



The Logos Doctrine

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The Logos Doctrine

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Let us begin by trying to translate as literally as possible the opening passage of Saint John's Gospel, retaining the more important Greek words:

“In Arkhe, in Primal Being, was the Logos, and the Logos was together with the Theos, and Theos was the Logos. That was in Primal Being, together with the Theos.

“Through This, the All came to birth, and without This came to birth not one thing which has come to birth.

“In This, Life was, and the Life was the Light of men; and the Light shineth in the Darkness, and the Darkness comprehended It not.

“This was the Light, the true, which lighteth every man coming into the World. In the World, This was, and the World through This came to birth, and the World knew not This.

“And the Logos became flesh, and tabernacled among (or, in) us, and we beheld His Radiance, the Radiance as of the only-begotten Son of the Father, full of Grace and Truth.”

This is the central expression of the Logos doctrine, with millenniums of development behind it, and centuries of application after it. Let us see whether we can lead up to an understanding of it, beginning with the simplest things in the consciousness of each one of us.

Before me is a sheet of white paper. I see it, I am conscious of it. If I reflect, I am conscious of seeing it. If I reflect still further, I am conscious of myself as perceiver. These two added perceptions, of the seeing and the seer, are the consequence of the rebound from the first perception, the thing seen, the sheet of white paper.

The three, the thing perceived, the perceiving, and the perceiver, are of necessity linked together. Yet it is a curious fact, though none the less true, that the strict materialist rests in the thing perceived, pays little attention to the perceiving, and practically ignores the perceiver; never seeking to discover the true character and nature of the perceiving consciousness, never looking steadily at it.

We are first conscious of the thing perceived. Consciousness of perceiving and of the perceiver comes later, as the result of a rebound from the thing perceived. This is, perhaps, the justification of the objective world, the whole process of manifestation. It is the starting point, the source and cause of all our present conscious perception. The world is a means for waking up our consciousness.

We have taken seeing as the type of perception. But there is hearing also. For example, as I write, I hear the clock ticking; I hear the wind outside, among the branches. And the I who hears is the same as the I who sees. So with the other modes of perceiving.

There are, if we so number them, five phases of things perceived; five modes of perceiving; five attitudes of the perceiver, who is, nevertheless, consciously one. All modes of perceiving come to a focus in the same consciousness and are there harmonized and unified. The perceiving I is one.

Meanwhile the sheet of paper has been covered with writing, the type of a different kind of activity, this time not perceptive but active. Once more we have a group of three: what is written, the act of writing, and the impelling consciousness, the writer.

As before, we may let this represent all forms of action, such as speech and voluntary muscular activity. There are always the three: the thing done, the doing, the doer. And the purposing and impelling doer is the same in all actions. The I who speaks is the same as the I who writes; the same also as the I who perceives.

We come now to our first application of these very simple and

familiar facts. If we consider the matter, we shall find that the world of each one of us, beginning with our intimate thoughts, including our sense of bodily existence, and going out to the room in which we may be, the landscape in the midst of which we find ourselves, even to the rim of the sky, to the sun and the stars and the Galaxy, is made up of the sum of the perceiving and of the impulses to action which hold the field of our consciousness. In this sense, the world of each one of us grows out of our consciousness.

From the perceiving powers we gain the sense of the colouring of our world, the rooms in which we live, the splendid pageantry of dawn and noonday and sunset and the stars, of green fields and trees and the white hills of winter, of the multitudinous turmoil of the streets.

Through the acting powers we gain the sense of space, of form, of consistence. Pressing a hand upon the table, we get the sense of solidity. Walking across the room, we measure it by our effort, so many steps to be taken, and gain a realization of space. Both space and solidity come to us as modes of our consciousness.

This is true also, as we have suggested, of our sense of bodily existence. It is built up from phase's of our consciousness.

It may be interesting to quote, for comparison, a recent expression of the same thought. It forms the conclusion of a review, in *The Spectator*, of the address of the President of the British Association:

“Might we not say, regarding the hierarchy of pure mind, subconscious mind, reflex action of nerves, nervous tissue and body tissue, that the body is in some sort an emanation of the mind? We have, perhaps, in the past laid too much stress upon the importance of the quality of tangibility.”

True, for the quality of tangibility itself is simply the expression of one of our modes of perceiving, the sense of touch. It is, therefore, an outcome of our consciousness, an “emanation of mind.”

We see, then, that in the strictest sense the world of each one of us is built up of the sum of our perceiving and acting. Our world has come to birth through the activity of our consciousness, and there is in it not one thing which has not come to birth through the activity of our consciousness; through that conscious mind which unifies our perceiving and impels our acting.

Have we not here a clue to an understanding of at least a part of the Logos doctrine? If the world of each one of us comes to birth through the activity of our consciousness, may not the whole manifest universe have come to birth through the activity of that greater consciousness, the Logos? If the body be in some sort an emanation of the mind, may not the body of the universe be equally an emanation of the Logos, the Mind of God? And in this thought of the body as an emanation of the mind, have we not a clue to the way in which the Logos becomes flesh?

We have thus been able, perhaps, to gain some little understanding of the Logos as the principle of manifestation, through considering our own conscious minds as manifesting the world in which each one of us dwells.

There are two other sides of the Logos doctrine which we shall now try to approach: first, the moral depth of the Logos, of which we have so far taken only a pictorial view; and, second, the threefold division of the Logos, with Primal Being beyond.

Perhaps we may come to the element of moral depth by way of certain thoughts from one of the ancient Indian presentations of the Logos doctrine, the Sankhya philosophy of the sage Kapila.

In both our perceiving and our acting, we have found a set of three. These correspond to one aspect of the Three Gunas, as set forth in the Sankhya Sutras.

The self which receives perceptions and impels actions, the conscious mind, corresponds to the first of the Three Gunas, Sattva, which means both Goodness and Substance; for in Sanskrit, both Sattva, goodness, and Satya, truth, are derived from Sat, being, reality. Goodness and truth both draw their essence from reality. The conscious and impelling mind, therefore, corresponds to Sattva. The activity of perceiving and the impulse of acting, the middle terms of our sets of three, correspond to Rajas, Passion, or impelling Force, the word meaning originally the middle zone of the air between earth and the clear sky, the region of cloud and storm. The thing perceived, from which the perceiving consciousness rebounds, or the thing acted on, like the top of the table when we press it, corresponds to Tamas, which means Darkness, and has the quality of resistance, of inertia.

It is worth noting, at this point, that the middle term in either set of three has the character of conscious Force, of Desire in the widest sense. It is quite easy to see this in the case of the impulse to act; this has of necessity the quality of force, the desire that something shall be accomplished. But it would seem to be equally true of perceiving; that in a large and deep sense we see what we desire to see.

For example, if, while reading the printed words of this page, the reader's mind has been following a more interesting train of thought, he will find, at the end of the page, that there has been no true reading. The eyes may have seen the words, but the conscious mind has not apprehended them. It has been fixed instead on the mind-images of its own train of thought. The conscious mind has seen only what it has desired to see.

Numberless illustrations of this may be found. A geologist who travels through mountainous country by rail-road will note the rocks unrolled before him, granite, limestone, red sandstone, with the direction of the strata, and the relation of the rocks to each other, and to the features of the country. A fellow traveller, looking through the same window, will see only the landscape, perhaps not even that. A botanist who is something of an artist will rejoice in the colours and forms and manifold beauty of the flowers. A hillside covered with wild roses, a spired lily in the woods, a field of scarlet poppies, an overhanging rock veiled in bluebells, become permanent riches. In these days of crowded city life, it is likely that millions never look up at the stars. But those who study the stars watch their succession with delight and awe, adding them to their thought of the wider world in which they dwell.

So we see what we desire to see, just as we do what we desire to do. Not only does each of us make his world; he makes it exactly according to his desire.

Perhaps it is in this sense that one of the great Upanishads says:

“Man verily is formed of desire; as his desire is, so is his will; as his will is, so he works; and whatever work he does, in the likeness of it he grows.”

So the middle term of our two sets of three, whether it be the activity of perceiving or of acting, corresponds in this real sense with

Rajas, Passion, the principle of Desire and impelling Force. We have built up our world. The quality of that world is derived from the quality of our desire.

To the conscious mind, the unifying power which perceives and impels, the Sankhya Sutras give two names: Manas, and Antahkarana, the second name meaning literally the Inner Working. But the conscious mind itself, according to this philosophy, is derived from a power or being above it, to which is given the name of Buddhi, the root meaning of which is Awakeness, just as Buddha means the Awakened, somewhat in Shelley's sense: "He hath awakened from the dream of life." Of this power, it is said that "Buddhi is pure Sattva, that is, pure Substance, or pure Goodness; it is the source of Righteousness, Wisdom, Purity, Divine Power."

Once again, let us try to discover the meaning of this by considering quite simple things. In the conscious mind, besides the power of perception, we find the power of recognition. Memory is its simplest form. We recognize what we have seen before. We bring the present image and the earlier image together in our minds, and we see that they are the same.

But this power of recognition pronounces not only on appearances, but also on qualities. It recognizes Truth, the relation between what is perceived and our inherent standard of Reality. It also recognizes Beauty, that divine essence which calls forth a certain pure joy, whether it be joy in the beauty of a violet, or in the clear force of some expression of truth, or in the beauty of holiness. It recognizes Holiness, that compelling power which awakens reverence, inspiring us to subject the lower to the higher, the worse to the better, to bring the wills of self into obedience to the Divine Will, the Will of the Master. This power to recognize Truth and Beauty and Holiness touches the conscious mind from above. The conscious mind lays its questions before it, as before an incorruptible judge.

But this divine power is the source of something more, in addition to a judgement that what we are considering is true, or beautiful, or good. It is also a potent creative energy. Phidias and Leonardo da Vinci perceived beauty; but they did more, they created permanent forms of beauty. Buddha and Christ not only discerned the laws of

truth and holiness, they embodied these divine inspirations in their lives and inspired them in the lives of their disciples.

The mind is so placed within the rays of these divine and creative energies, that it may and should draw them into its perceiving and acting, building up its world of true perception, and holy aspiration, and realization wrought with beauty, a world that shall make manifest the spiritual realities which are above it. And it appears that, when some real effort to do this has been made, there arises a sense of kinship with these divine powers, as something in no sense alien but in a deep and half-understood way really belonging to us and at one with us, the promise of a more profound, more real self, drawing nearer to which we have the sense of coming home. And that home-coming brings with it the realization of immortality. This deeper and more real self, compounded of Truth and Beauty and Holiness, perceiving these divine essences and creatively manifesting them, bears the imprint of the immortal. So Buddhi, as the Sankhya Sutras say, is the source of Righteousness, Wisdom, Purity, Divine Power.

