

# The Greatest of These

A219 Sunday Address 3rd September 1950 St Mary Abbots Place, London Sunday Service

*The date of this address is conjectural (see below), while the text is as issued in the magazine Angelus after it was given, apart from correction of errors*

*Text: from Angelus, October 1950*

*Context:* although undated in *Angelus*, it would be normal for the address from the first Sunday in September, at the reopening service after the August break, to appear in the October magazine. The reading seems to have been the popular one from 1 Corinthians 13, identifying Faith, Hope and Love (or in some translations, 'Charity'), 'and the greatest of these is love'.

*General Notes:* the address concentrates particularly, and very searchingly, upon faith, and upon the tests that come once faith is found; there is relatively little on hope, which is seen as a reward of faith, while love comes as the conclusion. When White Eagle mentions the forty days in the wilderness being comparable to the child's forty weeks in the womb, he is not confusing his figures, simply focusing on the numerology. At the end there is a reference to the Transfiguration, which is the title of the address given a month later. References are not particularly frequent in White Eagle's teaching; here, the point is that it required a level of spiritual unfoldment for the disciples to have witnessed the Transfiguration at all – presumably others might have gone up the mountain and seen nothing (in the account in the *Acts of John*, chapter 90, John sees much more than do James or Peter).

*References:* the story of the temptations of Jesus is from Matthew chapter 4; that of the Baptism is Matthew 3, and the verse in which the Dove speaks of 'My Son' is verse 17; it is also at Luke 3 : 22. At the Transfiguration, a similar event took place: see Luke 9 : 35. The temptations of Jesus are related in all three synoptic Gospels (Matthew 4 : 1-11, Luke 4 : 1-13 and, briefly, Mark 1 : 13), and the injunction 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God' is Mathew 6 : 33. 'I am the light of the world' is John 8 : 12 but 'I am the love' is non-biblical.

## White Eagle's Address:

We come with joy and love to bring our message. We speak to all, but also to each of you as individuals; because we know that in every life there is a great hunger and need for spiritual food and for guidance on the pathway; and we know also that there are some here tonight who particularly need that guidance, together with help and reassurance. We do not condemn or judge any man. We come with tender love to help everyone who will listen to our message.

We are going to speak concerning our reading tonight on Faith, Hope and Love. So familiar are you with these passages that they may trickle over you like a stream over its bed. We would like to unveil the spirit so that you may see beyond the words into a world of beauty and profound truth. We would endeavour to give you a deeper mystical interpretation so that it will comfort you; so that you may see it like a picture, or an idea to which you can aspire; then you will know that in everyday life, whatever experience you are called upon to undergo, is not idle, or possibly brought upon yourself. It may come to help to develop a rich spiritual quality in yourself. In any case, God does not inflict pain and suffering upon His children. Usually, the soul chooses that particular way in order to gain experience, to acquire knowledge and heavenly wisdom. In our reading concerning Faith, Hope and Love will be

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found hints, intimations which can prepare the awakened soul for certain initiations which it may take during its life in the body.

Every soul sooner or later must pass the same way, so that these words apply to you, my sister, and to you my brother, in equal degree. It is no use saying: 'This is not for me; I am not interested. I want something more scientific. Can you prove the truth of spiritual life to me?' No, the real proof of spiritual life, of a life after death and an eternal life beyond, lies within each individual soul. No one outside yourself will ever be able to give you your proof. You may receive certain psychic manifestations which will cause you to think, and impress your reasoning mind; but it is impossible for any one person to be given complete proof of the spiritual life by another. Conviction and faith can be gained through your own spiritual experience. This spiritual experience may take the form of the passing away from mortal life of some dear one – a loved mother, husband, wife, sister, brother, or dear, dear friend. But not merely the fact of their returning with some message will give you absolute faith and proof, but rather something which happens to you in your own soul. Spirit messages which appear to be foolproof have been given to mankind through many centuries, but still many people do not believe, and hold no faith in an afterlife, simply because they have yet to undergo a certain spiritual experience which will give that faith. In other words, they have not passed through the particular initiation required.

