

Freewill versus Destiny

A019 Sunday Address 22nd March 1936 Pembroke Hall, London Sunday Service

The text of this address is as prepared for machine-duplicated circulation shortly after it was given, apart from correction of errors

Text: a blue duplicated script, with no superficial markings, in a bound volume.

Context: the second known public address given by White Eagle in Pembroke Hall.

General notes: given exactly a month after the opening service, this address sets a pattern that would be consistent for several years, which is of White Eagle giving an address once a month at a Sunday service at the newly-opened Pembroke Hall. A reference to races by skin colour is not derogatory in any way and normal for the time.

References: 'There is a divinity that shapes our ends, Rough hew them how we will' is from *Hamlet*, Act V scene ii; it is slightly misquoted in the sixth paragraph. 'I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul' is from the poem 'Invictus' by W. E. Henley (1849-1903). There is another reference to these words at the end. 'Ashlar', 'chisel' and 'hammer' in the next paragraph are Masonic references. The reference to the Embankment, just after, is to the riverbank of the Thames in Westminster. Behind the phrase, 'not one jot or tittle', near the end of this address, is Matthew 5 : 18: 'Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled'. A 'jot' is an iota, the smallest letter of the Greek alphabet.

Historical note: given the seriousness of the world situation in 1936, White Eagle's comment, 'At the present moment your world is suffering from injustice and cruelty sown in a recent past. Not one nation concerned in the present crisis is guiltless' is most interesting.

White Eagle's Address:

All men like to believe that they have free will, can choose their path. Indeed many a school of religious thought impresses this fact upon its followers.

And yet, on the other hand, life most certainly demonstrates that man is not his own Master, but is governed by an inexorable law or fate. It is therefore often held that what is to be will be; out of chaos it after all appears that there is a Plan held by the Infinite Spirit – we ourselves have often said: 'He holds the plan'. With this comes the temptation to let go, to think that if the Great Architect of the Universe holds the plan of each individual life, of national and international life, man is so caught in a wheel of Fate that it matters not what he attempts, strives for, fails or accomplishes.

There may seem neither rhyme, reason nor justice. On the one hand you witness a soul striving nobly to make both ends meet; on the other a millionaire whose life is glutted by money, amassed sometimes out of the work and the blood of his fellow creatures. On all hands is to be seen confusion and conflict. And when you on earth strive to put a balance many times you give it all up in despair [*sic*]. Again, there are occult sciences which demonstrate man's fate or destiny to be written in the stars, on the lines of the hand, or a clairvoyant is able to predict certain events – sometimes trivial, sometimes great – which can be seen impressed on the ether. You are bound therefore to admit that the future holds certain facts; the future holds the fate of each one of you.

Is it then possible that man is a mere puppet, spinning upon a wheel of fate? How then can we satisfy our reason that there exists divine love and justice at work in human life?

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Let us make the position clear, so that you will follow our trend of thought. There are those able to read the future, true seers, whatever their method; for such a thing is possible. On the other hand, the schools of religious thought which teach that man possesses free will and can shape his destiny is also right [*sic*].

“There is a destiny which shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will.” But “I am the master of my fate, the captain of my soul.” And now to harmonise these two seemingly contradictory aspects of thought.

We have to use the experiences of life to create the future. Remember, beloved, it is not the happenings of your material life which are so important, but your reaction to these. Therefore regard man’s soul as the material, and the events in your life as tools placed in your hand to fashion and shape the material of the soul. Regard the soul as the rough stone, the rough ashlar, and events as tools, the chisel and the hammer, to shape the soul into the perfect square until it fits into its appointed place in the temple in the heavens, which temple is the over-soul or higher consciousness. Thus you are the rough ashlar, the earthly stone being made ready to take its place in the grand temple which you in many lives are building.

Can you look upon the outcast on the Embankment, and recognise: “In that man shines the light of God. In him dwells the same flame of light as in me ... If a path lays before me of eternal progress, so also with my brother the outcast beggar, so also with my brother in palace or counting house, so also with my coloured brother, be he yellow, black or red.” All souls contain within them the seed, the Divine Flame which, in ages to come, in time such as the finite mind cannot grasp, cannot comprehend, will perfect them – eons of time, not necessarily on earth, but on other planes of being, evolving, evolving, progressing, growing, expanding labours onward that tiny soul, until it becomes even as the Son of the Living God.

To understand this problem of destiny and free will you must penetrate into the invisible; it is impossible for man to solve these problems if he merely looks upon the surface. He must recognise the Divine Law of Cause and Effect and understand that man’s action of today will shape his destiny of tomorrow.