But why is our common experience so different from this? The Sankhya Sutras suggest the reason: "But when Buddhi is reversed, through being tinged with Rajas and Tamas, it becomes vile, with the character of Unrighteousness, Unwisdom, Impurity, lack of Divine Power." The word translated "tinged" means "stained red"; so we have the thought, well known to students of Theosophy, of Buddhi inverted and manifested as Kama, the principle of passional Desire.

In what way is Buddhi tinged with Rajas and Tamas? Perhaps we can make this intelligible by going back to our groups of three. The conscious mind may become so absorbed and immersed in things perceived, that it grows altogether oblivious of the divine powers which should stream into it continually from above, and may even lose the sense of its own consciousness, like a gross feeder absorbed in eating. It is drugged and infatuated by the power of Tamas, and is literally inverted, resting on what is below, instead of what is above. Or it may be so entangled in the thrill of perceiving and impelling to action, saturated with the sense of its feelings and inebriated with them, that it once more becomes oblivious of reality, and falls completely under the thralldom of Rajas. Losing the freely flowing

inspiration from above, it is full of Unrighteousness, Unwisdom, Impurity, and devoid of Divine Power.

We saw how the rebound of our consciousness from things perceived wakes us up to the consciousness of perception, and of ourselves as perceivers. This rebound seems to carry with it into our consciousness the image and feeling of our bodily existence; and this image becomes the basis of our sense of personality.

It would seem that the divine plan was that the consciousness, thus made concrete, should immediately draw on the powers which irradiate it from above, the divine, creative powers of Truth and Beauty and Holiness; that the man should become the servant of the God, as set forth with such convincing truth and beauty in that wonderful book, *Through the Gates of Gold*. But it too often happens that, instead of looking upward for continuous inspiration, the consciousness, under the sway of Tamas and Rajas, falls to worshipping the image of the body in the mind and offering sacrifices to it.

This is Bondage in the meaning of the Sankhya Sutras, and the declared purpose of that teaching is, to enable the man to see his bonds and to break them, to set him free, that he may realize and make manifest the divine powers of his immortality. For immortality is inherent in that deeper consciousness, and man doubts it only when he has become so immersed in things perceived, that he has thought himself into identity with their transitoriness.

So, calling to our aid the divine powers that touch our consciousness from above, we are once more to reverse the inversion of Buddhi; to invoke our inherent sense of Truth, that we may see things as they really are, and may then break the fascination of things perceived and the thrill of feeling; that we may also discern the true character of the usurping and tyrannous personal self and invoke the power of the God within us, and all co-operating divine powers, to break the tyrant's domination, so that the man may rightly worship and render obedience to the God. We are to invoke the divine powers of Beauty and Holiness, perpetually shining on our consciousness from above, in order that we may be so enkindled with the beauty of holiness, that we may be not only willing, but ardently

eager, progressively to subject the lower in us to the higher, the worse to the better.

We are so enthralled and fascinated that we cannot perceive the need of doing this, or gain the power to set about it, without the active intervention of Divine Powers. But the Divine Powers ceaselessly seek the opportunity to do this, if we only show ourselves willing to respond. Again and again in our human history, the Divine Powers have made themselves objectively manifest, incarnate Truth and Beauty and Holiness, in order to inspire and help us; such are Buddha and Christ, in whom "the Logos becomes flesh" in the literal sense of Saint John's phrase. And all that, in our highest moments of inspiration, we dimly divine of the better self above our conscious minds, and a thousandfold more, is made clearly visible in these Divine Incarnations, these visible embodiments of the Logos.

Let us now try to apply to the doctrine of the threefold Logos resting in Primal Being, what we have gathered from our survey of things familiar and near at hand.

We have, first, the marvellous centre of manifold perceptions and actions, the conscious mind which builds the world in which each one of us dwells. Our very familiarity with it blinds us to the continual wonder and miracle of its powers. But this much we see: that through the continuous activity of these powers, the world in which we dwell, the world built up of our perceptions and actions, is made manifest. It may be that we have here a correspondence with the Third Logos of *The Secret Doctrine*, the basis of the universe in manifestation.

Then we have that power which touches our conscious minds from above, ready to impart to us both inspiration and creative energy, as soon as we have firmly resolved to dethrone the usurping personality and enthrone the God; a resolution we are hardly likely to make, or even to conceive, without the active interposition of those Divine Powers on which we are so continuously dependent, but which can effectively aid us only in the measure of our sincere co-operation. Perhaps this region of manifested Divine Power immediately above us corresponds to the Second Logos.

But by abstraction we can conceive of the bare essence and potentiality of Divine Powers, not revealed, not made manifest. And

this abstraction, necessarily very vague and tenuous, may be as much as we can at present conceive of the First, the Unmanifested Logos, which is, perhaps the Theos of Saint John's verses.

Finally, by a second abstraction, we arrive at the thought of Being itself, the Primal Reality through which all exists. While we can postulate this absolute Be-ness as an abstraction, it is necessarily inconceivable and unknowable. For to know this, would mean that we know why there is Being, why there is a universe; and it is clearly impossible that anything within the universe and a part of it, could ever answer that question. Yet this very Unknowable, this inscrutable Being, is the very essence of us, now and for ever. We can never conceivably know That; but we are That, and that fundamental oneness is inescapable. So we may, perhaps, gain some faint and shadowy understanding of the Logos doctrine, the teaching of the threefold Logos, resting on Primal Being; confident that, as our light grows stronger through loyal obedience and service of the light, we may come to discern more clearly what is now so vague an outline.

So far we have for the most part considered life as though it were single, the adventure of one personality only. But there are three directions in which the very nature of our being perpetually impels us to break down our individual limits and go beyond them. There is, first, the natural impulse of exploration in the outer world. We have not only feet to carry us, we have also the impulse to use them which every child puts into action. The child views its immediate surroundings, but it feels instinctively, through the driving force of its inherent powers, that what it knows is not all the world, and it sets forth eagerly to make discoveries. Later on, this same power, this inherent conviction that there is more beyond, will impel it to explore new lands and continents, even to try to find the verge of the solar system, to send its thought forth to search the vast, mysterious spaces among the stars.

There is a second direction in which we are impelled by the inherent conviction that there is more beyond; the direction of our other selves, which rests on our intuitive certainty of the genuine being and consciousness of those about us. We are acquainted primarily with the consciousness of our own minds. But we know that there is also

consciousness beyond the verge of our own minds, stretching away without limit. Whatever a man's formulated creed may be, this intuitive certainty is what he invariably acts on.

We are destined to do far more than act almost blindly and unconsciously on this intuition of "more consciousness" outside our own minds, extending, indeed, like space itself, beyond the horizon. This too we shall one day set forth to explore, under the same impulse to go beyond known limits which sends the child out to seek new worlds. Perhaps Sophocles and Shakespeare have their uses at this very point; they portray many types of our other selves which we can read ourselves into imaginatively, and thus gain practice for real life, exercising ourselves in the broadening of our consciousness, so that we may the more easily gain a genuine understanding of others.

But we shall not make much real headway in this direction until we have in some measure recognized and followed the third roadway which leads us out of ourselves, the direction upward, toward the Divine Power which touches the conscious mind from above. We must gain some entry there, we must catch something of that celestial light, before we can have any true understanding of the consciousness of our other selves. Without some gleam of the celestial light, we may go out toward the consciousness of others only to be submerged among other lives as dark as our own. We may be swamped by some form of mob-consciousness, deeply tinged with Rajas and Tamas, like the earth-hungry consciousness of the Russian peasants.

But if lit by some glimmer of the heavenly light we seek beyond ourselves in the consciousness of others, we may be rewarded by finding souls far more receptive of that light, far more obedient to it, than are our own souls. We may thus gain divine help on our onward journey.

The impulse to open the gate of the child's garden, to open the gate of the constricted heart, to open the gate of the burdened soul to the light and life from above, is a threefold admonition to us of vast reaches of being beyond ourselves; vast expanses of natural life, of human life, of spiritual and divine life. And this perception carries us from the diminutive representation of the Logos in our own consciousness, outward and upward toward the immensity and depth

and splendour of the heavenly Logos.

If we are able thus to approach a philosophical understanding of the Logos doctrine, we shall be wise straightway to turn it to practical ends, for only thus can divine powers really come into action. We must invoke the spirit of Truth which illumines our minds from above, to the end that we may perceive the truth concerning the personal self that we have built up within our consciousness, a bedecked image of the body in the mind, which fascinates us and usurps our service. Here, it is not ill luck, but supreme good fortune, to break the mirror and so dispel the image of self; for only as the personality is dissolved, can we again become receptive of the creative light and power from above. The false personality, the hugely admired image of the body in the mind, is at first a source of intense enjoyment, as a youthful natural body with all its untried powers may be. But in old age the natural body, limp and torpid and flaccid, laden down with infirmity and the wear and tear of time, may become nothing but a source of weariness. So through the painful experiences of human life the false personality may come to be an intolerable burden, in spite of the residue of vanity that decks it. When that revulsion comes, there is hope that, inspired by the Divine Powers above and the succouring Divine Powers about us, we may dethrone our tyrant, and begin through painful, courageous effort, to live from above, struggling upward toward the light. This is that "new birth," or "birth from above," which Saint John records, through which we are born into the "kingdom of Heaven", the region of Divine Powers above us.

We should remember that all the powers, both perceptive and active, which have built up our life, are in origin powers of the Logos. Even when deflected to evil ends, as in the building and feeding of the false personality, they are divine powers warped. For this very reason the false personality is strong and intensely resistant; the combat to dethrone it can never be easy, can never be less than a fight to the death. It is the more imperative to wage it courageously.

It is philosophically interesting to notice how much of divine power misdirected has gone into the building of the false personality. Both its perceiving and acting are creative, because these powers are

derived from the Logos. And it has caught a reflection even of the Absolute, in virtue of which the personality instinctively regards itself as absolute, the real centre of the universe, for whose uses everything else exists. To see through the usurper's pretences and to dethrone him, is our practical problem. It is possible only because divine forces acting rightly and truly are stronger than divine forces warped and turned aside.

The Logos and the Mind

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*Io veggio ben sì come già risplende
nello intelletto tuo l'eterna luce . . .*
—DANTE, *Paradiso*, V.

“Well do I note how in thine intellect already doth reglow the eternal Light, which only seen doth ever kindle love; and if aught else lead your love away, naught is it save some vestige of this Light, ill understood, that shineth through therein.”

In the two lines quoted above, from the longer passage given in English, Dante has said almost everything that can be said regarding the Logos and the mind. The eternal Light of the Logos glows again in our spiritual consciousness, when mind and heart have been cleansed and restored by the long process of purification so marvellously described in the *Purgatorio*.

The heart of the matter would seem to be that not only our spiritual insight and will, but every power that we possess without exception, the whole substance and force of our existence, comes to us from the Logos through the collective Divine Power which we call the Lodge of Masters, and in particular from and through that Master on whose ray of spiritual life and force we are. It is the work of the Master to give form to the spiritual ideal for each one of us, and to lead us, so far as we permit and co-operate, to fulfil that ideal and to make it concrete.

