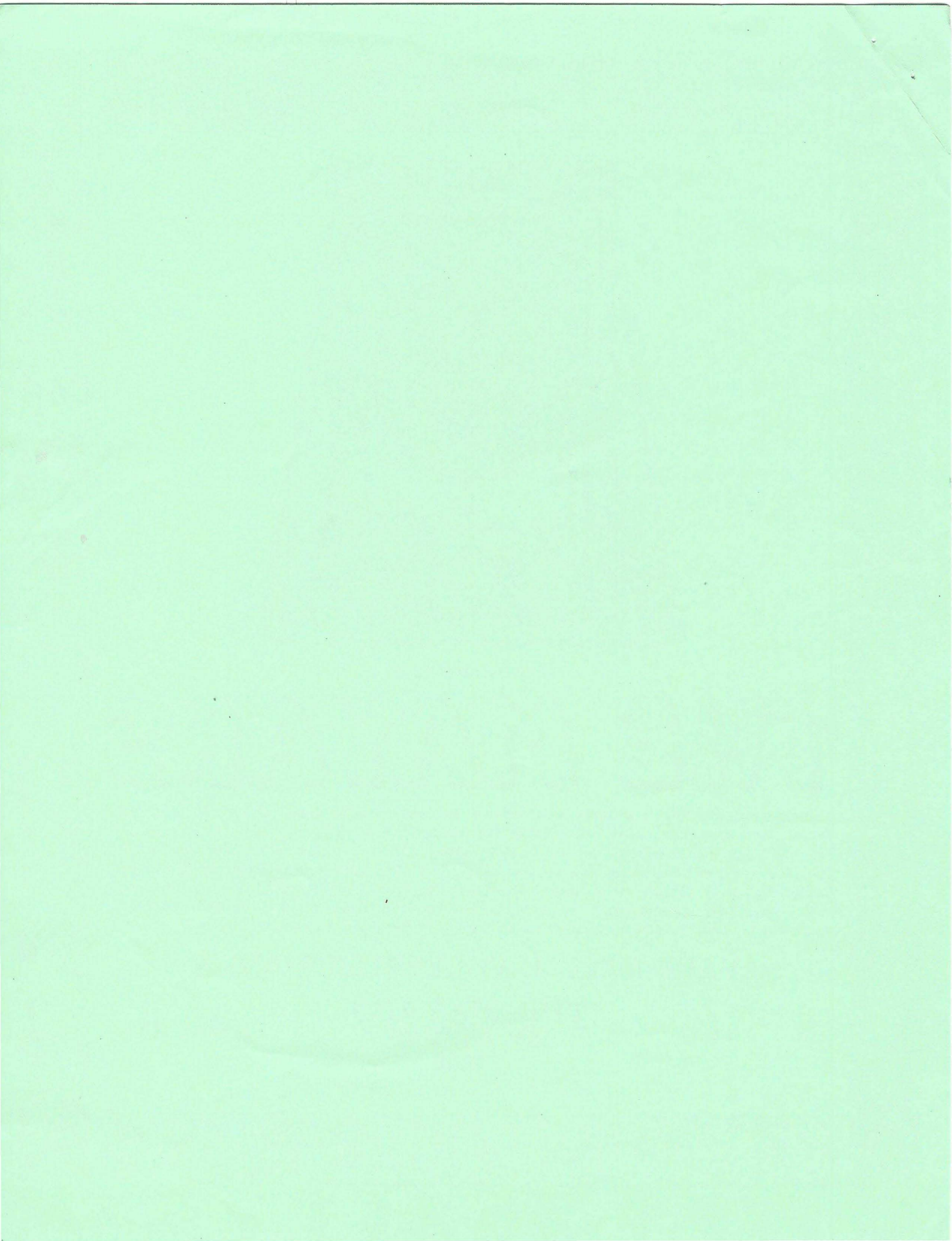
Degree 10

Number 251

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# *The Secret of Greatness*

MAYAN REVELATION NO. 251

**Hardship Drives Men to Greatness**

**Stewardship or Trusteeship**

**Trusteeship in our National Life**

**Trusteeship in our Family Life**

**Trusteeship in our Personal Attitudes**

**The Lesson of the Ages**

Beloved Perfector:

With this lesson, which we have called "The Secret of Greatness", we start a new series. This series will be devoted to helping you bring out all the potential that you possess.