Let us ask what is faith? Faith is an inner knowing of God, or spirit. Prayer, true prayer, is faith; that is to say, if you pray rightly you are praying in faith; you have faith in God or you would not pray. Faith is something which comes to the inner self as the result of a spiritual flash or illumination. Once you have had this flash of heavenly wisdom – we do not mean astral clairvoyance, but true spiritual enlightenment – when you have had this experience then afterwards you must be tested to see how strong is your faith. Here may we say that since your faith in God or in eternal life will be tested, so also it is right, just and logical that you yourself should be able to test the truth of any inspired teaching; because any wisdom which comes through from the spiritual side of life should withstand any testing. You will find that the words of the sage, the master, and the saviour will stand up to any trial your reason as well as your intuition can devise. Truth is a spiritually scientific fact. All the ancient wisdom that flows from the lips of sage and seer are words of heavenly truth. So remember that while you are being tested regarding the quality of your faith, so you, by reason of your experience of life become able to test the truth of the scriptures, and indeed of all spiritual teaching. Since we know that you will be eventually satisfied, your faith will then be complete.

The soul of every man and woman passing through the world has a similar path to tread to that of the Master Jesus, who was the vehicle through which the Lord, the Cosmic Christ, manifested. So we look to the life of the Master Jesus for understanding, for knowledge of our path. We notice that Jesus, after receiving the divine illumination in which he heard the voice of his Father calling him 'My Son', was caught up and saw the glory of heaven. There are some here tonight who have had a similar experience, having seen a vision of spiritual

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truth and of the life beyond the physical. You have felt so elated, so full of joy! You have said: 'This is it! This is truth! I shall never again be unhappy or fearful!'

Then comes the test. After this wonderful spiritual illumination, you find yourselves back again, in even a worse mental state than before. You find you are wandering in your wilderness even as the Lord Jesus wandered in his wilderness. You cry out for food and you cannot find food. You pray, and there seems no answer to your prayer. You wander for forty days, the forty days being a symbol used many times in the Bible, as when the Israelites wandered for forty years, and Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness. This period of forty is likened to the period when the babe rests in the womb of the mother before its birth. Forty days means a period of confinement in darkness and powerlessness; and in this condition the soul has to wait for the acceptable time of the Lord, which means that it is impossible for the soul to rush forward. The soul has to learn to be patient until conditions are exactly ready before it can move forward. Have not you come up against this in your own life? Have not you seemed to be fettered, confined and cramped and longed to break out, and yet you seemed unable to do so? And then after a certain time all your chains seemed to fall away without any particular effort on your part except a stepping forward when the opportunity was given. Having made your move you think, then, 'Why could not I have done this before? Conditions are just the same as they were six months ago and yet then I could not have moved. Now everything seems so simple and so easy.'

What we are trying to point out is that you cannot force any conditions in your life. You must realise that whatever comes to you comes with good reason and purpose, this being to bring to your soul spiritual wealth, or a deeper and truer quality of spiritual consciousness. You will remember that, when in the wilderness, Satan came to Jesus and tempted him in much the same way as you are tempted today. The devil is a symbol of the earthly, the reasoning mind. This mind has its purpose, but you must recognise it for what it really is. The reasoning mind comes along and tempts you to discard all spiritual teaching and all spiritual striving, saying, 'Why should you struggle to attain spiritual realisation, knowledge and development? You might just as well live your life on the outer plane and like most other people do and save yourself the effort.'

In this manner the tempter tries your true, your higher self. It will argue, 'Now, if this spiritual teaching is any good it will give you power over all material things. Test it now!' This is very subtle. Jesus had it, in that he was tempted to turn the stone into bread to satisfy his mortal self, his physical hunger. The stone, here, is the symbol of the Christ power. The term is used many times throughout the Bible. Jesus is called the cornerstone [of the building], or the keystone of the arch through which every initiate must pass into the heavenly world; or into the eternal truth of life. So he was tempted to turn the stone into bread for his own advantage. This is what a lot of people often do, unknowingly. They do not mean to, but they get the wonderful teaching of the Christ, they realise that here is a definite and dynamic power, and immediately try to use that power for their own ends. The initiate on the other hand learns by his faith in God that it is wrong to divert any spiritual power to

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satisfy worldliness, or even to convince the unbeliever; neither must he make himself seem greater in the eyes of the ignorant.