Our powers are not our own, but come to us without exception from the Logos, while the way in which we should use these powers, the plan and ideal we should follow, are given to us by the Master on whose ray we are, who himself draws the principles and lines of his conception from the Logos. Plato speaks of the secondary creative gods who formed mankind, according to his teaching, as mirrors of the eternal Artificer. Dante in like manner calls the divine potencies and high angels mirrors of the eternal Light. We may, perhaps, think of Masters in the same terms, and think of them as carrying out the same work.

Quite literally, we are not our own. We did not provide ourselves with bodies, which come to us through the long succession of ages, from an impulse having its origin in the Logos; and this is true both of their form and of their substance, in the view of students of Theosophy. In exactly the same way we did not provide ourselves with consciousness, that miraculous power which looks out at the world through our eyes. We did not provide ourselves with will, the ability to set our powers in motion, and actively to use them. Consciousness and will are more palpably of the Logos than the form and substance of our bodies; and it may be helpful for us to consider that our consciousness and will, exactly as they are at this moment, are integral parts of the Logos, of the divine, universal Consciousness and Will; not rays remotely derived from the Logos, but undivided parts of the Logos, here and now, just as, according to the most recent scientific view, our hands, for instance, are integral parts of the sum total of electrons which make up the physical substance of the world.

Why then, if the Logos be divine Light, are we so often children of darkness, at best able to say: the good I would, I do not; the evil I would not, that I do?

To begin with, is it not evident that the power thus to discern the dissonance between the good we seek and the evil we do, is already a gift of the Logos, an illumination of our minds by that ineffable Light? But the deeper mystery remains: Why are we so prone to darkness, if the Light be our Father? Why do we follow evil, if we are children of infinite Good?

Here is at once the deepest mystery of human life, and the fact of

which we have, from hour to hour, the most certain experimental knowledge: namely, the mystery of free will. From one side, that problem may be forever beyond our understanding, but from another side we know all that we can possibly use regarding it, much more than we are at all inclined to use. It is exactly as with the problem of Being; from one point of view, Being is, and must ever remain, an inscrutable mystery; from another point of view we know all we need to know, since we are possessed of being, and act confidently on that possession every instant of our lives. So we have free will, and we use it continually.

We may find a workable expression of our problem, if we say that the divine Power, having given us substance and form, consciousness and will, all drawn from the divine Being itself, determined to add the final prerogative of divinity, the power of choice; not simply the power to choose between two directions, as a bird chooses one or another tree for its nest; but the power to choose, with the perception that one choice is good, and the other evil; the power to conform to the divine Will, with the power to disobey that will. This is the splendid and terrible gift with which Divinity has endowed us; and we can see that, had we not the power to disobey, the final virtue would be forever lacking from our obedience.

But if we have both the power to perceive and the power to choose, why do we habitually drag our steps? Why is it such a long matter with us, to turn from the evil we recognize as evil, and to turn to the good which we know to be good? Why are we so sluggish and reluctant in our obedience?

Time seems to enter into the equation as an almost dominating factor. But perhaps that dominance of time exists only in our imaginations; perhaps it is there, only because we think it is there. A few years ago, the followers of Darwin used to think that almost endless time entered into the change from a species to a derived species, through the addition of innumerable characters so small as to be invisible. But the followers of Mutation now think that the complete change takes but one generation, as the moss rose suddenly appeared, or the new evening primrose which started this hypothesis. It may be that time does not enter at all into either transformation;

that our feeling of the innumerable divisions of time needed for any definite change in ourselves, any advance in conformity to the divine Will, is simply the expression of our divided wills, of our deep-seated reluctance really to exert ourselves.

If we consider it, our reluctance, our sloth is a very curious thing. Going to the limit of our physical knowledge in one direction, we reach the atoms, built up, according to the present view, of electrons revolving at the rate of thousands of miles a second; keeping up a pace that would circle the globe more swiftly than Ariel. Going to the opposite extreme, we have the suns and stars, perpetually racing through interstellar space. We, somewhere between these swift extremes, are sodden with sloth. As we have said, it is profoundly strange from a philosophical point of view.

The solution lies, perhaps, in that strange world, between earth and heaven, in which we have elected to dwell: the world of psychic life. From one point of view, it is the world of mind-images; of pictures formed in the mind and by the mind, which exercise over us an extraordinary power of fascination.

Many thoughtful minds have pondered over this power of ours to form mind-images. Patanjali, for example, calls them *Sanskaras*, a word derived originally, it would seem, from the patterns drawn by potters on the soft clay of their unbaked pots. Aristotle calls them *Phantasmata*, pictures first made through the senses and remaining in our minds after the outer objects are withdrawn. The Sutras of Kapila add that, once they are formed, they have a certain power of self-perpetuation, just as the potter's wheel, once it is set spinning, continues to rotate after the impelling force is withdrawn.

Here we come to another gift which the gods have given us, seemingly with the same terrible completeness with which they gave us the power of choice: the gift, namely, of being attracted. The lines quoted from Dante suggest the divine purpose of that gift. We possess it in order that we may have the power of being attracted toward divinity. Its purpose is, to lead us home.

But we use this divine gift as we use all our gifts, capriciously, perversely. We elect to be attracted by things which we know to be unworthy, our power to choose between good and evil giving us quite

clear indications. It is possible that we may sin ignorantly; it is certain that we repeatedly sin with our eyes open.

To go back to the mind-images; it would seem that we often confer on them our power to be attracted, that we purposely endow them with the quality of allurements, because we wish to be allured. Often we deliberately prefer that mood, all the time clearly knowing that it is a wholly unworthy mood.

The mind-image on which we confer the amplest quality of allurements is often the image of ourselves. Like Narcissus who saw his image in the brook, we take as our beginning the image of our visible forms. This we adorn with treasures stolen from heaven, as magpies and jackdaws, though free from our culpability, sometimes deck their nests with pilfered jewels. Once more, it is philosophically curious that we do not hesitate to attribute to this preferred mind-image the qualities even of God; we give it the absoluteness of Parabrahm, convincedly holding it to be the dead centre of the Universe, which all else serves and around which all else circles. And we steal God's benignant will, turn it about, and make of it malice, with which the beloved image is ready to defend himself against anything that threatens his infinite complacency. Perhaps somewhere in the wide Universe there is another spectacle equally grotesque, since it is a large Universe and contains many things.

Aristotle holds, as it seems, quite justly, that these *phantasmata* form the basis of our ordinary mental life. From a group of mind-images we form a derivative mind-image which has in it something of them all, and then, repeating the same process up a series of steps, we come at last to those universals which Aristotle so freely uses, to our harassment, in his Logic. But it is evident that, to serve this purpose, to become the basis of our mental picture-book, mind-images must have some permanence. Perhaps that need is the cause of their inertia, their power to continue spinning, as Kapila depicts it. And we take the two gifts, this needed quality of permanence in the mind-images, and our power to be attracted, and mix them into a potion which thereupon fascinates us, and holds us bewitched.

There are these perverse possibilities all about us. For example, we pass our lives in a sea of mingled nitrogen and oxygen, which we

habitually breathe into our lungs; but these same elements blended in nitrous oxide quickly upset our bodily powers and make our bodies inert and insensible. Two good things blended, it would seem, may make a poison. And from one point of view we and all human kind with us have been sedulously busy, these many millenniums, in thus juggling with the gifts of the Divinity, turning them to every possibility of harm.

Every perception and power that we possess without exception is, if this view be true, an integral part of the Logos, a gift coming to us through the Master on whose ray we are; not arbitrarily, but in perfect conformity with the life and principles of the Logos, including the principle of loving kindness and infinite mercy.

If we have terribly abused our freedom of moral choice, knowingly and repeatedly preferring the dearer to the better, if we have endlessly misused the power to be attracted, conferring it continually on things that we know to be unworthy, nevertheless the saving truth remains that these are still parts and powers of the Logos, and that that divine and benignant Light stands perpetually ready to illumine, guide and strengthen us, focused in the understanding and the heart of each of us by the Master who stands above us, and who ever presents to us the ideal of our divine possibilities. So generous, so benignant is the mediation of the Master, so close to us does he bring the everlasting Light, that we have only to use the powers we already possess and have always possessed, in order to repair the evil we have done, to begin the laborious ascent of the Mount of Purgation toward the spiritual life that is our true destiny.

We have light within us; we can see, if only the first step. For it would seem to be a certain truth that the divine Power above us, focused upon us by the Master, is so benignant, so provident, that the duty which we see set immediately before us, whether of effort or of abstinence, does in fact constitute the first step of our return. And this would seem to be true, whether we fully understand it or not, if only we perceive it to be a duty and faithfully perform it. For even this faithful performance, in almost complete darkness, is a using of our powers in conformity with the divine Will, and that right usage immediately strengthens these powers, bringing into them more light

and life. So we are already better prepared for the second step.

The reason for this sovereign quality in the performance of any duty simply for the sake of duty, would seem to be that it is at last a right use of what we have so long misused: our power of free choice. By choosing duty for duty's sake, we at last align our wills, which are also a divine gift, with the Power that preserves the stars from wrong, and we thereby begin to partake in the strength and freshness of the most ancient heavens.

It is one of the great positive truths of Life, that a spiritual power rightly used is far stronger than the same spiritual power wrongly used. As soon as we begin to offer up self-will on the simple and austere altar of duty, we begin to profit by that benignant law. Even a small duty faithfully performed with entire disinterestedness will prevail over a large accumulation of self-will, and will begin to undermine and lessen the heap. So we can definitely make a beginning, by responding to that unquenched spark that is in every one of us, the sense that the duty immediately before us ought to be done because it ought to be done, because that course is right.

We can gain an initial leverage in this way for our next step. Through following the Light in the first step, we shall find ourselves in possession of a light already growing brighter, a light that will begin to illumine the furniture of our inner dwelling, and will begin to bring out the ugliness of much that we accumulate there. And we shall see, perhaps, that we have brought these unlovely things into our dwelling by misusing that other spiritual gift, the power to be attracted; by fixing it on ugly and unworthy things.

If this be so, and if we so perceive it, then it would seem possible to detach that power of attracting us from these unlovely things, and to transfer it immediately to the Power to which it rightfully belongs, the divine Power which so unwearingly seeks to lead our feet into the way of Peace.

