

# The Bread of Life

A108 Sunday Address 4th October 1942 St Mary Abbots Place, London Sunday Service (Harvest)

*Text:* from *Angelus*, November 1942, including the title, where it carries the headnote below that includes the date of 6<sup>th</sup> September.

*Context:* an original typescript survives, headed 'White Eagle's Sunday address ... 6<sup>th</sup> September 1942' and is included in this archive, but it is not this text. In short there are two records linked to the same day. The typescript is very heavily annotated by Ivan Cooke and is marked by him 'not yet printed 10/10/42'. A reasonable suggestion would be that IC prepared the 6<sup>th</sup> September typescript for publication but for some reason the following Sunday service, on 4<sup>th</sup> October, was regarded as a better one to put in the November magazine. The 6th September typescript was duly marked as unused, but somehow the date of it got put at the head of the 4<sup>th</sup> October teaching, which was then printed under the title 'The Bread of Life'. It is possible White Eagle spoke twice on the same day in different venues, but highly unlikely. 4<sup>th</sup> October is the day of St Francis and the first paragraph contains hints that the occasion was a Harvest festival also. That would have been appropriate the month before too, but it has been a long White Eagle Lodge tradition to celebrate the harvest at the end of September or beginning of October.

*General Notes:* the reading preceding the address is described as containing the words, 'I am the bread of life', which would mean that it came from the middle part of the very long sixth chapter of St John's Gospel. The full verse reads 'And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst'. A later reference shows that it also included 6 : 31; it would appear that the reading focused on Jesus' words to the disciples about the feeding of the five thousand, and the difference between earthly and spiritual sustenance. In the fourth paragraph the text refers to 'the flesh bodies of Egypt' but in her own copy YGH has altered this to 'the fleshpots' and we have taken her correction to be authoritative, since it may well be her shorthand that recorded the text. The later part of the teaching contains a very full analysis of the Last Supper and the ceremony of communion or remembrance.

*References:* 'I am the bread of life' is John 6 : 35; 'Before Abraham was, I am' is John 8 : 58. 'Our fathers did eat manna in the wilderness' is 6 : 31. The 'fleshpots of Egypt' are not mentioned in John but in the Old Testament story about eating manna in the wilderness, Exodus chapter 16 (for fleshpots see verse 3 and for manna, verse 15). 'Bondsmen', i.e. slaves, is a term brought in from Deuteronomy 15 : 15. White Eagle refers to the whole story of Moses leading the Israelites to the Promised Land, a recurrent theme in most of the Pentateuch. 'Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh' is Matthew 25 : 13. White Eagle quotes extensively from the story of the Last Supper in the gospels, which is to be found in Matthew 26 : 17-30, Mark 14 : 12-26, Luke 22 : 7-39 and John 13 : 1-17:26.

## White Eagle's Address:

We have been asked to speak on the reading chosen for today and containing these words, 'I am the bread of life'. *I am the bread of life ...* a text which seems very appropriate at this season when men are gathering in the harvest, storing the barns [*sic*] and making provision for the winter. Bread is essential to sustain physical life. Therefore men rejoice at a good harvest and their hearts are filled with thanksgiving. The religious make a festival of the season and worship and thank the unseen Giver of life. This applies not only to the modern world, but all the ages have celebrated the harvest festival. Bread, then, is necessary to sustain life.

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But what, however, was meant by the words '*I am* the bread of life?' The Church interprets them as meaning the one supreme teacher, Jesus the Christ. But many schools of thought, many churches, do not follow the Christian teaching and they may never have heard of our text. Does it mean, then, that those millions are destined to perish from lack of spiritual bread of life, through lack of spiritual substance? We want to analyse and find out exactly what is meant by these words.

There is also a saying attributed to the Master Jesus, 'before Abraham was, *I am*'. We shall speak very simply, using simple words and simple similes, so that we can all understand and appreciate this message, because it concerns each one of us. Even we who are discarnate have need to understand the words of God. Those familiar with our teachings will understand that the words 'I AM' refer to the one supreme Light, the one God, the one Father and Mother, the one Creator which manifests through all the Christs and throughout the ages. *I am that bread*. These are words of the Father God, expressed through the lips of the Master and through His being – through the personification of the heavenly Light which the Christian calls 'Christ', and which in other words is known by other names. It makes no difference; this supreme Light which floweth through all is - God. So the words which Jesus the Christ spoke referred not to Himself but to God, the Creator, the Architect of the Universe, the one central point within the circle – one life which is universal, eternal and infinite.