Remember, as you study this lesson, that it is not necessary to be a giant mentally to be great. It is not necessary to possess great riches in order to be great. What the world may call "success" is very often far from greatness. More often, it is the "little people" who are great but are seldom recognized as being among the great ones.

It is those people who serve and do for others, who are able to bring some happiness into the lives of those who greatly need help, who are the great ones.

Many, many times through the years, you have heard me say it is my firm belief and conviction that there is only one purpose for our being put into this world - and that is to serve and to share with others what we have. This series of lessons will show you how you can best serve others and, in so doing, you will enrich your life by developing the best within you; thereby growing in stature.

We, here at Mayan Headquarters, and particularly your Instructor, will appreciate knowing how you like these lessons. They are prepared with loving care in order to stimulate your growth and your development as you continue along The Path in the quest for perfection as a Perfector.

Pray as you study, asking our Heavenly Father to guide you and see that



you overlook no opportunity to give aid and assistance wherever it is needed. Our world today, more than ever before, needs warmth and kindness between individuals and between nations. Each and every one of us can do our part in a world torn with greed, hate, and lust for power. Thus, in doing your part, YOU can attain GREATNESS.

Before we begin our study, let us pray together:

PRAYER

Our Heavenly Father, attune my heart and mind to the study that I am about to begin. Help me to benefit from its message and to be a better person for having studied it. Amen.

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## *The Secret of Greatness*

The people of the United States are admirers of greatness. More than residents of any other country we take pride in whatever is great. It may be greatness in nature. We stand in awe before a Niagara Falls or a Yosemite Valley. We feel a sense of satisfaction in the size of our cities - New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, or Houston. We travel long distances to admire a structure built by man - an Empire State Building, a Pentagon, or a Boulder Dam. Something within us responds to whatever is great.

Often we are sentimental about it, but we admire greatness in men and women. We give deserved honor to Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and other national heroes. We feel a sense of satisfaction in the achievements of a Thomas Edison, or an Ernest Hemingway. The emotional intensity with which large numbers of our people greet the personal appearance of a sport's hero or a star in the entertainment world amuses people of other countries, but it is part of our national pattern. We Americans admire greatness.

In this Lesson we shall examine two of the fundamental drives which make for greatness. Indeed, the two drives to be considered almost exclude any others. We recognize that good fortune or "luck" has a part in the transitory fame of some persons, but such individuals may not deserve the designation as "great." Nor will we identify success with greatness. Many small people achieve success. Often the success comes by dishonest practices or by skillful maneuvering. Sometimes it is the result of a selfish use of a family name. Men are often victorious in political campaigns who have not a single spark of greatness.

As we study these secrets which make for greatness we should not, of course, expect that their application to our daily lives will insure us of fame. One can be a great person and be recognized for that quality by only his immediate family or by a small circle of friends. I include a farmer in Georgia in the list of great people I have known. His farm is small. The soil is poor. He

never has traveled more than two hundred miles from his home. His income has always been pitifully small. Yet that man has been driven by a dream. He wanted his six children to have a college education. He inspired his sons and daughters with the desire to attend college, and stirred within them the urge to work for it. He has sacrificed personal comforts, has eaten the simplest foods, to set aside money for education. Again and again he has picked rock far into the night to clear an additional few square yards of land. This man is great. He will never be famous, but he has that quality which makes him great.

We are interested in greatness as we study this lesson - greatness in mind and heart and character; greatness in achievement within the limits of our opportunities and God-given talents. As you proceed to the consideration of the two factors which have helped most to make people great you will need to keep an open mind. Do not assume that you have nothing within you which could contribute to make you great. Learn carefully the lesson that the Divine Creator has put within all men the spark which can make for greatness.

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#### HARDSHIP DRIVES MEN TO GREATNESS

The history of the ages makes it clear that hardship has often been the drive which has made for greatness. This has been true of nations, as well as individuals.

