

The True Vine

A116 Sunday Address 7th February 1943 St Mary Abbots Place, London Sunday Service

The text of this address is as issued in the magazine Angelus after it was given, apart from correction of errors

Text: from *Angelus*, March 1943. The breaking of the text under headings is from the original editing, which may be substantial.

Context: the date is conjectured simply on the address having been printed, as was normal, in the following month's *Angelus*.

General Notes: 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman ... ye are the branches' is from John 15 (see below) and with it this address, if the conjectured dates are correct, begins a series of three centred on St John's Gospel, alongside the series of Inner Teachings on the same, which began in the winter of 1943 and continued to summer 1945.

White Eagle speaks of scientists not knowing the age of the earth – that was relatively true in 1943, and even today's estimates will likely be revised in time. White Eagle seems to stray into psychology in the 'World, Flesh and Devil' passage but correctly denies this. Nonetheless it is interesting that he uses the term 'the herd instinct' which was a relatively new concept in psychology, dating only from First World War times. White Eagle does not mean by the term quite what the psychologists then defined, but it is interesting how later in his teaching he refers to the positive aspect of this: group consciousness.

References: the passage on which the teaching is based is John 15 : 1-6. Towards the end, 'the true and the beautiful' contains just a hint of Plato's 'transcendentals': the good, the true and the beautiful'. The phrase, 'Love is the fulfilling of the law' is actually St Paul's – in Romans 13 : 10 – but there is a sense of it in Christ's 'Thou shalt love the lord thy God with all thy heart', etc. – Matthew 22 : 36-40.

White Eagle's Address:

How beautiful it is that in all the world, no matter of what race or creed, is to be found a longing in the human heart for God – in the orthodox phrasing, for 'an eternal home'. All humanity responds to the stimulus of truth. The divine principle is planted deep within, and because of this, my friends and brethren, we have great hope for humanity. Teachers of mankind throughout the ages, knowing this profound truth, have held the same hope, the same assurance. The word 'saved' has become rather unpalatable of late and gives rise to misinterpretation, to an assertive egotism. We are speaking of the human ego – not the divine Spirit. Such assertiveness is not altogether evil, but a stimulus to growth and development in the individual, although it can lead to many mistakes and great human suffering.

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The text upon which we are going to talk today is this: 'I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman; any branch in Me which beareth not fruit He taketh away ... and men gather them and they are burned'. First, let us clear our way by saying that in Jesus's teaching we have everything new, and yet nothing new: for Christ is the law and has been the law since the beginning of the world millions and millions of years ago. Scientists have as yet no true estimate of the age of the earth, but from the beginning cosmic truth was established in

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humanity. Much has yet to be discovered concerning the age of humanity and the beliefs and religions of mankind.

In the beginning, as far back as we can possibly think, there were teachers. Men of God were created millions of years ago with exactly the same bodies and instincts and souls as today. Do not assume that we possess more knowledge than mankind had in the past, for truth is as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end – the same truth, the same law.

There is ever development and evolution of the divine spirit in the soul of the world and in the soul of man, which is ever stimulating growth and which for ever expresses itself more beautifully as growth in the individual takes place. So what our beloved Lord, the Master Jesus, taught, or what came through His lips, by the supreme light of Christ, was no more or less than the Ancient Wisdom, presented for that time and age, but incorporating the same age-old truths.

Body, Mind and Spirit

My friends, we would try to make our subject very simple and very clear. We speak of body, mind and spirit. When we refer to body, we do not mean only the physical body. We have said before it is very difficult to separate the astral world from the physical world, because [the] former so interpenetrates the latter. Body of flesh and body of the astral or the soul-world are both intermingled. While it is true that a physical body can decay and die, there would still remain the soul. Every living thing, including the earth itself, has a soul-body. Some teachers call the soul-body 'the psyche', because it is actually the psychic body and this during mortal life interpenetrates the physical body and stimulates certain instincts, which instincts direct men to find experience. Such experiences have one ultimate object: growth of the spirit, the divine spirit.

The World, the Flesh and the Devil

Modern psychologists give a name to such instincts. We do not ourselves profess to be psychologists, but we will name three main instincts: the herd-instinct in the old Book is called 'The World'; the sex-instinct in the old Book is called 'The Flesh'; and the third instinct is the ego-instinct, which is called 'The Devil'. Let us consider the third, the Devil, with whom you are all familiar. You do not perhaps label him so bluntly, but this is the instinct which urges us to be arrogant, bad-tempered, to desire to pay back if anyone injures us. So strong is it that people say, 'I don't now what is wrong with me today; I have a little devil on my back'. They speak truth, ignorant that there are what the old Book would call the Sins of the Devil – sins which are subtle, sins which urge man to be grumpy and unkind, to attack and to retaliate. Be sure if you find yourself waking with that feeling one morning, you are reacting to the instinct of the lower ego.

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It is not necessary to speak of the instinct of Sex, that tremendous force, that great urge which when transmuted has a very beautiful place in the scheme of evolution; but can take a low and animal form. This is then the instinct of the flesh. And then we have the first instinct, which makes people do things because everyone else does them; they must go to the same places and copy everyone, much as when one cow in a meadow walks out of the gate, all follow – the herd instinct. Look around the world and you will see this happening on all sides.

The Life Beyond

These three are instincts or stimuli to which the soul is continually responding. This idea of the soul was known to all peoples. The soul when passing away from the physical body does not find itself necessarily in heaven, but in a state very much like the life which it quitted. When the body dies the soul, a counterpart of the body, which has largely responded to the stimuli of the world, retains the feelings and the desires and instincts of the world, unless some change has taken place in the soul during the lifetime of the body. This something is the response of the man, through his soul, to God, to divine truth.