If we succeed even to a little degree in making this transfer, in detaching the golden particles of attraction from things we now see to be ignominious, and attaching them to the guiding Light above us, then sheer duty, at first a stern lawgiver only, will begin to appear to us with the Godhead's most benignant grace. Or if we have already

caught a first glimpse of the truth that the Power which is guiding us and strengthening us on our way upwards is inspired by fully conscious and responsive love, that it is the power of the living Master, then we may begin with reverent heart to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

And once more we may remind ourselves that spiritual powers restored to their right place and their right use steadily outweigh and overbear the same powers wrongly used; so that the golden particles of attraction, once we have detached them from the unworthy things in our minds and restored them to the Light and Power above us, will immediately gain in drawing power, reinforced by all the strength of celestial Being. Emerson has a happy simile to express this law: cut downward with an axe, and the whole weight of our planet aids you; try to cut upward with the same axe, and the weight of the planet pulls against you.

Let us then consider how we may use our powers so that the whole weight of the Divine Power may pull with them, instead of pulling against them. And let us note, in passing, that that steady pull against our perverse wills, bringing with it pain and suffering, has again and again kept us back from destruction. It is as ready, yes, far more ready, to labour for our salvation.

Let us begin with will, the power to use our powers. Jules Payot has well said that the most important element of the will is the power of voluntary attention. Truly, a great power, and a magical power, if we so see it. It is not difficult to illustrate this. We of this generation have seen a succession of the most marvellous scientific discoveries; and each of these was the fruit of voluntary attention. It is true that an element of "happy accident" entered into the first discovery of the matter-penetrating cathode rays, while a second "happy accident" entered into the first discovery of the radioactivity of uranium. But without the steady, voluntary attention of the observers, these happy accidents would have borne no fruit. And it seems certain that, in this providential Universe, we are all surrounded with happy accidents, potentially capable of bearing no less valuable fruit, if only we used an equal power of attention. For it seems that attention not only is the power to hold the perceiving thought steady, but that it also contains

within it the power to perceive the inner significance of what we steadily view; this, in virtue of its being a ray of the Logos.

So we can begin to turn our attention, and to fix our attention, on that divine star in our hearts, which shines with the everlasting Light; and, in virtue of our miraculous gift of true perception, we shall begin to learn more of that Light, we shall see more clearly what part of the furniture of our inner dwelling is worthy and what unworthy, what is good and what is evil.

Then we have the power to form mind-images, and to confer upon them the power to attract us. But this power also, which has hitherto worked to allure and enmesh us, can be turned round, so that it will work for our liberation. For we can as easily form mind-images of things true and holy, which will draw us toward the everlasting way.

And, as soon as we consider the matter, as soon as we turn on it that other power of attention, as a searchlight is turned upon scenery hidden in the darkness of night, we shall find that endless riches have already been gathered for us, immediately available for this very purpose. Those books which deal with the things of the Logos, and of our relation with the life of the Logos, the Sacred Books of the world, are filled from cover to cover with mind-images lit with the beauty of holiness. We have only to build them up in our own minds, and we shall have an army of lovely images, ready to fight the battle of purification and redemption within us continually.

Take, for example, that ancient Upanishad, which pictures the youth, Nachiketas, descending into the House of Death. Here are mind-pictures which show us our own position, in the House of Death in which we have elected to dwell, and also the choice we must make, to find the way of liberation.

Or take the setting of the *Bhagavad Gita*: the field of Kurukshetra with the armies of kinsmen arrayed against each other. That is the type of the battle within ourselves, against the deformation of ourselves, which we have undertaken to wage; and Krishna's exhortation to valour in that contest is an exhortation to us.

Or, again, take the kingly figure of the Buddha, Siddhartha the Compassionate, which has drawn millions of hearts, even though his followers have rendered much of his teaching almost sterile, through

their over-use of the argumentative mind, neglecting almost wholly the power of the heart. Yet even with this handicap, the story of the formation of his Order is full of compelling beauty.

Again, if we consider it a moment, we shall find the history of the Master Christ doubly enriched with food for the imagination spiritually used. Christ constantly exercises the power to create mind-images that shall hold our thought and draw our hearts. All the parables are such images. And he has set in them those particles of gold which do draw us; in that respect, the work is already done.

Take the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican: no two figures were ever more vividly drawn, with lines of such perfect simplicity; the temple as background, the attitudes of the two men, their contrasted prayers. If our central sin be self-worship, what an image of ourselves is presented to us in the Pharisee, who "prayed with himself," congratulating God on His perfect handiwork. And if the breaking of the image of self be the beginning of the way, when the divine Light reveals to us the evil of it, what truer picture of our attitude of heart, when we perceive this evil, than the prayer of the Publican: "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Or take what is, perhaps, the greatest of all the parables, the Prodigal Son. Where in all literature has eloquence risen to greater heights than in his expression of repentance: "I will arise and go to my father"?

But there is a more immediate and one-pointed use of the imagination, than this general enrichment of our hearts with dynamic images, rich in compelling beauty, that shall draw our hearts toward things divine and holy; and it happens that the parable of the Prodigal Son precisely illustrates this one-pointed use.

He was not content with a vague purpose, dimly figured in his mind. He completed in his imagination the details of his act of penitence: "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." He formed a defined mind-image, a completed mental mould, of what he purposed to do and say; and, when he met his father, he found those words ready on his lips. Yes, and the Master who framed the parable made in it a mould for his

children, in which many a penitent heart has found a resting place, a perfect expression of its own burden of sorrow and contrition.

In this way, seeing the next duty in the light of the Divine Power now glowing more brightly in our hearts, we may form in detail the picture of ourselves performing that duty, and then endow the picture with those golden particles which have the power to attract our hearts, as we withdraw these particles from the wrong uses to which we have hitherto put them. The living mould we thus form and endow will almost carry us forward to the completion of our duty, again to use a simile of Dante's, like a boat carried with the stream.

Our central sin of self-adoration has many subdivisions: self-reference, self-attribution, self-concern, self-pity, self-admiration. We have endowed each with the power to attract and draw us. But we are now at the point where we can begin to make restitution.

We see that every one of our powers is a power of the Logos, a gift of the Master, misused through perversity. Self-worship is the misuse of the power to worship whatever things are holy. Seeing the image we have made of ourselves as false, grotesque, addicted to theft, and at the same time seeing something of the magnanimous beauty and generosity of the Divine Power which is leading and guiding us back into the way of life, we can, through an effort of clear seeing and steady attention, change the direction of our worship, bending it no longer toward the false image, but to the godlike Power. And instead of referring all things that happen to the centre of self, we can, by the same steady effort, refer them to that Power, realizing that all events happen, not for the purposes of self-indulgence, but for the purposes of Soul. As we see more clearly that all our powers are from and of the Logos, it will become easier to attribute to the Logos whatever we may find in ourselves of understanding and of valour, thus changing from self-attribution to a right attribution of these gifts to the Power to which they really belong. As the light within us grows, self-admiration will wane; we can help that decrease by paying the tribute of hearty thanksgiving to the divine Grace which begins to lead us out of our self-made labyrinth. As for self-pity, a time will come when we shall begin to realize the wrong we have done, the injury we have inflicted, through our perverse disobedience; we may begin to turn our pity to a

more honest use.

In this work of restitution we shall be helped by the drawing power of the eternal Light, "which only seen doth ever kindle love." And we shall come to realize that the treasures of beauty are in the books which speak of the Soul, because the Soul which created and inspired them is the fountain of all beauty. The parable of the Prodigal draws our hearts, because the Master who created it has infinite power to draw our hearts; to lead us, like the Prodigal, homeward.

The Logos and Life

Theosophical Quarterly, July, 1923

E la sua volontate è nostra pace:
Ella è quel mare, al qual tutto si move
Ciò ch' ella crea e che natura face.
—DANTE, *Paradiso*, III.

“Nay, 'tis the essence of this blessed being to hold ourselves within the Divine Will, whereby our own wills are themselves made one. . . . And His will is our peace; it is that sea to which all moves that it createth and that nature maketh.”

If we consider the Logos to be infinite Wisdom and Power and Love immortal, we may hold that all life, guided, inspired and ruled by the Logos, has as its purpose to infuse into our hearts wisdom and love and power and immortality, and steadily to increase their measure there toward the measure of its own boundless beneficence.

And, if we hold that the Masters of Wisdom are the ministers of the Logos, we may then consistently believe that the ceaseless purpose of the Masters, the Buddhas and the Christs of all past times and of the present and all time to come, is the same: to infuse into us such wisdom and love and power and immortality as is the essence of their own majestic life; a purpose which in them flames as a fire of benediction, from which we also may catch fire.

If this be true as a universal principle, it must be true in every particular; not only life as a totality, but every detail, every daily and

hourly setting of life, must have the same benignant purpose. If this be so, then nothing happens at random or uselessly; all things are weighed and planned and directed to that end.

But before we can become receptive of a consciousness so deep, so rich, so holy, there must be long preparation and apprenticeship. And we may learn to see, in the daily life of the moving crowds among whom we pass our lives, that ceaseless training and preparation are in truth going on, the training of multitudes who, in one sense, are hardly conscious that they are alive; who never pause to ask themselves whither they are bound, and what life's purpose, for them individually, and for us all, may be.

We may, perhaps, gain a deeper insight into this universal training and preparation, if we ask ourselves what must be the quality of a consciousness which shall be fit to approach, and in due time to enter into the mighty and immortal consciousness of the Logos; what must be the temper and texture of a soul, fitting it to become one with the Divine Soul.

In such a soul, in such a consciousness, there must be a quick, sensitive conformity with the spirit and nature of the Logos, the essence of filial love and an ever obedient will; a will obedient as Dante tells us that the angels are, because of their own nature they freely will what God wills, and eagerly and joyfully perform whatever they discern of the purposes of God.

Therefore a long training in obedience to law must be essential, a training continued until the soul is saturated through and through with joy in obedience. And it is one of the gravest criticisms of our times, that we have so little reverence for obedience as a principle, so little willingness to obey because it is right to obey, because the spirit of obedience is essential in order that we may respond to the divine leading of the Logos, which penetrates every detail, every circumstance and force of our lives.

It is a part of the same criticism, that men have so largely lost the sense of those powers and qualities in other men which deserve and demand obedience; that so few seek, by their own higher obedience, to bring into activity in themselves that quality of soul which others should obey; neither through fear nor through any shade of self-

seeking, but for love of that which deserves love, through reverence of what inspires reverence.

If life were rightly and worthily lived, in filial conformity with the beauty of holiness, there would be, among the visible leaders of men, something of that which disciples reverence in their Master, whom they joyfully obey, not because they seek anything for themselves, not because they fear, but through overmastering love.

Through this joyful, loyal obedience of spirit and heart and mind and the whole nature, disciples grow into the divine nature of their Master, as he has grown, by a like loyal and loving obedience, into the divine life of the Logos.

While the purpose of the Logos and its ministers, the Masters of Wisdom, must in many ways be thwarted and held back by this lack of the quality of nobility in our life today, whether it be the nobility which inspires obedience or the nobility which loyally obeys, yet the Logos, the eternal Wisdom, is too resourceful, too potent, too penetrating, not to seek the same end by some other means which our life today, though lacking in nobility, maybe able to afford.