Consider the golden period of creative art in Italy. For five hundred years Northern Italy suffered from continued civil strife and invasion from without. It was a time of suffering and hardship. Yet that period produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, St. Francis of Assisi, and others whose contributions to human culture have never been equaled in any similar period of time. Someone has pointed out that in Switzerland nothing happened during that same five hundred years to ruffle the peaceful existence of the people. They were prosperous, the Alps provided a protective barrier against attack from without. But nothing of enduring value came out of Switzerland during that period, except the cuckoo clock.

Hardship has driven the people of Japan to amazing national developments. Their islands include a large percentage of unproductive mountainous land. In an area less than one-third the size of Texas a population thirty times that of Texas is supported. The hardship has led to inventive skill which floods the world market with goods low enough in price so they can compete anywhere. The hardship drove the nation toward an aggressive imperialism which plunged the world into war. The drive to greatness brought immense tragedy, but who among us can avoid the conclusion that hardship has been a drive which made for greatness.

Hardship has made for greatness in the lives of individual men. John Milton did not write his immortal poetry until he was blind. Robert Louis Stevenson wrote all his great books after tuberculosis forced him to leave his homeland to find new life in the South Seas. Ludwig van Beethoven did not compose his "Ninth Symphony" until after he was deaf. In his life of Franklin Roosevelt, John Gunther declared that "polio was God's greatest gift" to the man who, previously, had been satisfied with the honors which came to him because of his family background.

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The nature of the hardship differs with different people. Two men, Charles Darwin and Abraham Lincoln, were born on the same day, February 12, 1809. Each was faced with hardship, and both achieved lasting greatness. Darwin was born sickly, and struggled against poor health throughout his life. Late in his career he wrote: "If I had not been so great an invalid, I should not have done so much work as I have accomplished." Lincoln's hardship was of a different nature. Born in poverty in a lean-to in Hardin, Kentucky, his lack of opportunity drove him to unbelievable sacrifices in order to rise in the world.

When you accept it as a challenge to develop whatever resources you have left, a physical handicap can become the key to achievements which you might never have attempted. Several years ago a young woman named Jessie Simpson was chosen as Miss America. She was beautiful, but even her closest friends agreed that her physical attractiveness was her only outstanding quality. While in high school her one goal in life was to capitalize upon her beauty. About two years after her reign as Miss America she slipped on the icy platform of the Newark, New Jersey, railroad station, and fell in front of an oncoming train. Both her legs were lost in the accident. In the hospital her fiance, Jim Seward, tried to tell her that this would make no difference to their love for each other, and to their plans for marriage. She would not listen. "No," she cried, "I don't want to see you again. I never can be married."

Jessie was fortunate in having the assistance at that time of a wise minister. He inspired her with a willingness to put her trust in God, and to use what she had left of body to help others. In the months which followed, Jessie Simpson learned to walk on artificial limbs. She started a woman's dress shop which, even now, is very successful. She learned to swim and to play golf. She began to work with under-privileged girls in Newark. She started teaching a Sunday School class. As Miss America she had a certain amount of fame, but her response to the accident made her into a great person. Her story had a splendid climax when TIME Magazine carried a picture of her walking down a church aisle to be married to Jim Seward.

The record of the ages forces us to admit that hardship is often the drive which leads men to greatness. Face up to your handicap, if you have one. Don't feel it necessary to apologize for your weaknesses. Hardship, accepted and utilized, will bring out qualities in you which, otherwise, would have remained dormant.

Hardship makes us center our attention upon what is important in life. It often fills us with an urgency to make some contribution to the lives of others. It gives us the consciousness that life is brief at best, and that we must use what we have of time and talents wisely and well.

Hardship is the driving force which can, and often does, make for greatness.

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#### STEWARDSHIP OR TRUSTEESHIP

What is to be the course of your life when you have few, if any, physical handicaps, and when your family and social background contributes to make life

comparatively easy? The only other major key to greatness is a consuming sense of stewardship of all that you have. Develop the concept that your talents, opportunities, family, and material goods are a gift of the Creator, God. Be aware of the obligation to use and administer all you have with a sense of holy trust.

Most of us have done very little to contribute to the privileged position which is ours. The food we eat was cultivated by the hand of man, but the harvest was dependent upon the sunshine, the rainfall, and the fertile soil. The minerals and oil which we take from the ground were not our creation. Many of us are the beneficiaries of the hard work and imagination of our fathers and grandfathers. The democracy under which we live was won at great sacrifice by those whose vision and courage has become our heritage. The individual talents which are ours for business, or music, or leadership were inherent within us. We developed them but they could not have been developed if they had not been present in our heredity.

