

The Mystical Teaching of St John

T151 The Inner Teachings 9th January 1945 St Mary Abbot's Place, London

No. 18 in the Series and based upon the 16th chapter of the Gospel, which should be read together with this record.

Invocation:

O divine Source of our life; Thou from whom we all derive, to whom we all return; Thou who art all-enfolding love, Thou who art truth; Thou who art love, wisdom and power; we seek Thy wisdom; we pray that in this upper room there may be a manifestation of Thy life in the hearts of all present. We pray for understanding; but first of all make clean our hearts within that we may be fit to receive, to understand the mysteries of the spiritual life. May the company of illumined beings who are with us make their presence felt by all in the physical body. May the Master and his disciples manifest. May this be a meeting between earth and heaven, and may heaven be the authority of all that is said. May it be from Thee, O God.

Amen.

Man* has changed little in two thousand years. The same spiritual truths which the Master Jesus endeavoured to impart to his disciples are being imparted again today. There are still some men who know and some who do not know. The teachings attributed to one called John are still the mystical teachings of the spirit, and those who would learn them must be born of the spirit ere they can comprehend. When John speaks of rebirth he does not only mean reincarnation; he means the birth or awakening of the spirit within the soul.

*[*For editorial policy around gender see the introduction.]*

Some confusion exists about what is spirit. We will try to make clear what we mean by spirit. Because people are said to be obsessed by spirits and Jesus is said to have cast out unclean spirits, the word 'spirit' may have more than one meaning. The true meaning of spirit is the Holy Breath. Spirit is sometimes called and actually *is* life, but an animal kind of life which is largely automatic is not the life of the spirit—it belongs to the physical world. Life which is eternal is not of this world. Jesus said, 'The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me'.* The prince, the ruler of this world, the being who directs the physical aspect of life, has nothing in real spirit. It is not the breath or divine essence of life. It seems necessary to make very clear the difference between pure spirit and life confined to physical matter.

*[*John 14 : 30]*

Jesus said (in effect) that when death comes it means that the spirit is withdrawn. You interpret this to mean the cessation of the life-force which animates physical matter. It is not this. When love is withdrawn a kind of death which operates on the psychic plane as well as on the physical plane follows. It may be that this was the meaning behind the words which are still used in your marriage service, until death us do part. People think this means physical death. We do not think so. Two people are united; when love departs, the death of love must part them. When love has departed from the heart of a man or woman there can only remain death.

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When contemplating this 16th chapter of St. John we should get clearly in mind the meaning of pure spirit, the divine essence, or the Divine Breath, which when withdrawn all that remains is death. We want you to remember that these mystical teachings have a deeper meaning than is commonly thought. There is also an esoteric meaning which we would unfold. Just as a rebirth may mean only a reincarnation, there may also be a spiritual rebirth of the soul on to the plane of pure spirit. Jesus said that such a rebirth can only come to his disciple by the withdrawal of his physical presence.

To give some indication of what it may mean when this pure spirit is born again into the soul of man, let us consider something which takes place when two people become separated through death. One continues in the world; the soul of the other goes onward. Perhaps there comes a wonderful experience for the one that is left whose soul is raised in consciousness to the plane of spiritual life where the loved one now dwells. Some of you may have experienced this great wonder, this true communion, this at-one-ment, this attunement of spirit. Or it may be that in the quiet of meditation you have touched for a flash—you could not hold it long—the cosmic or the Christ consciousness, and been aware of the plane of pure spirit. No one who has experienced this can ever forget it.

This is what Jesus had in mind when he spoke to his disciples about the necessity for him to leave them before they could receive the spirit of truth, the Comforter. He knew that they were clinging to his physical presence. Here again another important point is raised. A number of people get to know spiritual truth intellectually. They contemplate with their mind, they meditate upon, they think ever intellectual truth. They acquire a spiritual scientific knowledge.

