

Consider the Lilies

A131 Sunday Address 2nd April 1944 St Mary Abbots Place, London Palm 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, May 1944

Context: that it is a Palm Sunday address is made clear by the third paragraph of the main address. The date is conjectural except inasmuch as in 1944 Palm Sunday fell on this date and it was printed in the May *Angelus*. Interestingly no Easter Sunday service has survived for 1944.

General Notes: a very beautiful address. The suggestion that the child who remains in his father's care is somehow a saint, while the one who runs ahead and cuts himself has to learn surrender, is somewhat contradicted by (for instance) White Eagle's comments on the Parable of the Prodigal Son – but there is perhaps resolution to be found if we see the two children in relation to their spiritual, rather than earthly, father.

References: the opening paragraph of the address contains submerged references to John 1 : 3–5. For St Paul on the two bodies of man (fifth paragraph), see 1 Corinthians 15 : 40 and the surrounding discussion. The quotation from Emerson, 'It takes a God to see a God' is a favourite of White Eagle's but has resisted location in Emerson's works. The origin of the 'Eastern' story that follows is not known, though White Eagle often enjoys quoting stories of Ramakrishna. The English poet who wrote of looking on a flower and understanding the glory of the universe is probably Tennyson, in the poem, 'Flower in the crannied wall'. 'Consider the lilies' is Matthew 6 : 28.

White Eagle's Address:

We meet to commune and to worship our Creator, the great White Spirit, Father–Mother God; and the Son of God, the Spirit of Christ which dwelleth deep within the human heart. In quietude, in tranquillity, let us therefore seek the innermost place of prayer and worship within our being: and being thus united with the spirit of all truth and love, we become conscious of the blessings of this mortal life. We become aware of the manifestation of this divine spirit of beauty and love in all created things; and in this realisation of the blessings of life, of the presence of Christ, the Light of all mankind, we surrender our minds and hearts, knowing that thus shall we receive the blessing of God. Amen.

We have just taken part in a certain ceremony. We refer to the portion of the Service in which you are asked to send forth spiritual light in the form of a Cross. We would explain to those who come to this Lodge for the first time that the way to project is to think of a Cross of Light, and to think with compassion and tenderness of all suffering mankind. This act of projecting the Cross of Light, and to think with compassion and tenderness of all suffering mankind. This act of projecting the Cross of Light is more potent than any of you perhaps realise. We would like to go deeper; let us see what the Light really is and what the symbol of the cross actually means. We are told by the Master Jesus that the Light is the Life and that the Life is the Light; and that the Light shineth in darkness – which the darkness comprehendeth not.

The Life is the Light, the Light is the Life; the light is the spirit which dwelleth in the darkness of matter, of materialism; but the darkness comprehendeth not the light. You know that the symbol of the cross is one of the most ancient symbols in the world? It can be traced

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through many past religions, it is to be found carved upon the stones and rocks of prehistoric man. In ancient Egypt it was known as the symbol or key of life. This act of projecting the cross of light into the ether, into the invisible life of the worlds around you, is an act of surrender; that is, if you contemplate the great need of your brother man your heart must overflow with tenderness and love and compassion. In other words, you are stretching yourself upon the cross, you are being crucified in matter. All the demands of the material self are surrendered as you contemplate the needs of mankind, and from the central point of compassion, pity and love in your heart you send forth this glorious cross of light.

At this season of the year much will be said by the Church about the crucifixion of Christ. This week, commencing from today, is Holy Week. May we suggest humbly that there may be too much concentration upon the material or outer aspect of Christianity, and not sufficient upon the inner spirit, or the life, not enough upon the true light (which is Christ) in man's innermost heart.

When we study many religions of the past we notice how the origin of all religion was this true life and light. It originated from the spirit of its teacher, of its leader; but when the teacher was withdrawn it would seem a common fault in mankind to attempt to materialise the spirit of their religion. When this is done the truth and the light and the life departs.

The spirit must illumine mankind, it must be the *life* of their religion; this life can only survive in religion through the act of crucifixion of the flesh, or surrender of the flesh to the life of the spirit. It is impossible for spirit to be seen by matter. We mean this, it is impossible for spirit (a spirit if you like) to be seen through physical sight. God is spirit and no man has seen God at any time with the physical sight. But as St Paul once said, man has two bodies, the terrestrial body and the celestial body. It is with the celestial eyes that man beholds the life and the spirit. When a spirit lives on after death it lives in a world of light. You have within your body rays of light of which you know little or nothing. This light dwelleth in the darkness of the mind and the body and the darkness comprehendeth it not. There is also sunlight imprisoned in many of the elements of the earth. The light is shining in the darkness, but it is unknown, undiscovered except in a few cases when your scientists have learned the secret. This light is life!