You are a trustee of a mighty heritage. Learn more about it. Steep yourself in knowledge of the factors which contributed to make you what you are. Your personal greatness will be achieved as your thoughts and actions come more and more to reflect your stewardship of these unmeasured gifts.

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#### TRUSTEESHIP IN OUR NATIONAL LIFE

From the shores of New England to the western slopes of the Rockies, the story of America is the account of hardship as a key to greatness. Our forefathers made unbelievable sacrifices to establish their homes in a strange and hostile land. They battled the elements to till the soil. They endured every manner of physical pain to hold the values which they considered more important than life itself. But in the efforts they built an America which is great.

The ages are dotted with the tragic accounts of nations which accepted greatness as their destiny, and which failed in their stewardship. Percy Shelly wrote an unforgettable story of the failure of ancient Egypt in his poem, "Ozymandias".

"I met a traveler from an antique land  
Who said, two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert, and, near them,  
Half buried in the sand, a shattered visage lies  
Whose frown, and sneer, and wrinkled lip  
Tell that the sculptor well did read  
The passions there enshrined.  
And on the pedestal these words appear,  
'My name is Ozymandias. Look on my works  
Ye mighty, and despair.' Nothing beside remains.  
Round and about the lone and level sands  
Stretch far away."

The United States is a wealthy nation. No one who travels throughout the world can fail to be impressed by the vast difference between the material advantages of the people of North America and the limited resources of others. We are



tempted constantly to accept our position as our deserved state. Our hardships are negligible. The record makes it clear that we will collapse into dust unless our sense of stewardship leads us to use wisely and well all that we have.

Several years ago I observed a construction gang at work outside the city of Helsinki in Finland. It was a strange work force, made up almost equally of young men and young women. They were laboring with picks and shovels. When I inquired about them I learned that the group included men and women on vacation from school or business. "How much pay do they receive?" I inquired. "They are not paid at all," came the answer. "They are helping to build a new highway to Abo because Finland needs the road."

Imagine the response which would come from American young people if they were asked to build a road, working not for pay, but for love of their country. Merely to think about the matter is to be aware of how much we take for granted, and how small is our sense of obligation to the country we say we love.

The principle we are developing applies here with inexorable truth. If hardship is not the drive to make our country great, then there must be a sense of trusteeship toward all we have. This must be a part of your life. Never let a day pass without considering how great have been your advantages. Develop your sense of obligation to fulfill your part in the struggle to preserve the best we know.

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#### TRUSTEESHIP IN OUR FAMILY LIFE

When you listen to the story of a family's history you seldom hear of a background of ease and luxury. A generation, or two generations, away from a prosperous family which is surrounded by evidences of wealth, you find parents who struggled and fought to rise in the world. The hardships were severe, but this drove ambitious fathers and mothers to strive to make life better for their children and grandchildren.

I listened recently to a speaker at a service club. He said, "I determined many years ago that my children would not have to go through what I did to get an education." As I looked around the room I noticed heads nodding in agreement. Most of the business men present had made a similar decision. Few of the men recognized that the sacrifices they had been forced to make had contributed to their character and ambition.

No one wants his children to be subjected to difficulties which would hamper or destroy their chance of development. Nor must we assume that hardship is necessary in order to gain a respected and useful position in the world. But if hardship is not a factor which encourages the use of every talent, then it is essential that there should be instilled a sense of holy trust of all which has been provided.

Families rot within when children assume that wealth, and the things which money can buy, are their just due, and not their privilege. J. Edgar Hoover reports that acts of violence by juveniles occur in nearly the same percentage among children from wealthy homes as among children from underprivileged neighborhoods.



When people are poor they need the encouragements of religion; when people are rich they need the restraints of religion. It is difficult to assess in which state religion is more essential. It is certain that the fibre of family life will remain strong in times of economic security only if faith creates a sense of holy trust. If a youth has talent for business, or for leadership, then he must learn that he possesses a gift which must be used wisely and well. The principle is basic that, without hardship to urge one to supreme endeavor, only a sense of stewardship will give the necessary feeling of urgency.