Souls which have advanced beyond the limitations of the lower mind, to those higher realms of consciousness, are able to reflect a picture upon the ether, upon the screen to be read by those whose eyes are opened. A moving picture crudely represents that which can and does take place in the invisible. You are continually casting a foreshadowing or reflection of your future into the days to come – and then you wonder how it is that your future can most surely be seen by those with the gift of vision.

Are you able to control these pictures? Yes, by your freewill choice. It is not for you who have learnt somewhat of the law of life to accept fatalistically that which seems to be written, but to express perfection, beauty in your life; not for you to accept and drift as flotsam on the sea of life. He who takes that attitude of mind deserves all that comes to him. If experiences come which seem over-hard and beyond your control, remember that by your actions either

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in this or in a previous day of life, you have sown the seeds; the conditions of the present are the harvest.

So whilst the inexorable law of justice rolls onward, there is also a great love governing your destiny or fate. Few people recognise the higher self within, being mostly conscious of the everyday man who goes about his work, either drifting, or else a-striving. But behind, beyond that lower personality exists a Divine Urge, the Voice of God which speaks to every soul through the Son – the Son of God, so often overruled by the lower mind, by the senses, and by passions.

Thus man sows the seed of lower passion and desire, but knowing not when he will have to reap and garner the thistles and the weeds which the lower self has sown. In the garnering of such weeds and tares, let us not forget what they bring, since out of sorrow comes understanding, which creates something in a man's heart ... in a man's soul. Sweat of suffering may pour from his brow, but out of suffering rises a spirit refreshed and strengthened. Remorse and regret may linger, but the Divine light is born through the agonies of Gethsemane and Calvary.

When a soul comes to incarnation, a divine urge, the 'conscience' as it is known, directs the course of the soul. Conscience is God ... You will find God in many places, a myriad manifestations of God. You will never fail to hear God in the whisper of the still small voice, in the place of stillness and quiet within. Thus God is leading man to freedom, to emancipation; but so long as man allows the sense of the flesh to govern him, so long must he suffer the result of his sowing.

You may have to reap today that which was sown yesterday ... you don't necessarily wait till you get to the spirit world. And remember that you who listen are receiving both within your soul and from the outward vibration of my words. As you receive understanding of this lesson, you will find a very much quicker reaction to this law of cause and effect.

Put the law into practice; try for yourself. The reaction may come in a few hours – it will be interesting to see. Not only act today, but also think today; thought is more powerful even than action. Put both thought and action into operation today and you will reap tomorrow. It may sometimes appear that man escapes the consequences of his action; it may be that he is a younger soul, when it takes longer for it to work out. But as surely as night follows day, no man can escape. The Law brings its reward, and although it may look like casting pearls before swine, like labouring in vain, no good can ever be wasted.

We bring this message of hope and consolation. Not one jot nor tittle shall pass away until the law is fulfilled. This occult and spiritual law is clearly expounded by Jesus in His parables.

Look not back with regret and sorrow nor feel overwhelmed by the thought of the seeds you have sown in the past ... commence from this very moment, and see that you sow for future reaping seeds which will produce happiness and freedom from the toils of the flesh, freedom from the bondage of the senses.

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Do not say to me: “Oh, but White Eagle, you speak of things beyond our power ... it is all too idealistic.”

Never!

It is now that you create the future – now! At the present moment your world is suffering from injustice and cruelty sown in a recent past. Not one nation concerned in the present crisis is guiltless, and so witness the result – and so it is with human life.

Put [this] into operation ... not in some distant future, for you will get no greater opportunity when you are in the spirit world! – but now, here and today in this earth which is school to you all. Those who pass onwards review the wasted opportunities of earth life, and long, I assure you, for yet another chance – another chance; and then, they think, they will do so differently! But when the soul comes back again to the bondage of the flesh, the flesh holds it down, though the voice of conscience still strives upwards, upwards towards God.

Be God! Love your brother man, be tolerant, gentle – cast no word of criticism. Learn to be silent, learn to express the light of Christ, and your body will vibrate to the light and become not a weight and hindrance, but a vehicle of joy.

And so, beloved, onward, onward – onward to a freedom based not upon the conquest or suffering of your brother, but freedom gained within yourself. With freedom in your heart, no condition in physical life, no episode, has the power to hold you or bind you to the wheel of fate – for you are the master, you are the captain, you control the ship, and you are heading to freedom and to LIGHT.

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:

Karma, freewill, predictions, mindfulness, acceptance, flowing with it, positive thought, affirmation, inner voice, light within