

The Symbols of Communion

A320 Sunday Address 4th October 1959 St Mary Abbots Place, London Harvest Festival Service

Text: a blue carbon in MB's usual format and style, with no markings, except that in the paragraph beginning 'And the symbol of the grapes' the word 'pray' has been changed maybe in YGH's hand to 'remember' ('let us remember'. This may be an actual correction of the script but has not been retained here. The title, 'the symbols of communion', has been chosen for this project. It does not appear to have been printed.

Context: MB mentions two readings, Matthew 13 : 31-52 and John 4 : 31-38. The first contains a whole series of parables: those of the mustard seed, the leaven in the bread, the wheat and the tares, the hidden treasure, the pearl of great price and the dragnet. The second is the well-known passage about the fields, 'white unto harvest'. MB notes an anthem, 'O Christ who holds the open gate': this is very possibly just the hymn setting of John Masefield's poem. 'The Everlasting Mercy' – maybe sung by the choir to introduce it to the congregation. The tune would then be 'Gonfalon Royal'. MB says it was 'beautifully rendered'. Unusually, White Eagle begins with a little invocation integral to the address. The communion is also integrated into the address, and longer than usual. The final hymn, we are told, was 'God is working his purpose out' – with words by A. C. Ainger (1841-1919). Brother Faithful's few words at the end are once again preserved. The 5 July address mentioned the hot weather, and this address, interestingly, looks back during the communion to the beautiful sunshine of this particular summer.

Brother Faithful mentions a harvest service at New Lands the previous week (27 September) at which White Eagle spoke. The address on that occasion does not seem to have survived.

General Notes: a central theme of this address is the explanation of the symbology of the bread and the wine, which is the reason for the choice of title, although an alternative would be on the lines of 'Be true'. This is quite an unusual harvest address, for it deals most of all with the relationships of human beings one with another. This theme arises from words in the anthem/hymn, 'O Christ who drives the furrow straight'. The straight furrow becomes an image of straight, i.e. honest, living. In the course of the address, White Eagle inspires us with the range of 'brethren' with whom he sees we work, even the animals: 'we would like to include in the term "your brethren", your brethren of the physical life, your brethren who come to you to help you from the spirit life, your brethren of the animal kingdom. Do not forget that where there is life, there is God.' Ironically, despite the reading the only one of the parables that White Eagle refers to is the Parable of the Talents, one that was not part of the reading from Matthew. Another interesting statement is that spirit always gives truth – there is no possibility of speaking falsely on the other side of life. 'First of all, man must be true'.

We find White Eagle coining a word in this address, a rare event: 'No wibbly-wobbly furrows', he says.

References: near the beginning, White Eagle says that man will learn he does not live 'only by physical bread': the reference is back to the temptations of Jesus, Matthew 4 : 4. There is an interesting reference to the climate of Britain changing – apparently for the better – but this address was given well before the climate crisis of the twenty-first century. For the Parable of the Talents, mentioned in the middle of the address, see Matthew 25 : 14-30. 'The mills of God grind slowly but they grind exceeding small' is a quotation from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem 'Retribution', but the thought goes back to classical times: to Plutarch and to the philosopher Celsus, who wrote against Christianity.

White Eagle's Address:

Dearly beloved brethren, we pray to the Great White Spirit that you may all receive his blessing here this night, and that you may be aware of the vast company of angel beings.

Amen.

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It is a great and powerful thing in a man's life when he can realise that he is not living unto himself, nor by himself; when he can realise that he is encompassed by a group of shining beings. This is true. And only man himself closes the door of his consciousness on those companions of his spirit, those heavenly companions. But at the same time we must remember that man has to keep his balance between earth and heaven. Man has been sent to earth to manipulate the forces of the physical plane to the glory of man's life and above all to the glory of his Creator.

This gathering, which we and you call a harvest festival, that is to say a festival of thanksgiving for the harvest, in an ancient establishment. We look back, or shall we say the vision opens, to eternity – and we feel that we are participating in a ceremony which has taken place through the ages. In your modern world such a festival may not take such a big place in the life of humanity as it has done in the past. But the time will come, dear ones, when man will be once more in full consciousness of the Eternal Son, the Son of God, and he will adjust his life to this power. He will understand that he does not live only by physical bread and the fruits of the earth, but by a life which floweth into him from the invisible Sun.

You have been enjoying an exceptionally sunny period. Some of your people say that the earth is changing. We say to you that humanity is approaching an age where there will be the greatest spiritual blessing upon the earth; and the climate of your own island will change. Now every physical change has an effect upon the spirit of man, upon his spiritual life. Now when he pauses to think of what the physical sun means to his physical life, when he pauses to think of the order of nature, the transition of nature, man is humbled before the Great Creator.