My beloved friends and brethren, in the reading which we have heard tonight is a reference to the 'manna' which came down from heaven to feed the children of Israel when they wandered in the wilderness. Ours may not be the only interpretation of the word 'manna' – other schools of thought may put forward other interpretations – but we offer this interpretation as one which we ourselves have found true and helpful. We interpret the Biblical references to 'Egypt', the land of Egypt, or the fleshpots of Egypt, as referring to the physical body. This means that those who 'dwell in the land of Egypt' dwell primarily in the senses of the body. They are the prisoners of the senses, and the time comes when all the souls thus enslaved, the 'bondsmen' in the land of Egypt, desire to be free to escape from the thralldom of the senses. As viewed from the soul aspect of life, a man who desires freedom has to flee the land of Egypt. His first step forward takes him into the wilderness. How many of the lost wander in some wilderness of the mind, seeking hither and thither for truth, for understanding, for comprehension of themselves and the purpose of life, for knowledge of the Creator and of the laws of life? They seek a scientific explanation of the facts of creation and evolution, both physical and spiritual, and get nowhere, nowhere escape from a wilderness on the mental plane. You will remember that the children of Israel murmured because they came no nearer to the Promised Land. Their guide, whom we know as a great teacher, tried to calm their fears. And, lo! there came from heaven, they know not how or where, a white substance which covered the earth. They were told to gather this and eat it as sustenance during their wanderings. Now, my friends, there are schools of thought which interpret 'manna' as meaning food for the *mind* of man. We also interpret 'manna' as that 'food' or mental development which takes place after the soul has risen from the flesh and is seeking understanding and truth on a mental plane which proves a vast and tiring wilderness.

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Do you remember how the Israelites were fed so far by Moses and that he himself was permitted to see but not to enter the Promised Land, the land flowing with milk and honey, which proves that it was one thing to look into the land of light, the Land of the Spirit – one thing to look at it and to know it mentally; but quite another to actually participate in the spiritual life of this land of the Spirit.

As the Israelites eventually proved, this is a state which we shall all reach with patience and in due course, but we know not the hour. At any moment a sudden flash of illumination may come at any moment. Remember the words, 'Watch and pray; for you know not the hour when Son of Man cometh'. My friends, we are not inferring that it is necessary to leave the physical body through death before once can enter into fields Elysian. No. The soul can rise and leave the land of Egypt while the body lies sleeping; and the soul can receive divine illumination and become one of the inhabitants of the Promised Land.

At any moment this may happen. And so we see the distinction between the 'I AM' which is the Bread of Life and that 'manna' which fell in the wilderness to sustain the people of Israel whilst they were wandering and suffering and gaining experience and knowledge.

Now to our next plane of contemplation of the 'I AM', the Bread of Life. 'Before Abraham was, *I am*', said Jesus. We understand by this that the 'I AM' is the one Supreme, the one Life-principle, the only Life in all the universe; and as we think on this we begin to realise something within our hearts and in our minds. The 'I AM' dwells in the mind and the heart, the 'I AM' is a new consciousness that can arise – not to be found through reading many books, but something of which we become aware in the great Silence. A consciousness of what? Of infinity, of divinity, of eternity. This is that Bread of Life; and when we partake we know eternal life and our consciousness is illumined. We become aware of the immensity of space, of the timelessness of life, and we bring into operation the intellect, which should be a channel, a tool, given to man to enable him to comprehend more and more the glories of life, of creation. Through the intellect man is enabled to probe physical and spiritual science and learn profound truths which enable him to follow that path which leads ever nearer to the great Architect. When science reveals to man the composition of the atom and the place in creation of force and energy; when science reveals to man the immensity of the heavens and enables him to conceive the creation of planets, suns and stars; when science brings to the intelligence of man the immensity of the heavens, then the intellect is drawing man along the path of understanding, of realisation of comprehension of the 'I AM'. *I am the Bread of Life*. For man the microcosm then becomes merged in God the macrocosm. Man learns then that his own body is itself a universe; and that in his universe is a sun and a planetary system, even as in the heavens. The sun is the heart of man and the planets in the body of man are those windows of the soul, the psychic centres. Man contains within himself a universe, hence the words written above the great temples and the mystery schools of the past: 'Man know thyself; and thou shalt know God and the universe'.