The light which dwells within man's soul is the Christ life. When man develops or endeavours to allow this Christ life to be expressed, the light shines through the physical self and is sometimes seen by other men, but not very often; because as the American philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson, once said, it takes a God to see a God. This is also a saying of the sages in the East. It takes a sage to recognise a sage. The story has been told of a sage who was found by the wayside in a state of deep meditation. Three men passed that way and the first one was a labourer. He looked upon the sage as he meditated and said, 'He must also be a labourer and very tired after his work. So he has gone to sleep'. The next man who came by was a drunkard; he looked at the still form and laughed and said, 'Oh, he has had a drink or two too many!' and he passed on. The third man who came by looked at the sage and said: 'He is a man of God'; and he very gently rubbed the soles of the sage's feet

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and the palms of his hands and gradually brought him back to the consciousness of this world.

It takes a sage to recognise a sage. The man or woman who has cultivated the life of the spirit can always recognise the light shining through another.

Many people today have heard very attractive stories about the life after death. True, the life of spirit is very desirable. We do not gainsay this; but, my friends, this life is not to be enjoyed merely by passing into the next world, but only when the spiritual life is cultivated whilst man is still living in a body of flesh. Because this same life when lived in the flesh is a realisation, whilst in the flesh, of spiritual light. This light and this radiation of the spirit my friends illumine and reveal the beauties of the spirit life after death. If the soul when released from the flesh has neglected to cultivate the life of the spirit – that is to say, if it has not lived simply, humbly, kindly, purely, harmoniously, beautifully (and greatest of all) lived with kindness of heart towards its brother man, that soul will have no indwelling light. If you will make a daily habit of endeavouring to realise the life of the light of the spirit within yourself – not in a self-complacent, but in a broad, human way – so that you look out upon the world and all the life of mankind with appreciation and thankfulness, you will develop that which will light your spirit here and your spirit life beyond the veil. You have heard it said that when an illumined spirit appears to a man, a light seems to shine from within, illuminating the spirit body. The beauties of the spirit world to which man passes cannot be seen unless the man carries a light with him. It is the light of his spirit which creates the beauty of his heaven.

But, my friends, why wait? The little light must be lighted now. That is why we were all created and sent by God into a physical body that we may learn to cultivate the light. It is a duty of every man and woman so to live day by day that they may cultivate the light of the spirit and enjoy the heaven which can be thus created here on earth. Go out into the country. Unless you are prepared, unless you have the life and the light within you to understand, you will not fully appreciate the beauty before you. It is the spirit which reflects beauty. If the spirit lies dormant, then the mind may not appreciate nor understand.

Did not an English poet say something to the effect that a man who had cultivated the true spirit of God or Christ within would look upon a flower and to him it would contain the glory of the universe? But to the man who had no light the flower would remain a flower and nothing more. This is why we stress the importance of creating the light and the life so that the light may shine in the darkness and illumine and bring joy to life.

We like to use the lily to symbolise the life of the spirit. The Master said, ‘Consider the lilies; they toil not, neither do they spin’. They apparently make no effort, but rather do they surrender themselves to the great love of God. Consider the lily as representing the life of your spirit which grows unseen, unknown. It takes no thought to itself. It surrenders itself to the sunlight. This is the true meaning of the crucifixion, a mystical interpretation perhaps, but a simple and a true one. Crucifixion means the surrender of desire, of the self-will to the

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God-will. It stands for the difference between the man who acknowledges God as his Father and one who says, 'Yes, I believe in God; but I like to believe in myself too. I believe that I have powers that I must express; I must be myself, it is my duty'. Such a man is like a child taking a walk with his father. He likes to cling to his father's hand, but suddenly sees something attractive by the wayside and runs off to investigate. As he runs he falls and cuts his leg. But the brother of the child who ran away is held in his father's arms and makes no attempt to stir. The brother has surrendered himself to the father's love. My friends, the second child is the state of the true saint, who has crucified the personal I.

You may not agree with all of this, but you will learn eventually that every child of God has come to this state of self-surrender, of crucifixion. Only through crucifixion can there be true resurrection of the spirit into the heaven which is prepared for it. The Christ spirit within man can grow like the lily, pure and perfect, because the lily has surrendered itself to the laws governing its life. It has grown as the Father planted it in the dark earth towards the light, out of the mud at the bottom of the pond. Even as the flower strains towards the sunlight, so also the spirit of man with his roots in the mud and the slime of materialism yearns towards the sunlight and becomes a perfect expression of the true life, a child of God. So, my beloved friends, live day by day. Live to become as the lily, the perfect expression of the true life of God.

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:

crucifix, ancient religions, symbolism, heaven world, world of light, reincarnation, rebirth, insight, perception, sacrifice, life after death, enlightenment