Now it is very important that at a service of this character that everyone present should think of the blessings which flow to the physical side of life, not through the action of an automatic law in nature, but by the Divine Intelligence and Will which controls the forces of nature. Man himself has within his heart the seed atom of the Son of God. Many would like to refute this profound truth. But as you think seriously and consider the order of life, the physical order of life, you can but recognise the gracious love, preparation and direction of a Supreme Intelligence. But we would also remind you that man is not only the son of man, but the son of God, the son of that Invisible Being. And into man's heart God has breathed the Holy Breath. And this Holy Breath is the spirit of the Son, the Son of God.

Now you may wonder what all our words have to do with the harvest. Well, you have been listening to a fine anthem [for] which we are grateful to the Choir for its beautiful rendering. It is a great help to our work to hear lovely music, and we were caught – we were impressed – by a few particular words in that anthem. They were: 'Christ who drives the furrow straight'. Now this, my dear ones, is pregnant with meaning. Every man, woman and child on the physical plane has in his hands a spiritual plough. Every soul has a driver of his spiritual plough. And the power in man's being which can and does drive the plough and causes the furrow to be straight is the power of Christ, which keeps its vision upon the marking post. We mean by this that everyone has the Christ power within them which, if allowed to practise in the human character, causes that character to go straight for the marking post. No

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wibbly-wobbly furrows for the souls who allow themselves to be guided and inspired by the Christ spirit! A rich harvest is the result of, first of all, the correct and thorough preparation of the soil before the sowing of the seed.

Brethren, you will one day leave your physical form of life, and you will enter a new life, a life not so limited as the physical form. And when you arrive in the higher life, or the spirit world, you will at the appropriate time be taken to what we may describe as a harvest festival on the higher planes of life. There are many people who do not believe this. Many people who say the life after death is exactly the same as the life on earth. Now we have said this ourselves, but let us explain what we mean. The form which the life after death takes is exactly the same as the form of physical matter; but when man's awareness of God has developed, the physical, the form in the physical, the spiritual form all around him, form of all natural things, the form of the companions that he meets there: all this form is enhanced, or the reverse, by what a man has acquired or developed within himself of the God-consciousness, the God- and the Christ-consciousness. So when man, in the afterlife, is taken into the Temple where the harvest festival is celebrated, he become conscious of his gifts.

Now, this does not mean that he is made uncomfortable by his companions, oh no! All around him are kind, loving, merciful companions. But it is possible for a man to be reminded of the parable of the talents. There are some who carry with them into the spirit life, and to the harvest festival there, a rich harvest. The words that we hear, and the scene that we can see, and we hope you can too, are these shining souls who are bringing in the sheaves of corn and the baskets of grapes, the gifts of the spirit, the development, the unfoldment of spiritual qualities. Now, materially-minded people would not believe our simple story. Never mind, they will find out for themselves that the harvest time at the end of every incarnation can be the most beautiful experience, or it can be a sorrowful and bitter experience.

Now, in your daily life it is of the utmost importance that you drive your plough in a straight furrow, which means that you are working shoulder to shoulder with your brethren on the physical plane. And we would like to include in the term 'your brethren', your brethren of the physical life, your brethren who come to you to help you from the spirit life, your brethren of the animal kingdom. Do not forget that where there is life, there is God.

Now picture the shining white temple in the heavens, and the people pouring into the temple bringing in the sheaves and the fruit produced by their service, their love to their fellow beings. And now, let us consider the meaning of the symbols of the corn and the grapes, very ancient symbols that have been recognised and used by mankind – a certain few, shall we say a certain section of mankind? – ever since the earth held life.

The corn is the food sent by God, or grain created by the Great White Spirit for the physical sustenance of man's form. But the esoteric meaning of this corn is the life, the service and the karma of man. For as he lives, so he thinks and speaks and acts. And all three produce for him karma. You cannot think, nor speak, nor act without touching the law Divine, the law of karma. And this karma, which every soul makes, he has to eat. So you will see that karma is the symbol of the corn. As man ploughs and sows the seed of thought and action so he is

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sowing the seed of karma. And karma is not a very acceptable bread to many on earth. They cannot understand why they have to suffer, and they take their pleasures lightly. You know, it would be a good thing if everyone would thank God for pleasure and joy and the blessings of the Sun.