Perhaps this is one of the causes of what we call the age of industrialism. We may, if we are so disposed, rejoice in its supposed triumphs; or we may lament its hardness and raw ugliness. But we shall be wise also to seek its deeper purpose, its more enduring fruit.

This age of industry is busy, not so much with materials, as with the forces embodied in materials. And no material can be successfully employed except by seeking and gaining an insight into the forces it embodies, and by a faithful obedience to these forces.

We call this the age of iron, of steel; and steel and iron are gathered sheaves of force. They are force made visible, force which must be studied and its laws faithfully complied with, if our structures are to stand up and hold together; if our complex machines are to do their work. In the handling of them, there is a constant compulsion to obedience, an obedience which is in fact willingly and loyally rendered.

It is well worth while, with this thought in mind, to watch those who are engaged in our many mechanical industries and their operations; to see how the complex machine teaches and trains the man, after the man has invented and built the machine; to note the

qualities of attention, of alertness and energy which the machine imposes on the man who operates it.

His conscious view is, in all probability, that he is earning money because he needs or wishes to spend it on many things which he desires. But, if our thought be true, there is a second purpose going on, a deeper end attained; the all-wise Logos is teaching him lessons, drilling essential qualities into his soul, while he imagines he is serving his own purposes only.

While the workman counts up his earnings, while his employer reckons the gains or losses of the whole complex operation in which the workman is a part, the Logos may draw up a more significant balance-sheet, recording that he has, through so many hours, gained so many units in the practice and training of obedience: not the highest obedience, not the noble obedience of a loyal soul to a greater and more luminously inspired soul, but still obedience; an obedience which, when it has been thoroughly learned, may in the fullness of time be transmuted into the nobler obedience of the consenting heart.

If we take a penetrating and imaginative view of the whole immense and pervading activity of our industry, we shall see that the lesson is going forward on a tremendous scale. While millions of men think they are serving their own ends, they are really being trained to the ends of the Logos; quite unknowingly, but none the less really, they are gaining those qualities which shall fit them, when their day of spiritual birth comes, to enter into conscious conformity with the life of the Logos in the splendour of its immortality.

Take next our commerce: the buying and selling of so many things, useful or useless, which engages large classes from morn till eve, day after day, year in and year out.

It is a truism among these people themselves that the first step toward every sale is to find out what the buyer wants, and to supply it. There would seem to be no exception to the rule that every great fortune has been gained in this one way: by discovering something which large masses of people desire, and by bringing it to them. There may be a good deal of cheating, of fraud, of chicane; but they do not bring the great successes. People know what they want, in a general way. They may, and often do, want things that they would be much

better without; but that is beside the question for our present thought. The essential fact is, that the successful merchant must discern exactly what they want, and must supply it.

To do this, he must exercise a quality of divination, he must learn to study and read their wishes, and sensitively to respond to them; and, if he seeks a continuing success, he must give them the feeling that they have got exactly what they desire, so that they will come back to him for more.

So far as he is concerned, his motive may be no better than self-seeking. None the less he is being trained, unknown to himself, in something finer than self-seeking. Looking forward with faith, we can see that the same sensitive divination will, in the fullness of time, when his day of spiritual light has dawned, guide him into seeking and discerning the purposes of the Logos, the thoughts and wishes in the heart of God.

Take another side of our life: the gregariousness so characteristic of the cities, which are so imperiously drawing us into their whirlpool life today. Think of the immense crowds which surge through our railway stations morning and evening, threading their divergent ways among meeting crowds; the swarms of human beings gathered in our factories, our huge office buildings.

Underneath much in all this that is repellent and a ceaseless strain, something of greater value is being gained. Once more quite unconsciously, these seething masses of men and women are being inducted into an instinctive realization of the sea of human consciousness in which they move. In our immense railway stations, in packed trains, in the rushing rivers of the streets, they must take note of each other as living beings, even when there is little sense of finer human values. If only in self-defence, they must be alert, active, observant, on pain of colliding with each other. Thus something of the total of human consciousness, albeit on a level not yet fully human, is trained and driven into them, just as obedience is being driven into those who operate machines.

The swiftly moving crowds teach each other certain essential lessons, one day to become available for larger and nobler ends. As each one is now compelled to remember that he is part of a great

human consciousness, so he may in time be prepared to recognize himself as a part of a greater divine consciousness, and with grateful joy to conform himself to its finer nature.

Take again that striking feature of our life today, the swiftness of movement, the ceaseless rushing through space, which is either an overmastering passion or an all-compelling necessity. At no time of which we have any record did each human being average so many miles in his journey from birth to death, or cover them at so great a speed. This must inevitably drive in upon the consciousness a quality of ceaseless motion, an aroused, alert energy, which may gradually ascend step by step to the wide-sweeping yet perfectly focused consciousness and will of the Masters of Wisdom, from whom further steps go upward to the supreme consciousness, the eternal motion, of Life itself, the everlasting Logos.

It is part of the infinite beneficence of that Life, that the Masters of Wisdom come among us, as the Buddha came, as the Christ came, to reveal to us the essential nature of Divine Life, that supreme Consciousness and Will of infinite beauty, infinite wisdom, infinite love, whither all our human pathways tend.

The Buddha in his serene selflessness, the Christ with his passionate love, bring close to us, and put us in immediate touch with, the splendours of Divine Life which are our destiny and goal.

It would not be difficult to press home the same lesson, the ceaseless teaching and guidance of the Logos, with regard to every activity of our complex life. In our consideration, we have touched on only a few external points. We have said nothing of the individual genius of nations and the revelation that underlies true national life. We have said nothing of the finer intimacies between soul and soul, which so evidently teach and inspire. We have said nothing of art, which might reveal so much of the unseen. We have said nothing of the beneficent lessons of pain and suffering and sorrow, which admonish us of laws of the Logos which we are ignoring or violating, thus mercifully doing their part of the eternal work.

All these things must be studied by us and learned, until we see their significance and meaning, seeking to understand them, not as the human souls who are in the midst of them see them, nor as they may

appear in our own personal view, but as the Masters of Wisdom see them, as they are directed to serve the eternal ends of the Logos.

For we shall be well advised to hold that, however much men and devils may seek to pervert life, to make it mischievous and destructive, the Masters of Wisdom and the Logos in the long run win, the divine ends are always served and attained, even in the face of perpetual blindness or opposition. Every detail, every quality and fact, is being used and turned to the uses of divinity, not occasionally or at favourable junctures only, but everywhere and always.

If this be so, then it would seem that we may draw certain conclusions for our own use.

If the whole of human life, and even all the perversions of life, are being directed by a conscious, divine purpose to beneficent spiritual ends, in the transmutation of human consciousness into divine consciousness; if this be true of life in general, it must be true of my life and yours. It must be true of us in every detail, at every point of our lives; in every hour, every moment even, the divine lesson is being presented for our learning, and therefore at this point, this hour, this moment; the lesson which, as we learn it, will lead us a step nearer to divine wisdom, divine love, immortality. We must learn to see these lessons; we must teach ourselves to look for them, that we may see them. The first step is to understand that they are there, and that to a considerable degree we are missing them because we keep our eyes shut.

A second conclusion we may draw is that, if humanity as a whole and all human beings are being so taught and guided and helped in spite of blind incomprehension, in spite of recalcitrance and resistance, in spite of wilful disobedience and evil contrary purposes; if, in the teeth of all this, true progress is being made toward the divine goal, then it must follow that, if we substitute for resistance a loyal and eager obedience, if we are willing to open our eyes and to be cured of blindness, if we will go gallantly forward to meet the divine teaching, we shall instantly change the complexion of our lives, bringing our wills into conformity with the purpose of the Logos, bringing ourselves into harmony with the teaching of the Masters of Wisdom; and the gain will be incalculable.

The child whose heart is filled to overflowing with loving obedience, the pupil who is full of enthusiasm, the student whose soul kindles with intuitive and sympathetic understanding, how rapidly and with what joy they learn, how splendidly they go forward! The willing, eager co-working of genuine love, alight and aflame, is the true stone of transmutation, transforming, purifying, enkindling heart and soul and understanding. The disciple who has given his whole heart to the Master in devoted love, receives in full the blessing of the Master's peace, a peace which is full of the consuming activity of devotion. In the fullness of time, he learns to set his hand wisely and effectively to his Master's work, even to lift something of the heavy burden his Master bears; in time he too may become a minister of the Logos, working to lead mankind forward on the way of Divinity.

We may elect to be pushed and dragged along that way, like prisoners under arrest, or to go forward of happy choice, inspired by love. It will be profitable, perhaps, in the beginning, to realize that what we call our minds, practically everything we now think of as ourselves, is so much plastic material, to be moulded to better uses. We may begin by directing our powers of thought and understanding firmly to impress on these minds of ours the primary truth that each moment, each juncture, has its divine lessons; and, when we have imbued our minds with this fundamental truth, we may then take the step that logically follows, and set our intelligence to work to seek the lesson, enkindling our hearts to learn it, to follow it, to put it into effect.

Since we have so long been wilfully or heedlessly blind, we shall at first see vaguely and indistinctly, with the eyes of infants not yet coming to a clear focus; we shall go forward with the halting steps of little children, not yet able to stand firmly, or to walk without unsteadiness and feebleness.

Like infants, like little children: could there be any simile of more evident promise? Is it not of universal experience that infants learn to see, that little children learn to walk?

Let us borrow from them something more: the happy, confident faith with which all childhood accomplishes these miracles, and the continuing joy in effort which sets the child going again, after never so many falls.

The lessons are there, set as clearly in the frame of day and hour as the pictures on our walls; as the child learns in no long time to see the pictures on the walls, and to understand their meaning, so may we, if we put our hearts into it, learn the significance of the day, the hour, the task, discerning just what lesson, what fault to be corrected, what gift of illumination, of humility, has been put there by the Masters of Wisdom, ministers of the Logos; put there, waiting for us to see. It is possible to long ardently to be taught by Masters, and to sit through lesson after lesson with our eyes shut.

As our love is kindled by reception of the spirit of Divine Life, we shall see, we shall learn, we shall obey. We shall muster courage to drive the self of evil out of ourselves with increasing detestation, to draw into our hearts in stead obedience and light and love; we shall see that these days of ours are veils of the Eternal, not in some vague or abstract way, but instantly, in every moment, at every point. By desiring to cooperate, we shall already begin to cooperate in the great and magnificent work the Lords of Life, the Masters of Wisdom, have in hand. By receiving the spirit of obedient love into our hearts, and entering in spirit with our own efforts into the divine purpose, we shall share in the work of leading the innumerable assemblage of souls forward to ward the everlasting home; toward a life which is infinite love, infinite beauty, infinite wisdom, infinite beneficence.