Not for many incarnations do the masses quicken to the highest, that divine truth. They live influenced by the lower, the animal instincts. Animals and flowers have souls, everything which has animation has a soul. Indeed, there are souls of the mountains and the rocks. You will say instantly, 'But how can a rock or a stone have a soul, because it is inanimate?' How do you know? Because it does not appear to breathe and to live? All nature has a soul, and when man leaves his body he discovers this for himself by entering what is called the soul or the astral world, and there finds an exact replica of the world that he has left. But he is living then in a soul-body and is not able to make himself seen or heard on the physical plane, because his soul-body is of a different vibration from the earth and from his old physical body.

Life's Purpose

Where is all this leading us? What then is the purpose of life? Is it possible for the soul of man, or the psyche, the psychic body of man to die? It is possible – it can be, but it is not usual. Now we begin to see the meaning in the words of Jesus - every branch that does not bear fruit is cut off and is thrown into the fire. This means that if what has accumulated in the soul is of no use, or is, shall we say, bad fruit, it is consumed by a natural process.

Beloved friends, this is a cosmic law and is continually taking place and not necessarily only on the astral plane. When the psyche becomes so depraved there is nothing for it but to die, because there is no need for it to live. The process of death, of this consuming of that which is unwanted, occurs to the souls of men and to the souls of nations.

Nevertheless, we say with deep conviction and with confidence that everything will come right in the end. Everything always does work out right, but not necessarily without suffering,

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without the soul going through the fires of Gehenna or, if you like, hell-fire ... the fires which consume that which has outlived its purpose. As we look out into the world, we can see these fires raging; but, my friends, we must not look upon human suffering with complacency because we know that it is the outworking of the law of God. We must not sit back and say all is karma. This where we draw the line. We must not be indifferent to human suffering or to human joy. Now we begin to see a glimmer which soon will grow into a glorious light in our souls. What is this light? It is divine love, the light of the soul. Man has within him power to respond to the stimuli of the psychic world; so also has the power to respond to divine love.

The Road Paved with Good Intentions

The mind can understand these truths and say, 'Yes, I believe it is so. Mankind must live by love'. Much is now being said about brotherhood and about seeing that everyone has a 'fair deal'. Much of this is but lip-service, even if well-meaning. You know the old saying, 'The road to hell is paved with good intentions'? So many religious people are full of good intentions. They know with the mind what is the right thing, but that is as far as it goes. This is not enough. The stimulus within is urging not only the mind but the soul to respond to divine love and this means that the life on earth must be lived *actively* in God.

Activity in God

Love, my friends, is *activity in God*. This means that the individual not only listens sympathetically to the troubles and problems of his brother, but also feels them, takes them into his own being. His imagination is so developed that if he witnesses the suffering of a brother he immediately becomes that brother. Did not Jesus do this very thing? When he raised Lazarus from death, did He not suffer as did the bereaved sisters? Did he not weep over the sorrows of Jerusalem? Did not Jesus at the wedding feast enter into the joy of His friends? Do you not see the Gospels of Christ are charged with the Ancient Wisdom? The spirit of Christ which was manifest through the beloved Master Jesus is the spirit born in every man; and the spirit of Christ when it rises from the cradle – deep, deep within the psyche or soul of man – enters instantly into the sorrows and the joys of all mankind, not with mind alone, but wholeheartedly.

Any Spiritualist will tell you that you can take on the psychic conditions of others. The Spiritualist opens the psychic doors with a purpose, leaves his psyche open to receive impressions. But then every man and woman is unconsciously open to the psychic conditions of the world. Your psyche or psychic body is responding all the time to psychic forces of evil and of good. But the divine spirit, the love of Christ also within the soul, will, if the mind looks up and aspires, help the soul to open to the true and the beautiful, will raise the soul from death to life. This is what Jesus meant when he said man must be reborn to this life of the divine spirit.

Fruit of the Sprit

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In conclusion, if the soul or the psyche be not animated and inspired and illumined by the divine spirit, it has not borne fruit. It is but an empty shell and it must die; but the divine spirit, the divine love, which is in every brother, does not die; it never dies. The psyche, yes, can be consumed.

Christ, the beloved, the divine, said, 'I am the true vine'. I am the divine love, the true life. You are branches of that vine. In you also grows the Christ spirit.

So, my beloved brethren, we see clearly the two aspects; the psyche, the soul which lives certainly after the death of the physical body, but until living in the divine love it does not truly know life. All mankind is moving up this spiral, continually reincarnating and thus gaining experience and responding slowly but surely to divine love. If it fails, then there is no health in it. That is what happens in the physical body also when there is no love, because disease springs from lack of love. But humanity is only in process of growth and evolution. When the perfect man has come, when there is whole growth of the divine spirit in man, then there will be perfect health, perfect harmony, perfect beauty. We move towards this golden age. How far distant it lies we cannot say.

Although the psyche of those who cannot respond passes away, again they come into new birth. A new soul is given, with the same potentialities, the same instincts and also the spirit of love which will enable it to become a branch of the true vine. Love is living in God, actively in God, so that every thought and action is in God – not in the world. We no longer respond to the vibrations of destruction and death, but to the vibrations of life. So may it be. Love is the fulfilling of the law – Christ's words! Until love is established the fires of Gehenna will continue to consume and cause suffering and pain. All our love, dear ones; great love and blessing be upon you.

The search matches with either words and phrases, which appear in the text, or the following 'key' words and phrases, which are similar in meaning to those in the document:

enlightenment, path of the soul, spiritual path, etheric body, bodily urges, meaning of life, pain, cause and effect, empathy, community