Jesus often talked to his disciples. Many of them had been with him a long time. He knew that much he said was only understood intellectually as far as they were concerned. It had not penetrated deeper than the intellect. Yet what a vast difference there is between merely knowing things and becoming spiritually a part of life! Or in other words receiving into the soul the Divine Breath which is pure love, not a love which is passionate or emotional but pure. Such a love is the act of giving. If love gives, it must in turn receive: it is the law. You cannot give without receiving, but it is more blessed to give than to receive. Why did Jesus say this? Because without first learning to give it is impossible to receive. To receive what? To receive the Comforter. The spirit of truth is the Comforter and this spirit cannot be received (or welcomed) by the soul until it has learned to feel the impetus of love so strong within that it can only spontaneously give and give and give. Did not the saints live thus without thought of themselves? The gift that one receives in return for giving true love to others is that Spirit of Truth which brings life, not death, and it brings power also.

Here we have the trinity. We have love, and life which is the result of the incoming of truth. Life is power—and so we get love, wisdom and power, the threefold Godhead. This you will see is an even deeper interpretation of the trinity than we have given before.

You will recognize how necessary it was for Jesus to withdraw in order that the great love which he had inspired in the disciples would urge them to love and to give to the world as he

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had given. In such a giving they would in turn receive the spirit of truth, but their urge thus to give to mankind would not awaken whilst he was there with them. He had to withdraw and leave them to receive the spirit of truth and then to manifest its power.

Many live only in the physical body and think that physical things are the most important; even when they know of spiritual matters they still think the former to be the most important. In a degree they are right: physical life is important because it enables the soul to contact experiences which can quicken the breath of life in the soul. The ideal for us all is to place physical life in correct perspective. Physical life forms only a part of life; it is not the whole. Moreover, physical life in itself cannot live eternally. The body dies, but the Holy Breath can impregnate the soul which man creates for himself out of his own desire nature, and that Holy Breath is eternal. Once received into the soul it brings a stimulus and the soul attracts to itself from the physical plane of life all that is most lovely in creation. The soul has a freewill choice. It can ally itself with the prince of this world and attract all that which means death. This is what humanity is now doing and this is why humanity suffers and dies—without knowing that it dies. Do you not realise that a large percentage of people now existing are already dead? They are dead because there is no life, no spiritual elements in them; they belong to this world and this world perishes—whereas pure spirit is eternal.

The purpose of your life is that you may live in the spirit and that the Divine Breath may live in you, and that as you climb the ladder or the arc of life you may take with you an individualised soul, pure and true. Thus you can enter the kingdom of heaven a living soul.

Jesus once said to his disciples, 'Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now'.* What did he mean? Those of you who believe in life after death will be puzzled, for if he referred to the spirit world we must all in due course follow him. Remember that he could see into the minds of his disciples and knew that much of his teaching was only intellectually understood. Therefore he knew that until something happened to shake them, to wake them up to the realities of pure spirit, they could not follow. He was going to the plane of pure spirit to return to his Father; they were not clothed to meet the heavenly bridegroom.

*[*John 13 : 36]*

You can find the same esoteric meaning in the parable of the guest who was not fittingly robed for the wedding feast. That clothing symbolises a soul impregnated with the life and the truth and the love of pure spirit. Such a spirit wears a robe of light which scintillates and sparkles. That is the wedding garment. Jesus knew that his disciples could not follow him. It is one matter to know spiritual truth intellectually and quite another to be so clothed in spiritual truth that every thought and word and act is a spontaneous expression of divine love and life.

You may say, 'Oh, it is not possible to live like this'. We know your difficulties, but we also know that it is an effort which must be made. You must keep on and on. If you can express for one flashing moment that spontaneous love, you will have taken a momentous step forward.

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This truth you will find repeated again and again in the gospel of St John: 'I am the true vine; I and my Father are one'. Man must realise whence he comes and whither he goes before he can get any sense into life; otherwise he is like a rudderless ship. Once man recognises his captain, once the captain takes command, misery and sorrow depart, and true joy replaces them because the soul can then understand; it knows at last that in order to create and build itself up, it must undergo certain experiences. Therefore, my friends, may you realise that suffering has brought you something more of those finer elements from heaven. Sorrow can do this and joy can do it also.

(Verses 1 and 2 of the 16th chapter of St John were then read.)

That can happen today when a man of true spirit endeavours to speak the word of truth. He is ostracised; he is cast out of the place of learning. The intellectualist has no place for the spiritual man. He thinks the spiritual man is just a dreamer and a mystic and is useless in the world of man. Jesus knew this.