And the symbol of the grapes is the symbol of the Divine Love, the Christ seed which lies deep within everyone. It has a very different form of expression in different people. But let us pray that even the most degraded human soul has a spark of the Christ within it. And usually we find that this spark of divinity is nurtured or smothered by his fellow beings. We know that there are many individual cases, which you will be able to name, probably are naming now, where the individual you are thinking appears to have no decency in him or her whatsoever! But this isn't true. Every individual has within him that spark of divinity. He has, as we have already told you, he has in the past created karma through ignorance. You remember the words of Jesus when he was being crucified, 'God forgive them for they know not what they do'? If every man knew what he was doing, if he comprehended the Divine law which governs all life, he would be helped to develop that divinity within him. How much does man truly help his brother man to bring home a rich harvest? What have we all – what sin have we all committed towards each other? This is a thought. And have you noticed when you apply divine law to your associates, to the problems which arise in human life, that divine law of love works what can be called a miracle? Now, my friends, this is what is happening on your earth today.

First of all, man must be true, true to the divinity within him. True in his life. True to his brother man and true in his speech. That is one thing in the spirit world, you cannot say one thing when you are thinking another. It is too clearly seen. There is no untruth when you get out of the physical. This is going to pop up another question, which I will answer as we go along. What about the spirits who do not always give truth? Pure spirit always gives truth. When statements become untrue or deceptive, it is because they are entangled with earthly conditions and earthly thought. Spirit, pure spirit gives truth, because it is truth. Spirit is truth.

Oh let us come back to our symbols of the corn and the grapes. The corn has to be ground into flour before it can be made eatable bread. Before the soul can accept its karma it has a long way to go, for that corn has to be ground in the mills of God. You know the saying of one of your poets, 'The mills of God grind slowly, and they grind exceeding small', which means of course that karma has to be lived and re-lived and re-lived and worked and ground until it is fit to make into bread. And the Bread of Heaven is the result of the acceptance by man of his daily karma.

The grapes have to be pressed long and thoroughly in the grape press. And what does this mean? It means, my beloved friends of earth, that the spirit has to be tried and tried and tested. And it is tested by earthly things, by the environment of the life, by the companionships of the life, by the events of the daily life. But if the soul of man has allowed himself to be awakened to the divinity within him, then the Wine of life which represents the essence of the spiritual divine life is given to him by the Christ himself.

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Now, my children, when we come to you on the level of the spiritual plane of conscious life, and we tell you, as we are telling you now, that in your midst stands the form, the human form of the Son of God, you will begin to comprehend the meaning of the divine and holy communion, because He Who is Man made Perfect – as all men will be one day – He, the Son of God brings to you these symbols of Divine Essence of life. If you eat now this heavenly Bread and in simple belief accept from His Hand the cup and sip the Divine Wine of his love, great power passes into you. This is a true spiritual experience which is the foundation of your life.

And as you look up to the rays of the physical sun, give thanks for what has come to you unaided by man, the glorious warmth and sunshine of the physical sun this summer. But beyond this, we would remind you that behind the rays of this physical sun are the rays, the cosmic rays of the invisible Son, the Son of God, the Spirit of the Son of God, the Christ spirit.

You may well see that with this holy blessing, as well as a physical blessing upon the earth planet, this summer will see this quickening in man of that spiritual Will, that Divine Will, to act true. In other words, we believe that humanity is now waking up, and will respond to the glorious spiritual rays which are pouring upon his life.

Do not be perturbed or put off by small things which seem to cause disruption. Go to the heart, to the very core of the spiritual power which is beginning to operate in the soul of humanity. And you must remember that they are your brethren, your companions, and you by right thought, right action, right speech can help your brother man. And you will be developing the talents which God gave you when you entered upon incarnation. What a wonderful opportunity! And as you see the fruits of the harvest here before you, fruits which you, out of your love and service, have brought to this harvest festival, so you will see a rich and perfect fruit of man's life, and especially your own life on the physical plane if you live it to the best of your limited ability.

With these words, with this message, we now withdraw from the physical plane to join our companions in spirit; but we leave with you our love and these words which we hope will have an even deeper meaning for you than you realise tonight.

God bless you every one, old friends and new friends, and dear brothers of the inner and outer brotherhood of this Lodge. We give you all love and all the help within our capacity. Dear ones, God bless you. God bless you every one.

Brother Faithful:

Last Sunday there was a Harvest Festival at New Lands, and New Lands chapel was quite full. It was the same reading and White Eagle gave an entirely different address to that of tonight. I thought you would like to know how widely the work is spreading round the Country Centre. Last Sunday was the fourteenth [anniversary of the] opening of New Lands.

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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:

intuition, communion, service, seasons, path of the soul, spiritual path, initiation, patience, nature, life cycles, eucharist, spiritual unfoldment, spiritual development, holy communion, life after death, heaven world, world of light, symbolism, tests, testing, nourishment, thanksgiving, feasting