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### TRUSTEESHIP IN OUR PERSONAL ATTITUDES

Many of you, my readers, can look back on hardship in your early years. You may have possessed very little of a material nature.

I was born into a family which was poor materially, but rich spiritually. One of the most vivid memories of childhood remains the exciting day when a woman gave me five cents for doing an errand. I entered a drug store, clutching that nickel in my fist. It was the first money I had ever owned. "Please give me an ice cream cone," I said proudly to the man behind the counter, "make it chocolate." When I held the cone in my hand I paused to gaze at it before beginning to eat. I have never seen a bouquet of flowers which seemed more beautiful. Looking back over the years I appreciate the fact that hardship was a driving force which made me not only appreciate small luxuries, but made me want to achieve personal victories.

Perhaps you can give similar accounts of your early life. The hardship you faced may have spurred your drive toward greatness.

Often our greatness decreases when we achieve what we think we want most in life. Many women struggle to make a good marriage. They read to become informed of the interests of the one they want to marry. They develop physical attractiveness and charm in order to gain their desired ends. Then many women are satisfied, are content to coast through life - adequate, but never growing.

The same is true of many men. A current drama tells of a young lawyer of humble background who struggled to gain a respected position in the law profession. He made every necessary sacrifice to succeed. Hardship drove him upward. Then there were years when he contributed little. After his death the junior partner, who had been with him for eighteen years, remarked: "I don't know how he gained such a high position in our profession. He never had a new idea in the eighteen years I knew him. I prepared every brief. I gave him the arguments which he used so successfully in court." This man had hardship as the drive to make for greatness, but having achieved his goal, he possessed no sense of stewardship, so had nothing to urge him to further personal victories.

If hardship is no longer the drive which forces you to use your powers to the uttermost, then you must develop a sense of trusteeship toward all you possess. Recognize every day how great have been the gifts entrusted to you. Count your advantages one by one. Think carefully of how best you can use what you have to



grow intellectually and spiritually, and to help those about you.

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### THE LESSON OF THE AGES

Few of us do not aspire to greatness. We may make no effort to achieve it, but in our better moments we want to be great in mind, in heart, and in achievement.

Hardships may drive you to greatness through the laws of life which operate in the universe. The record is clear that, without conscious awareness and striving, many women and men have been driven to supreme achievements by the difficulties which they faced.

If you face severe handicaps, or difficulties, or frustrations, recognize the nature of the hardship.

Consciously labor to develop the potentialities which remain.

Plan how best to take advantage of the meager opportunities before you.

I know a young man who is blind. His lack of vision is a hardship; but as he is a member of a family which has social position and wealth, he could have taken the easy way. He could have lived upon the affection and generosity of his parents. That is what they wanted him to do. Instead, he was determined to secure a college education and standing in a profession. By supreme effort he has succeeded in his purposes. It is questionable whether he would have accomplished as much had he been free from hardship.

You may be facing hardship, but feel sorry for yourself, and look to others to supply your needs. You may be making no effort to compensate for your handicaps. If so, now is the time to make a fresh start.

Hardship can sometimes serve, not to make us great, but to make us sorry for ourselves. Yet, if the handicap is accepted and faced, we can achieve surprising results. It is the lesson of the ages that hardship can and does make for greatness.

The question which you may want to face is this: "Am I a faithful steward of all which has been entrusted to me?" Dr. Wilfred Grenfell will always be an example of good stewardship. He was born into a family which asked nothing of him except that he spend the vast resources of wealth which former generations had stored up for him. But Grenfell felt that life required more of him than that. He became the doctor who served the people of remote Labrador for more than a generation. His sense of stewardship made him great.

Greatness is your God-given destiny. Accept this truth as basic. Capital-



ize upon your possibilities to grow in mental and moral strength. Don't be satisfied with a selfish attitude toward life. Kindle the awareness of stewardship as the key to greatness. To accept this principle is to appropriate a law of the universe which operates for you every day that you live.

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AFFIRMATION

Hardship is not only my burden, but my opportunity. I also have a stewardship

- in the nation I love
- in the family I serve
- in the life I live

I will be faithful to all which is entrusted to me.

Blessings,

Your Instructor.