We shall discover that work to this divine end, in the spirit of obedient love, far from wearying us, deeply refreshes us. As we spend ourselves and pour forth our efforts, we become thereby richer, not poorer; as we follow the light, we shall gain light; as we surrender joy, we shall increase in joy. But we shall do this, not because of these rewards, but rather in purity of heart, through love, in humility and obedience, in reverence and awe before the living miracle of divine love and mercy and benediction.

The Logos and Meditation

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Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

The passage from which this beautiful word picture is taken might well serve to illustrate the whole theory and practice of Meditation, in its three stages: observation, understanding, embodiment.

The word rendered “consider” is more emphatic in Greek; it means “study intently, observe accurately.” The parallel passage in Luke uses another word, but with the same emphatic meaning: to fix the powers of observation intently and accurately on the thing observed.

Neither the translation we have quoted, from the Sermon on the Mount, nor the rendering of the passage in Luke, does full justice to the accuracy of the Master’s observation. The Greek of Luke says, of the lilies: “they spin not, they weave not”; the two processes, spinning the thread with a spindle, and weaving warp and woof together on a loom, which go to the making of the piece of cloth to be made into raiment. The accepted translation gives only a part of the picture in the Master’s mind; he was thinking, not of toil in general, but of the particular toil involved in the making of raiment: spinning and weaving.

In another passage, which follows shortly after the image of the lilies, in the Sermon on the Mount, the translators use a word which somewhat blurs the clear outline of the Master’s picture, and thereby

obscures a point of high interest. They translate:

“Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye”

The word “mote” calls up no clear image in the mind, unless it be the mote in the sunbeam. But the Greek word means, among other things; a chip cut by a carpenter, hewing a beam into shape with an axe. The thought in the Master’s mind would seem to be this:

“Why beholdest thou the chip that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the plank that is in thine own eye?”

The simile may come from the workshop of the Carpenter of Nazareth. Thus rendered, it is far more vivid; it has also an element of keen humour, of which something will presently be said.

Yet another word regarding the lilies might be more vividly rendered. The Master asked his disciples intently to observe the lilies of the field, “how they grow.” The Greek word means, “how they increase,” growing in height, in strength, in beauty. The lily sends forth the stem, unfolds the leaves, forms the buds, opens the flowers. It is a picture not static but dynamic, a picture of evolving life.

And it is worth noting that, when the Master speaks of plants and trees, he speaks also of their growth, in this sense of increase. He sees the fruit tree, not simply standing in an orchard, but bearing fruit; the branch of the vine likewise bringing forth fruit; the wheat sown on good ground, springing up and bringing forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold; the seed springing up and growing, the sower knoweth not how; the earth bringing forth fruit, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear; the fig tree, when the branch is yet tender, putting forth leaves, foretelling the coming of summer.

Always the same intent, accurate observation; and always the vivid sense of growing, increasing life. The Master sees not only the lily, the wheat, the vine; he sees also the life, the divine, creative Spirit, the breath of the Father, moving in the lily, the wheat, the branch of the vine.

If space allowed, it would be profoundly interesting to illustrate in detail the Master’s keen, intent observation of the life about him in

all its aspects; not only the growth of plants and flowers and trees, but the birds of the air, the hen with her chickens, the sparrow; the raven and the eagle, seen, perhaps, when the Master ascended the mountains; household episodes, a woman sweeping, the mending of a torn garment, the kneading of dough; then pictures of life in small towns, children playing gay or tragic games, men standing in the market place waiting to be hired, others giving alms ostentatiously; scenes in the country, the ploughing of fields, the sowing of wheat, the fields white for the harvest, the reaper with his sickle; shepherds tending their sheep upon the hills; a red and lowering sky; portending foul weather, the cloud rising from the West, from the Mediterranean, bringing a shower, the South wind, from the Arabian desert, bringing heat. So complete, so many sided, so accurate is his observation, that it is almost possible to see the face of the land and its people with the Master's eyes.

This is the intent, accurate observation which is the first stage of Meditation, the right use of the first power of the Logos. In the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali, it is called Dharana: "the binding of the perceiving consciousness to a certain region." Patanjali adds: "When the perceiving consciousness is wholly given to illuminating the essential meaning of the object contemplated, and is freed from the sense of separateness and personality, this is Meditation (Samadhi)."

Intently noting the life about him, the lily, the raven, the reaper, the men praying in the temple, the Master brought what he had so accurately observed to the inner, spiritual consciousness, the divine Light of the Logos, in order "to illuminate the essential meaning of the object contemplated."

He saw the lily, the reaper; the men praying, first as they appeared to the natural vision, keen, alert, perfectly focused. He then directed upon their images the divine vision, the highest spiritual Consciousness, to see their essential meaning as it appears to the eyes of the Father.

The attitude of the Master's mind and heart, in this regard, are best revealed in his words, recorded by the beloved disciple:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things

soever the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth.”

If the soul, seeking light in Meditation, will reverently and faithfully lift the object of Meditation toward the divine Light of the Logos, that Light will illumine it, revealing its essential meaning, because the Light is kindled by divine Love.

When the disciple, in faith and love and obedience, in his heart brings his problem to the Master, the Master so strengthens the spiritual light of the disciple that the disciple can find the solution of his problem; not yet fully, not completely; he cannot yet see the lily as the Master sees it, as God sees it; but he can, if he have faith and love and obedience, see enough for his next step. And that is all he needs, in order to obey.

Let us go back over some of the ground we have traversed, with the endeavour to see how the Master perceived “the essential meaning of the object contemplated”; how he discerned the real values of things, the values they have in the eyes of the Father.

He was able thus to see eye to eye with the Father, because he gave himself up to the Father’s will, completely, without reservation, in devoted, ardent love, saying, “not my will, but thine, be done.”

He saw the lily of the field sending forth stem and leaf and bud and blossom; though neither spinning nor weaving, yet clothed more perfectly in beauty than Solomon in all his glory. And he saw the essential meaning of the lily: the divine Life, the infinite, creative Spirit, the power of the Father, flowing into the lily, penetrating it to the tip of every leaf and petal; and the lily clad in perfect beauty, because of this divine, inflowing Life.

That, in itself, would have been a complete perception, a Meditation which had attained its end. He had perceived the essential meaning of the lily’s beauty: the indwelling Life of the Father. The poet who truly perceives and truly meditates, goes thus far.

But the Master, though he finds joy, and deep joy, in the beauty of the lily, thus seeing in it the revelation of the Father’s love, is yet preoccupied with another purpose: He speaks of the beauty of the lily, only as a means to his real end.

This real purpose is, to reveal the love of the Father to the hearts of the men he is talking to; to the hearts of his disciples, and, through them, to the hearts of all mankind, to whom he sends his disciples, to carry this message. The mission of the disciples is, to bring the hearts of men to the Master, that he in turn may bring these weary hearts to the Father, establishing in them the Father's joy, the Father's kingdom.

And because he sees these hearts, weary and heavy laden, sorely anxious for the morrow, sorely anxious regarding food and raiment, he makes available for them what he has observed, and what he has inwardly understood regarding the life of the lilies and the ravens.

The ravens neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn; and the Father feedeth them. The lilies of the field, the wild lilies, increase in their beauty; they spin not, they weave not, yet Solomon in all his glory was not so arrayed.

As the lilies, resting on the earth, receive and are penetrated by the flowing life of the Father, whereby they increase, and form buds, and blossom in beauty, so should we receive the flowing love of the Father in our hearts, that our joy may be filled; that we may enter into the joy of the Father, the joy of a life, infinite and eternal. And the purpose of the Master, in putting the lily before his disciples, is to make the lily reveal the Father's love within their hearts. This is always his purpose: he reveals to his disciples, to the multitudes, to us, the form and loveliness of his own life, that he may thereby reveal to us the love of the Father.

To come back to the other picture we began with, the chip and the plank, an impression drawn from the carpenter's shop in Nazareth.

In this picture, there is keen, precise observation, but there is also humour. We read and hear his words with a feeling of reverence, because of which, perhaps, this element of humour escapes us. But we ought to seek his purpose in using just this image. That a carpenter, hewing a log of wood into the regularity of a beam, might get a flying chip in his eye, would be quite natural. But how could he get the whole log in his eye?

Is it not clear that the Master is using the expedient of wild exaggeration for a purpose: to rivet the attention of his hearers on the

image; to give them a picture, unforgettable just because it is supremely ludicrous? The picture of a man walking about with a log in his eye, and not knowing it, has, in fact, the element of the ridiculous in an almost infinite degree. Once the mind sees it, it can never be forgotten.

Take another image, with exactly the same quality of wild exaggeration: the camel climbing, with only a slight effort, through the eye of a needle; the camel being chosen, rather than a horse or an ox, just because of the humped, clumsy awkwardness which makes it standing matter of comedy, the last animal that can be imagined performing a difficult acrobatic feat with ease and grace. Had the Master spoken of a camel jumping through a hoop, we should already have had a humorous, ridiculous image; but the effect is heightened almost to an infinite degree; by substituting for the hoop the eye of a needle. Mentally form the picture, and it is startling in its ludicrousness.

The purpose is once more to fix on the memory of his audience an image unforgettable because it is so supremely ludicrous. And he wishes thus to fix the picture on their memories, in order that they may never forget the message which he ties up with the image.

To go back to the chip and the plank The Master is seeking to reveal to his disciples the obstacles which men put in the way of the Father's love; the barriers they build up: in themselves against the Father's love, which the Master has come to reveal.

Most potent of these barriers is self-love, the kind of self-love which he calls "hypocrisy"; the quality which concentrates and hardens the false self; the nucleus of egotism, setting it against others, and at the same time setting it against the love and will of the Father.

He has expressed the purpose of his coming in these words:

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in one."

What more insuperable barrier to that “perfecting into one” than the harsh egotism, full of vanity, self-assertion and superiority, which the Master calls hypocrisy?

The use of the word “talent” in the Master’s parable, like his use of the tribal name, “Samaritan,” has stamped on these words a new meaning, which has attained universal currency. The Greek weight of precious metal has come to mean an intellectual or moral power; solely because of its use in the Master’s unforgettable story. The name of a despised tribe has come to mean a man of compassionate heart, for the same reason. The Master has re-minted both words, indelibly stamping his hall-mark on them.

So it is with hypocrite. It now carries for us the meaning gathered from his repeated use of it, to indicate that tendency of the human mind and heart which he found to be the greatest barrier, the most dangerous obstacle, in the way of what he sought to accomplish: the bringing of the hearts of men into oneness with his own heart, in order that he might thereby bring them into oneness with the Fathers heart.

Just because of the new currency which he gave to words like talent and Samaritan, we are likely to lose something of their original meaning, as a weight of metal, an unpopular tribe. So it is with the words hypocrite and hypocrisy. It is worth while, therefore, to go back over the history of these words, to follow their original meaning and development.

