



THE SPIRIT OF OPULENCE

By

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IT is quite a mistake to suppose that we must restrict and stint ourselves in order to develop greater power or usefulness. This is to form the conception of the Divine Power as so limited that the best use we can make of it is by a policy of self-starvation, whether material or mental. Of course, if we believe that some form of self-starvation is necessary to our producing good work, then so long as we entertain this belief the fact actually is so *for us*. “Whatever is not of faith”—that is, not in accordance with our honest *belief*—“is sin”; and by acting contrary to what we really believe we bring in a suggestion of opposition to the Divine Spirit, which must necessarily paralyse our efforts, and surround us with a murky atmosphere of distrust and want of joy.

But all this exists in, and is produced by, our *belief*; and when we come to examine the grounds of this belief we shall find that it rests upon an entire misapprehension of the nature of our own power. If we clearly realise that the creative power in ourselves is *unlimited*, then there is no reason for limiting the extent to which we may enjoy what we can create by means of it. Where we are drawing from the *infinite* we need never be afraid of taking more than our share. That is not where the danger lies. The danger is in not sufficiently realising our own richness, and in looking upon the externalised products of our creative power as being the true riches instead of the creative power of spirit itself.

If we avoid this error, there is no need to limit ourselves in taking what we will from the infinite storehouse: “All things are yours.” And the way to avoid this error is by realising that the true wealth is in identifying ourselves with the *spirit* of opulence. We must be opulent in our *thought*. Do not “think money,” as such, for it is only one means of opulence; but *think opulence*, that is, largely, generously, liberally, and you will find that the means of realising this thought will flow to you from all quarters, whether as money or as a hundred other things not to be reckoned in cash.

We must not make ourselves dependent on any particular *form* of wealth, or insist on its coming to us through some particular channel—that is at once to impose a limitation, and to shut out other forms of wealth and to close other channels; but we must enter into the *spirit* of it. Now the spirit is Life, and throughout the universe Life ultimately consists in *circulation*, whether within the physical body of the individual or on the scale of the entire solar system; and circulation means a continual flowing around, and the *spirit* of opulence is no exception to this universal law of all life.

When once this principle becomes clear to us we shall see that our attention should be directed rather to the giving than the receiving. We must look upon ourselves, not as misers’ chests to be kept locked for our own benefit, but as



centres of distribution; and the better we fulfil our function as such centres the greater will be the corresponding inflow. If we choke the outlet the current must slacken, and a full and free flow can be obtained only by keeping it open. The spirit of opulence—the opulent mode of thought, that is—consists in cultivating the feeling that we possess all sorts of riches which we can *bestow upon others*, and which we can bestow *liberally* because by this very action we open the way for still greater supplies to flow in. But you say, “I am short of money, I hardly know how to pay for necessaries. What have I to give?”

The answer is that we must always start from the point where we are; and if your wealth at the present moment is not abundant on the material plane, you need not trouble to start on that plane. There are other sorts of wealth, still more valuable, on the spiritual and intellectual planes, which you can give; and you can start from this point and practise the spirit of opulence, even though your balance at the bank may be nil. And then the universal law of attraction will begin to assert itself. You will not only begin to experience an inflow on the spiritual and intellectual planes, but it will extend itself to the material plane also.

If you have realised the *spirit* of opulence you *cannot help* drawing to yourself material good, as well as that higher wealth which is not to be measured by a money standard; and because you truly understand the *spirit* of opulence you will neither affect to despise this form of good, nor will you attribute to it a value that does not belong to it; but you will *co-ordinate* it with your other more interior forms of wealth so as to make it the material instrument in smoothing the way for their more perfect expression. Used thus, with understanding of the relation which it bears to spiritual and intellectual wealth, material wealth becomes *one with them*, and is no more to be shunned and feared than it is to be sought for its own sake.

It is not money, but the *love* of money, that is the root of evil; and the *spirit* of opulence is precisely the attitude of mind which is furthest removed from the love of money for its own sake. It does not believe in money. What it does believe in is the generous feeling which is the intuitive recognition of the great law of circulation, which does not in any undertaking make its first question, How much am I going to *get* by it? but, How much am I going to *do* by it? And making *this* the first question, the getting will flow in with a generous profusion, and with a spontaneousness and rightness of direction that are absent when our first thought is of receiving only.

We are not called upon to give what we have not yet got and to run into debt; but we are to give liberally of what we have, with the knowledge that by so doing we are setting the law of circulation to work, and as this law brings us greater and greater inflows of every kind of good, so our out-giving will increase, not by depriving ourselves of any expansion of our own life that we may desire, but by finding that every expansion makes us the more powerful instruments for expanding the life of others. “Live and let live” is the motto of the true opulence.