(Reading of verses 3 to 9)

Because when truth comes into a man's heart he sees with very different eyes. His values of life change. He is able to discern the things of the spirit and to discern true values in life. The spirit of truth comes to him and he immediately sees beneath the surface. He does not need the judgment of the world to guide him.

(Reading of verses 10 and 11)

When the spirit of truth comes the prince of this world is at once judged, because discernment allows the soul to see the prince in his true colours.

(Reading of verses 12 and 13)

An important point. It means: I did not tell you these things before because you could not stand the truth. That frequently happens. Something has got to happen before that soul can receive truth—maybe great sorrow or great joy. Something has to crack the shell or break the crust before the soul can receive truth.

(Reading of verses 14 to 18)

He is speaking in riddles. They have not received the spirit of truth or understanding. Therefore he says, 'A little while, and ye behold me not' because they are going through a period of darkness. Later on when they have had their experience (and this applies to all of you) they will awaken and follow the way of Christ. It is a state of unfoldment of the soul of man.

(Reading of verses 19 to 22)

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The same thing happens to any soul. You pass through sorrows which you feel you can never get over. You undergo the travail of birth and you bring forth not a physical child but the spiritual gift of understanding.

(Reading of verse 23)

Why do you suppose Jesus said, 'In that day ye shall ask me nothing'? Because there will be nothing remaining to ask. The soul of the disciple in that day will be complete. It will know truth. It will have all truth within itself and it will not have to seek further.

(Reading of verse 24 to end of chapter)

The soul born of the Christ spirit enters into the peace which passeth all understanding, into the truth beyond all worldliness. This peace, this truth and this life Jesus was teaching his disciples how to find. So it is with you today. Those who have seen and have entered into the kingdom know only peace. Nothing can disturb you: no fears, no anxieties. The soul who knows dwells in Christ and in the Father. This is the meaning of the peace of a soul reborn to the life of the divine spirit.

This chapter, of course, is a description of the path of the neophyte or the initiate. It indicates what it means when the soul is initiated into the Christ state. It gives a description of the soul-experiences through which every soul must pass before it can enter through the gates of initiation. It emphasises so very clearly the importance of the real life of spirit—not the mere talking about it—but the living of it as against the insignificance of the material life. It is also a guide to the disciple so that every experience and every physical act should be interpreted in the terms of the spirit. The disciple should always look for the inner meaning—yes, even of food and clothing and the trivial things of everyday life. Behind all is the spirit. Do not cast aside the physical life. It grows more important when it is lived with an understanding of spiritual values. Everything you do in the world should be a spontaneous manifestation or expression of the spirit.

We have endeavoured to give in broad outline the esoteric meaning of this 16th chapter of St. John. The truths taught long ago by Jesus and so beautifully written down by John have to be known and lived. They have not been so lived except by a few saints. Even these saints were limited by the world of their day. Now we are coming to a new age and these same teachings of John are going to found a new church, but not a church such as you know today. The church of St John will be built into men's lives, into men's hearts, into men's souls. Man will learn to worship in his own church, in the sacred place of his heart. Men will not live by physical values only, but by the light of their own spirit, and their own spirit will show them how to behave towards their fellows. There will not be the need then for social legislation—you hear so much about trying to put on the roof before the foundations are laid. The foundations of the church of St John will be laid on pure spirit. The cathedral will be raised out of men's lives. On earth will come the spirit of perfect brotherhood. Then people will no longer foolishly worship mammon. The prince of this world will recede and fall away

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before the spirit of love and brotherhood. 'I AM that I AM.' 'I AM The Divine Flame' sayeth the Christ.

Benediction:

On this note let us all gather together, my dear ones, within the heart of the Divine Fire. O Love, breathe into us thy warmth, thy beauty, thy truth, thy power, so that thy blessing upon each one of these thy children may be full. Thus and only thus can they know peace and happiness beyond all earthly imagination or understanding. Thy will, O Father–Mother God, Thy will be done on earth, and in earth as it is in heaven. Thy will.

Amen.

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Comfort, dependency, religion, future