And now our last step: the meaning of communion. On the one hand there is the microcosm and on the other hand the macrocosm; but the microcosm is part of the macrocosm and whilst

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the microcosm is cut off or isolated from the macrocosm it cannot receive the life force which it needs to keep it spiritually alive. *I AM the Bread of Life*. My friends, let us recall an act of the Master Jesus when He called together His disciples and brake bread with them. We cannot touch upon all the implications, because it introduces the vast subject of man's free will and we then ask how far man can allow his free will and we then ask how far man can allow his freewill choice to operate in this great scheme of spiritual evolution? However, among the twelve disciples was one whose Karma, we will say, brought him to a particular work. He had to perform a certain act, to betray his Master. Reason and history now tell us that without this betrayal the whole world of Christendom might have crumbled; and so Judas the betrayer had his function, his part to play in this spiritual drama. But let us centre our attention upon the actual act of communion. The Master took bread and brake it and handed it to His disciples, saying, 'Eat; this is My body. Do this in remembrance of Me'. This is one of the rites of the Christian Church, even as similar rites existed in the Greek Church, in the Egyptian mysteries and in the Atlantean mysteries throughout the ages. The 'Ceremony of Remembrance', it was called, and fruit juice and corn were used. 'Do this in remembrance of Me'. What is the esoteric meaning of this act of communion? This bread is My body – the bread of the earth. The corn of the earth that feeds the body of man. Bread is produced through the provision, through the love and through the perfect law of the one supreme Being, the great Architect of the Universe. Therefore, my friends, every mouthful we eat should be a divine communion. With every fragment of food which passes the lips, one should say, 'This is the divine Body, this is divine food. This comes to me through the divine love and the divine provision; therefore I eat of it in Remembrance of God'. This is also the body of the sun, because the sun interpenetrates the particles of earth and brings forth corn from mother earth. All this do in remembrance of Me.

And the Cup – *this is My blood*. Drink, in remembrance of Me. The fruits of the earth are fed by the rains of the skies, without which life would not exist. We eat the bread of life, we drink the wine of life. There is also the esoteric meaning of this divine communion. The bread is symbolical also of the sustenance of the Spirit necessary to the human spirit. When this is lacking there is no spiritual life; all is a wilderness. Look for yourselves upon those worldly men sustained for the time being on 'manna', on the food of the mind and the intellect. There is no light in them. Then look, my friends, at those men and women whom you instinctively or intuitively call saints. Visualise them and what do you see? A radiance, a light. Call it what you will: call it spirituality, call it life more abundant. A divine light radiating through them. It was this light the Christians worshipped in Jesus the Christ. It was this light which the Buddhists worshipped in the Lord Buddha; this light which the Hindu worshipped in the Lord Krishna. Does this light shine through the man fed merely on manna of earth? The manna merely sustains him. He lacks divine life and illumination. The Holy Grail, the chalice filled with the lifeblood of the Spirit, is that which many a Brotherhood has gone forth to seek: that Holy Grail which contains the Wine of Life.

Where can it be found? Throughout time pilgrims have journeyed to find the Holy Grail. Does it exist? My friends, the chalice, the cup, is the heart. The heart of man is the Holy Grail filled by the divine essence of pure love, pure wisdom, pure justice, pure truth. Then indeed

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does man recognise that justice is a divine law; and until this divine law of justice and true brotherhood is put into operation on the earth mankind must spiritually die. Man must die until he takes Holy Communion with the one Supreme, the Law of Love which brings into being the galaxies of stars, the planets, the suns, the universe, that which creates all nature; that which causes the spider to spin, and the bee to gather honey, the bird to sing and the rose to give forth its fragrance. This is the one supreme Law operating through every kingdom of nature, through every plane of physical life, through the astral and mental, the celestial and the heavenly planes. All is in accord with the physical atom which is the basis of matter on earth and which has its replica on all heavenly planes of consciousness to which man will, eventually, pass and [to] which many migrate whilst still in a physical body; for such men as they have taken true communion – eaten the Bread of Life. The ‘I AM’ in them is fed and sustained and reaching out to enfold all creation, reaches up to be absorbed into the very heart of God.

Until man recognises the I AM – the very Bread of Life – there will be chaos, death, darkness, suffering and pain. What has been done can still be done. There have been golden ages when men realised this divine truth and there will be again a Golden Age. It depends upon the effort and the aspiration of man how soon that realisation and illumination will come. In silence the Voice speaks. Deep within the silence the Voice of God, the Consciousness of Christ, says: ‘Take, eat; this is My body. I AM the Bread of Life’. The heart glows with the living fire, divine Love. The Voice says, ‘This is My blood, My life-force; drink; and remember Me....’

*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:*

*Eucharist, sacrament, Passover, Lord’s Supper, transubstantiation, cause and effect, freedom, insight, revelation, imagination, inspiration*