This sacred power symbolised by the stone cannot be turned to material advantage. For Jesus said: 'Get thee behind me!' That was to the lower mind tempting him to use his powers. 'Get thee behind me, Satan!' – and he said elsewhere, 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all things shall be added unto you'. The lesson this teaches is to serve the spirit, to put the Christ first and to serve God before Mammon. You cannot serve two masters. This way of the spirit is your way, my brother, my sister, because you have in the past received divine illumination, having seen into the heavenly world and the way of life there, and because you have seen this vision you have received faith. Yet although faith may dwell within your innermost being, your reasoning mind still tempts your inner self to betray its Master, the Christ.

Beloved children, when you have passed through this testing of faith you come closer to God. Because you come closer to God you are filled with hope and joy.

It may not be in one incarnation that you pass this test of faith – you may live for a long time before you become tempted to betray the Lord Christ within, but tempted you will be. There will come a stage, we promise you, when the soul can be no longer tempted, because it has come into close communion with its God. Thereby the soul is filled with hope, joy and inner certainty that God is love, that all things work together for good, and that God will never forsake him. There are some present, we know, who have reached this realisation of the closeness of God. They know by the many demonstrations they have received in the course of life that God *never, never, never* fails. God never fails to feed you both spiritually and materially. God is all-good, all-wise and all loving. We do not mind what you have to tell us about your present conditions. We still say that hope is your anchor. If you have confidence in God, you have hope. No one can take that hope away because your soul has learned that the world cannot really touch you. The real you is quite apart from the body. Realise that you are spirit and at one with your God. Then nothing on this earth can permanently hurt you. If you are confident in God's love you can live your days in peace. You can go about your business which is also your Father's business. You can give light and service and love to your fellow beings and remain untouched or unmoved by anything that the material life can do. If you are suffering, if you have any disease of the body you can be sure that disease has come as the result of a broken law. This breaking of the law may be due to ignorance on your part – that is of your ordinary mind; but your deeper self knows that suffering has one object which is to bring to you experiences, which will educate, develop and evolve your soul. So, when you have passed the initiation of faith you have steadfast hope, which no one can take away. But you are told by the sage that something even greater than faith or hope remains, and this is love.

We see many demonstrations – or shall we say manifestations? – of love on earth. Love is Light. Love is the Divine Fire and Love is Life. Love is God. God is Love. Christ came manifesting through the body of the Master Jesus, and saying: 'I am the Light of the World. I

## The Greatest of These

A219 Sunday Address 3rd September 1950 St Mary Abbots Place, London Sunday Service

am the Love.' Now, love is the light, the warmth and the sun. For behind the physical sun we receive into the whole of our being the Life of God, the spiritual life. So, whilst the soul is experiencing love that soul is growing, and indeed cannot grow very far without love. By your own human experience, you know how vital human love can be to you. You know how love can change the face, the form, the whole being of a person. Have you not looked upon two young people said to be in love (or two old people for that matter), or any two people who are in love? Pure and true love for another is a very wonderful and beautiful emotion, and necessary for the evolution of the human soul. Love is not only between husband and wife, but can be between friends and sisters and brothers. Love is a something which enriches the human heart, and fires the whole system as light and life.

Love is the great solvent of all difficulties, all problems, all misunderstandings. Try it. Apply love. When we say love we mean by your inner attitude towards any human problem. Put aside the reasoning mind. Let love, divine love, operate in you. Give from your inner self God's love, and you will be surprised to find that every problem will be solved; every knot will be loosened.

Faith, hope, love. All are tests and initiations on the path, but the greatest of all three is love. Because when love flows freely from the heart, the soul is raised into the heights of heavenly consciousness; into the world of light and beauty, and the completion of life is therein found.

This is the way for every one of God's children. This was demonstrated again and again by the Lord Jesus. Finally, He appeared to his disciples, to those who were prepared; to those who were more advanced than others, and he took them with him to the mount. In other words he raised their consciousness, else they could not have seen his transfiguration. Thus he demonstrated to you and to every simple soul the power of divine love. It shone from his face, from his raiment. Those disciples who had striven to follow him so far had the great joy of seeing with their own inner vision the glory of their Lord the Christ. They saw where love can take its child – to where God the Father and Mother brings the Christ Son.

This glory is waiting for you, my dear ones; we speak not idle words, but age-old truth.

So, the blessing of the Great White Spirit pours upon you. Amen.

*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:*

*mystical interpretation of faith love and hope, suffering chosen for spiritual growth, enlightenment/then testing, initiations of faith, hope and love, transfiguration*