In Homer, the verb from which they come meant “to reply, to answer.” In Athens, with its passionate love of drama and of the theatre, the word came also to have a more technical meaning, the answer of an actor on the stage; and from this the passage was easy enough to the meaning, “to play a part on the stage,” as when Aristotle speaks of an actor “playing the part of the king.” From this, the moral application, playing a part, feigning, pretending, in word or deed, was easy.

Perhaps we shall get back something of the word’s original vividness, if we take Aristotle’s phrase, “playing the part of the king.”

Is not that, after all, exactly what vanity does, what egotism does, what the false self within us does incessantly? Because the false self usurps, and plays the part of the king, taking, both in perception and

in action, the initiative which rightly belongs to the divine Light of the Logos in us and should rightly flow from the Logos; because of this usurpation, the false self is hardened against the Logos, hardened against other men, children of the Logos, hardened against the Master, against the Father, whom the Master came to reveal.

It was to reveal this situation, to break down this dangerous barrier, that the Master drew that picture with its wild exaggeration: the man walking about with a plank in his eye, and not aware of it; the "hypocrite," playing the part of the king. The plank in the eye is the false self, hard, aggressive, blinding.

If we are right, then, we may say that all the Master's Meditation, his marvellously keen and vivid observation, his spiritual understanding of the essential meaning of what he observed, seeing it as the Father sees it, the living pictures which he drew, to embody this understanding; all this was devoted to a dual purpose: first, to reveal his own heart as the door to the Father's heart; second, to reveal, and to break down in the hearts of men, the barriers against his love and the Father's love. His Meditation always had this practical end in view; in his own words, he always made it bring forth fruit. He embodied his Meditation in the living images drawn with words.

It is well worth while to consider the way in which he draws these living pictures which bring to us the fruit of his Meditation; and to note something of their perfection of form. We may, perhaps, best gain our insight by comparison. Take a sentence like this, framed by a master in the use of words:

". . . the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill . . ."

There is fresh vividness of observation here, with beauty of form and rhythm. But in translation much of that beauty would evaporate; the dew would dry up. There is too much subtle delicacy in the fine tones of colour in the words, in the lightly balanced stresses which make the rhythm, for transfer to another tongue. The movement of his story, the forms of his persons, his insight into life, remain; but Shakespeare translated is a moral philosopher rather than a poet; all that is most distinctive in his verse vanishes. Shakespeare has entrusted too much of his beauty to the surface, to rhythmic subtlety in the

balance of words, the use of the pause, the delicate colouring of an adjective. It would be almost impossible to carry over into a translation the tone and music of the phrase:

“The multitudinous seas incarnadine . . .”

In his expression of beauty, the Master seems to have gone deeper, to have entrusted less to the surface. He has reached that primal simplicity of beauty which it is almost impossible to miss or to mar, even in a series of translations.

Every word picture of his has passed through two or three translations: from the Aramaic, the speech of Aram, or Palestine, in which he addressed his hearers, through Greek and Latin, to our modern tongues. Yet the beauty remains untarnished, undiminished. It would be well nigh impossible to mar, even after repeated translation and re-translation, the simplicity of “Consider the lilies.”

Exactly the same thing is true of such a sentence as this:

“Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.”

Æsop has built a volume of fables on the comparison of human beings with animals, the perception of the traits of this or another beast or bird in human beings. The Master, using exactly the same method, has accomplished more in this single sentence of only twenty-two words; and it would be almost impossible to mar it in translation.

We might well, if space allowed, note some of the means by which this atomic conciseness has been reached, a unity of form so perfect, that centuries have not been able to break off any of the parts; but one or two indications must suffice.

To begin with, the Master always uses a concrete image. Again as a comparison, take a beautiful piece of verse:

“Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.”

This has penetrating beauty. It is in the spirit of “Consider the lilies,” and conveys something of the same message. But Wordsworth

is abstract, where the Master is concrete. On the one hand, “the meanest flower that blows,” on the other hand, “the lilies”; on the one hand “thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears,” to which every reader may give a different meaning, on the other hand, “your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.” The Master speaks, not of “some magnificent monarch,” but of “Solomon in all his glory.” There is always this perfect concreteness. The Master speaks of the “image and superscription” on the Roman coin, the denarius: Caesar’s portrait, Caesar’s name.

Besides this concreteness, there is always precision. We must confine ourselves to a single side of this precision: his use of exact numbers. “There shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.” “An hundred measures of oil, an hundred measures of wheat.” “Ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.” “Thou hast authority over ten cities.”

We ventured to say, a little while ago, that the Master’s coming, his whole life and effort, had a single purpose, with two branches: by pouring his love into our hearts, to bring our hearts to himself; and thereby to the Father; to reveal; in order that with the help of his love we may remove the obstacles in our hearts to that love.

We have here the indication of our own task and purpose, also with two branches: first, to seek in all ways to open our hearts to that love; second, to discover, in order that we may remove, the barriers. Meditation is a means.

We must first observe, then understand, then embody what we have understood. We must observe life, our own lives, the lives of others, all life about us, looking intently, accurately noting. We must then bring what we have observed into the heart within, reverently seeking the Light of the Logos, the Master’s light, to illumine the essential meaning of what we have observed; with faith that in time we shall see all life as the Father sees it. “Lighten our darkness.” What we come to understand of the essential meaning of life as the Father sees it, we must embody in our lives, making it concrete, precise. In the fullness of time, we shall see all life in the light of the Father’s love.

Then the barriers to that love, first in our own hearts. We must look intently; accurately observe. We must seek the essential meaning

of what we have observed, always in that Light. What we understand, through the illumination of that Light, we must embody, in love, in will, in act; concrete, precise, as the image of the lilies; in the fullness of time, perhaps with something of their beauty.

The Logos and the Heart

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Greater love hath no man than this.

The surface character of the Logos, we can know from our own consciousness, since our consciousness is a direct ray of the Logos. All the powers within our consciousness are immediately derived from the Logos, however much we may have perverted them through the misuse of our free will. The cure of this perversion dwells in the regenerating power of the Logos in the heart.

Our free will itself is of the very essence of the Logos, a manifestation of divine creative power. And while, through misuse of free will, we have too often shamefully degraded the powers both of perception and of action, by turning them in wrong directions, yet the essence of the Logos, which is in these powers and in free will, makes possible their redemption.

Students of Theosophy believe that this redemption of all the powers in man is the main task and purpose of the Masters of Wisdom and Compassion.

The surface powers of the Logos, we can know in ourselves, though we rarely recognize the divinity, the profound marvel and mystery, of these "common" powers. For the most part, we thoughtlessly and heedlessly take them for granted.

But the deeper powers of the Logos, in all their glorious majesty, we can perceive only as they are revealed to us in and by the Masters of Wisdom and of Love, who have found their divinity by losing

themselves in the Logos.

The great Masters of the East, from the sages of the Upanishads to Sankara Acharya, have sought to reveal the Logos as Divine Light, that Light which, reverently and faithfully followed, will lead us along the path of redemption to our eternal home.

Saint John, the abstract quality of whose spirit makes him more Oriental than the other disciples, speaks of the Master Christ as the Light. But the Master himself seeks to reveal himself, and thereby to reveal the Logos, as Divine Love. In himself he manifests and reveals a love which seeks to give, not to receive; a love which comes, not to be ministered unto, but to minister; a love which gives itself to the uttermost, and receives only in giving.

The Master Christ is in himself a revelation of fiery, passionate love, a love which outstrips the utmost of romance; a love returned but timidly even by his immediate disciples, a love that has never been adequately requited. In the long centuries, a few men and women have given all that was in their hearts, with the eager hope to repay that love; in virtue of their supreme giving, they have rightly been honoured as saints. Yet in all history there is no such tragedy as that immense, unrequited love.

We may hold that a main purpose of that Master's coming into incarnation nineteen centuries ago, coming as an Avatar, in the Eastern phrase, was to reveal this immeasurable, fiery and passionate love. And he appears to have planned to make this revelation in two ways: first, by immediately manifesting that divine love, with its healing and its joy; but also by hurling himself against those evil powers in the human heart which have been built up by the misuse of free will, and which are the negation and destruction of love; quite clearly perceiving from the very beginning that this fight to the death between love and hate must mean his own supreme sacrifice, a sacrifice which would include public ignominy, torture, the anguish and despair of his friends, a felon's death. Supreme love could be revealed only by the laceration and desecration of love by hatred; only by the revelation of what love will gladly and eagerly suffer, in a self-giving to the very dregs.

This complete self-immolation, courted in a deliberately planned

and purposed attack on the powers that are the enemies of divine love, shows throughout his mission from its very inception. This would seem to be the meaning of his declaration:

“Think not that I came to cast peace on the earth: I came not to cast peace, but a sword. . . . I came to cast fire upon the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?” (R.V.)

This calculated challenge rings out in the vividly recorded sermon with which he began his mission in his own city:

“And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And there was delivered unto him a roll of the prophet Isaiah. And he opened the roll, and found the place where it was written,

“‘The spirit of the Lord is upon me;

Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor:

He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,

And recovering of sight to the blind,

To set at liberty them that are bruised,

To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.’

“And he closed the roll, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down: and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him.

“And he began to say unto them,

“‘Today hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears.’

“And all bare him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth: and they said, ‘Is not this Joseph’s son?’

“And he said unto them,

“‘Doubtless ye will say unto me this parable, Physician, heal thyself: whatever we have heard done at Capernaum, do also here in thine own country. . . . Verily I say unto you, No prophet is acceptable in his own country. But of a truth I say unto you, There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah . . . and unto none of them was Elijah sent, but only to

Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.”

We may be so familiar with this passage that we miss the challenge in it. A paraphrase may make it clearer:

“You, people of my own town, who have known me, and whom I have known, from my childhood, are full of pride and self-complacence because you are Jews, the chosen people, children of Israel, of the stock of Abraham. But consider how the history of your nation rebukes your pride. Though there were many widows in Israel at the time of the great famine, Elijah was sent by God, not to these Jewish widows, but to a foreigner, a Phoenician, not of the house of Israel, not of the stock of Abraham. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha, but none of them was cleansed of leprosy, but only Naaman the Syrian, again a foreigner, not a Jew, not descended from Abraham. See how your own records rebuke your arrogance.”

It was a direct attack. How keenly this sword-thrust pierced, the next verses show:

“And they were all filled with wrath in the synagogue, as they heard these things; and they rose up, and cast him forth out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong . . .”

These same fellow-townsmen, immediately before, had fastened their eyes on him, wondering at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth. Thus did the Master Christ cast a sword upon the earth.

This first discourse in Nazareth, so marvellously recorded that we can see every movement of the speaker, and of those who heard him, embodies both elements of his message: the abounding love, and the fiery onslaught against the evil of self-centred arrogance, which makes love impossible. The Avatar came, bearing immeasurable gifts in his hands, glad tidings to the poor, the lowly of heart, release to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, liberty for them that are

bruised, the acceptable year of the Lord; he stood ready to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke, bringing instead the yoke of his love, the yoke that is easy, and the burden that is light.

But, while he had so deeply studied and so profoundly meditated on the words of Isaiah, he had not less deeply studied and understood the hard egotism of the men of his city and his country. He knew beforehand that they would reject his gifts and put the generous giver to death, in the implacable war of hatred against love.

In the last quiet hours between the farewell banquet and the betrayal, when he said of himself, "I am no more in the world," he set forth for his disciples the fundamental cause of this unappeasable enmity: "All these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me." They had shut their hearts against the Light of the Logos; self-love had thereupon warped and distorted and corrupted every divine power and gift, turning to evil what should have been incomparable good. The corruption of the best is the worst; therefore, these powers, thus distorted and become demoniac, were insatiate in their hostility against the Life of the Logos, which is the Spirit of Love.

The full insight into the evils of self-love which were intertwined with the religious zeal of the Jews must have revealed itself gradually and progressively to his mind, from the days when, a boy twelve years old, he sat in the temple in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them and asking them questions.

We are told that his parents went every year to Jerusalem to the feast of the passover, and it is natural to believe that, beginning with this twelfth year, he accompanied them, foreshadowing the ceaseless journeyings of the three active years of his mission.

Whether at Jerusalem or in Galilee, he had abundant opportunity to note the zealots who made broad their phylacteries, and enlarged the borders of their garments, loving the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi; the zealots who, when they gave alms, had a trumpet sounded before them in the synagogues and in the streets; who loved to stand and pray in the synagogues and at street corners,

that they might be seen of men.

These generalized descriptions are based on keen and repeated observation, throughout years, and on profound meditation, which pierced through the outward appearance to the carefully hidden evil motive. We can conceive that, in this corrupting self-love, entwined about the things of religion, penetrating into divine things and polluting them, he discerned the ultimate enemy of divine love.

Seeing this egotism as evil, and the root of every evil, but most dangerous and malignant when it permeates and corrupts the things which concern the Father, the Master Christ made it the chief point of attack, hurling himself against it with the supreme energy of fiery love. Against it, as he foresaw, he was broken; yet, we believe, with the far-off, divine hope that, in the recoil, he would grind it to powder.

Therefore, it was against this stronghold of evil that he threw himself, in the synagogue of his own city, among his own townspeople; thus launching the attack which began the war of passionate love against the entrenched evil in the hearts of men.

The same passionate quality, as of a sword-point, leaps forth in many incidents; as, for example, when

“he entered into the synagogue, and there was a man there which had his hand withered. And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him. And he saith unto the man that had his hand withered, ‘Stand forth.’ And he said unto them, ‘Is it lawful on the sabbath day to do good, or to do harm? to save a life, or to kill?’ But they held their peace. And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart, he saith unto the man, ‘Stretch forth thy hand.’ And he stretched it forth: and his hand was restored.”

Note once more the instant response to this challenge: “And the Pharisees went out, and straightway with the Herodians took counsel against him, how they might destroy him”; evil hatred flaring up against righteous wrath.

There is the same passionate quality in this other incident:

“And they brought unto him little children, that he should

touch them: and the disciples rebuked them.

“But when Jesus saw it, he was moved with indignation . . .”

Then instantly the manifestation of divine, compassionate gentleness: “And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.”

On each occasion, this fiery anger, visible to all, flamed out when hard hearts put obstacles in the way of his compassion, the strong movement of the heart to pour out love. Many times that kingly movement of the heart is put on record: “He was moved with compassion . . .” or, in his own words, “I have compassion on the multitude.” The word the Master uses means a fiery longing, poured forth from the innermost heart, the virtue, the dynamic energy, which healed those who, with faith, touched even the hem of his garment; that living ray of the Logos which he embodied and revealed.

Without doubt, that compassion went out toward all right human relations, like the bond between husband and wife:

“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become one flesh: so that they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

There is the same solicitude regarding the love of parents for their children, the love of children for their parents:

“For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, He that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death: but ye say, If a man shall say to his father or his mother, That where with thou mightest have been profited by me is Corban, that is to say, Given to God; ye no longer suffer him to do aught for his father or his mother . . .”

Without doubt, the Avatar had at heart to sanctify all these human relations, permeating them with the love that gives, rather than seeks to receive.

Yet we are constrained to believe that his deeper purpose went far beyond even the consecration of these human relationships:

“The children of this world marry and are given in marriage:

but they that are accounted worthy to attain to that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.”

“That world” is the eternal world of Spirit, to be entered by self-obliterating love of the Father, in contrast with “this world,” the transitory world of matter. The Teacher’s purpose is, to carry us over from “this world,” to “that world”; from the life of the animal, with its natural relationships, yet irrevocably subject to death, to a life equal to the angels, a life immortal.

“That world” is “the kingdom of heaven” of so many of the parables, which carry, without fully revealing, the deeper message and purpose of the Avatar, a purpose going infinitely beyond any amelioration of our mortal life.

It is profitable, with this in mind, to read and meditate on each one of these parables, seeking the revelation which it carries, of the Master’s deeper purpose, remembering that his true disciples are “the children of the kingdom,” to whom it is given “to know the mysteries of the kingdom.”

That world of immortality, entered through love of the Master’s spirit, is the hidden treasure, the goodly pearl, the seed growing secretly, the leaven, the grain of mustard seed.

Finally, there is the terrible tragedy of the parable in which, his outer work drawing to a close, the Master sums up the experience of his own mission, the fruit of his fiery contest against the powers of egotism entrenched in the human heart:

“Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. . . . When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?”

Like the first great sermon at Nazareth, this brings us once again to Isaiah, into whose heart the Master appears to have poured so much of

his spirit, in preparation for the supreme effort of his own mission:

“My well beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. . . . What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? . . .”

It is worth noting how completely the Master affirms his mission as an: Avatar; on the one hand, by declaring the manner and purpose of his coming, and, on the other, by setting himself apart, as it were, from the nation in which he had incarnated, and from certain ideas fundamental to that nation.

First, as to the manner of his coming:

“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. . . . Ye are from beneath; I am from above; ye are of this world; I am not of this world. . . . I am the living bread which came down from heaven, I am that bread of life. . . . As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. . . . Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. . . .”

This is the whole cycle of the Avatar; the meaning of Avatar being one who, having passed through the river of death, comes back again to help others through the dark waters to the shore of eternal life.

Equally complete and striking is the way in which the Master sets himself apart from the frame of national egotism which shut in the Jews. He has come, indeed, to fulfil the law; but, speaking to the Jews, he says, “It is written in your law”; and, to his disciples, “The word that is written in their law”; never “our law,” as though he were identifying himself with them.

Again, the Jews held that the Messiah must needs be the son of David, of the house and lineage of David, and therefore those among them who accepted the Master as Messiah, including his disciples,

hailed him as the son of David.

But the Master himself suggests that the real sanction of his mission is quite other than descent from David:

“How say the scribes that Christ is David’s son? And David himself saith in the book of psalms, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till make thine enemies thy footstool. David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son?”

In the same spirit is his saying—“And, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.” Again, descent from Abraham, and the covenant made with Abraham, were the basis of the whole pride of race and election among the Jews. But the Master deliberately puts himself outside this limitation, and claims for himself a sanction of a wholly different kind, when he says:

“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.”

It is worth noting that, just as he said, not “our law,” but “your law,” so he says, not “our father Abraham,” but “your father Abraham,” setting himself outside that frame altogether.

This complete standing apart from the traditional historic atmosphere of the house of David and the stock of Abraham may, perhaps, be brought into sharper relief by quoting as a contrast the words of a devoted disciple:

“I am a Jew . . . an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews.”

The evil which the Christian Master combats, consists, therefore, in taking the divine powers of the Logos, and prostituting them to the uses of egotism. The cure for this malignant self-love is a divine love that shall break and melt away the hardness of heart, drawing the divine elements of the powers from the meshes of egotism in which they have been ensnared; drawing them forth toward the Divine Glory of the Logos. The method of that Master was, to break hard hearts by the overwhelming tenderness of his love; to draw them toward himself by that love’s irresistible attraction, and thus to draw them out of evil

isolation toward the Divine Union in the Father, the Logos.

Sankara Acharya, as a great Eastern Master, seeks to illumine the understanding, to quicken the intuition to the degree of inspiration, and thus to draw the spirit toward the oneness of the Infinite Light. The Master Christ seeks to break, to melt, to enkindle the heart, drawing it toward himself with the bands of love, so that the heart's isolation, and all the self-centred evil that goes with isolation, may be melted away and the heart merged in the oneness of the Divine Heart, the Life of the Logos: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself," and thus to the Father.

It should be absolutely clear that the spirit of the Christian Master is as far as possible from a soft, general benevolence, easily tolerant of egotism, arrogance and malice. On the contrary, the more brightly his love shines forth, the more keenly does he attack these enemies of love.

We can do no more than outline this sharp contrast in the closing scenes of this immense tragedy, when, following the Transfiguration, he "steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem."

There have been endless discussions and controversies, during long centuries, regarding the Master's manhood. We should like to see the word changed and, especially in these scenes of darkening tragedy, a clearer emphasis laid on the Master's manliness, as he advanced unarmed toward certain death. Not less striking is the infinite treasure of compassion which he was ready to pour out, in those closing days, as, for example, on the household at Bethany.

Perhaps the first Gospel gives the clearest view of the succession of events: the royal progress toward Jerusalem, "Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass"; a progress which led him direct to the temple, and to that passionate act of protest, when he "cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers." The tremendous rush of anger, finding vent in vehement action, is worlds apart from easy toleration of evil.

Then immediately his acclamation by the children, perhaps some of them the children whom he had gathered in his arms and blessed.

On the next day he renewed the attack, in the temple, in the presence of the chief priests and the elders of the people:

“Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.”

Then the parables, spoken in the temple: first the story, terrible in its anger, of the householder who planted a vineyard; then the parable, equally terrible in the pathos of divine compassion met by chill indifference, the marriage of the king’s son and the excuses of the invited guests.

Finally, the gathering of passionate love, and passionate sorrow for love rejected, in the closing scene:

“Behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify . . . that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth . . . O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”

Thus the final attack was delivered, and the Master withdrew from the temple, the scene of so much of his teaching, to return thither no more. In the quiet hours that followed, while awaiting swift oncoming death, he gave his disciples the ultimate proof of his humility and his immortal love, after the farewell banquet, to the tragedy of which they were almost wholly blind. It is altogether fitting that the record of his infinite love, in the last address, should be made by the disciple whom, beyond the others, he loved.

Thus, with superb heroism, he waged his war, a war not for one life-span only, but for all time, until the victory shall be complete. Thus he revealed the Life of the Logos as flaming love, a love that burns everlasting.