

From the moment you go to sleep until you waken again, you are engaged in great activity. You have your associations, your friendships, your work even on the astral plane. You are in a larger company there for the reason that when you are out of the body you are on a level corresponding to your own state of development. Isn't that a comfort? I have known individuals, with very little in common with their families and associates, who look forward to their nightly rest, so that they can go out and be with congenial companions and be themselves.

During the world war there was a much larger conscription on the astral than on the physical plane. Everyone who had the least inner volitional power was drafted into service, helping to manage and direct the hundreds of thousands of raw young souls who were flung out of their bodies, and who went out in strife and hatred and in the full expression of all the baser elements of viciousness and combativeness that war releases. It was a crucial period, and the Great Ones who had not been called down to the astral plane for thousands of years descended and took charge of this work of normalizing these souls and helping them become adjusted to the new conditions into which they had been suddenly and violently thrown. I am trying to show you how real and actual is this life on the astral plane and how complete an existence it is.

When such a momentous event as your progress in Truth is taking place, the astral influences in your life become very marked and you will have very strong feelings for and against things — your emotional nature will be greatly activated.

So much for the introduction to this book. We read:

The profound fundamental connection between the ceremonies of the great world religions and the facts of Nature is shown by the manner in which they are grouped around the story of the year. On the material plane this story begins with the universally observed festival of the New Year which is understood to celebrate the victory of light over darkness, and culminates at the beginning of June. . . .

The New Year Festival is preceded by the Feasts and Ceremonies of Birth, marking the season in which the sun — the life and light of the world — enters upon rebirth, and returns to conquer darkness and death. He comes back each year as a little child, waxing strong as the seasons advance. . . .

The student of occultism is aware that man is a part of Nature, and that the mysteries are revealed to him when he enters into the

secret and sacred life of the heavens and the earth. For him the yearly season of material birth is preceded by the spiritual state of desire for birth. Both in the Egyptian and Buddhist systems the sun is supposed to die, or lose his fertilizing energy in the autumn and early winter.

During the winter solstice the sun hides his face and sleeps under the adverse influences coming from the north; so it is on the inner planes. The creative forces are at a disadvantage, and the winds of adversity seemingly gain the upper hand, but as the sun moves northward (from December 22 until June 22), so will the creative life on the inner planes gain ascendancy over the dark forces by which it was temporarily eclipsed.

The difference of climate in the various parts of the earth does not affect the religions of the world in their universal acceptance of the month of January as the season of the return of the light of the world. All Nature begins life anew; and the month of December is devoted to the preparation for this fresh life.

CHAPTERS I, II, and III

DECEMBER

The Birth Month

December 1, 2, 3, 4 — The Ceremony of Desire of Birth

LITANY

- I. I desire birth.*
- II. I am ready to be burned and consumed, for that is what birth is.*
- III. I am ready to be naked and unprotected, and to suffer from my nakedness; for that is what life is.*
- IV. I am ready to make the pilgrimage through matter in darkness and in fire, so that the circle of the uncreate shall become one with the circle of the create.*

There are groups of students of the occult schools who follow these ceremonies each year, and this longing of the Spirit for rebirth in matter symbolizes on one side the original descent out of the formless into form. It is a process of individualization, for the sake of self-awareness, out of the unmanifest, unconscious condition; but there is another and greater significance. There is a constant desire, on the part of everyone who is aspiring to a higher state of development, to return to the lower planes in order to render service to others who are limited to that state. We are struggling to rise out of the physical world in consciousness, to get all of its elements expurgated and out of the system, and at the same time we desire to stay in it so as to function more on the plane where help is needed. If it were not for this ceremony, many would go on to higher planes of consciousness and leave the great majority of humanity struggling in darkness.

To desire birth also means to desire to awaken Egoically, to experience the birth of the Christ in the heart. Birth into the Egoic consciousness is through the purification of the personality, and it is brought about ordinarily through the telestic work or through contact with one who is awakened. When the stream of awakened power or Shakti force or divine fire flows down from the Higher Self or Ego, it enters the seven centers of the etheric vehicle, and there is a literal burning up of the dross of the personality — the forces and entities and elementals in the mental body first, then in the astral body, and later in the physical body. It is a common experience with many, when going through this period, to feel a great deal of internal temperature or fever.

The disciple is naked and unprotected during this period — stripped of all delusions. Read the chapter in *The Madman* by Kahlil Gibran that tells about man's 'masks'. If one goes through the purifying fire of the Ego, he won't have any masks (poses and pretenses and other artificialities) left.

December 5 and 6 — The Ceremony of Terror

LITANY

*I. I am nothing, save as a fragment to be burned and consumed. II.
I, alone, am as nothing.*

On the physical plane that is experienced in this way: after we have achieved success in some line of endeavor, the results of aims born of ambition, there comes over the soul a pall — a sense of the utter futility of all desire, effort, power, even life. What is the use of anything? What does anyone want to live for? What is there worth while in life? It is all an illusion that peace and happiness and contentment come with wealth! It is a vain dream that love and marriage and a home make a little heaven on earth! Success and fame are empty chimeras! When the realization comes that there is no Utopia in these outer things, that no one has ever experienced it there, and the consciousness of the disciple hasn't expanded far enough to realize the inner life — the inner powers and forces, the eternality of one's being — then is when the terror, the "dark night of the soul," the period of the "dweller on the threshold," sets in. "I, alone, am as nothing." When you actually realize that, it destroys all of that egotism that you are something, and then you are at the entrance to the inner life of the soul.

The Hall of Learning is on the astral plane. It is the first state of conscious development, actually built of astral matter on the astral side of life, and it is the place where one acquires the knowledge of permanent things, of the eternal verities, of the inner laws of life. When one passes his grades, he graduates from the Hall of Learning and enters the Hall of Wisdom where all these facts of being become facts of consciousness. Before the disciple has obtained the power to enter the Hall of Learning and witness the ceremonies that take place there, he becomes aware of these things of terror in the experiences of life. After he has passed through this utter loneliness and isolation in his search for Truth, the time will come when, through this inner ceremony, he will be drawn to others, his fellow sufferers in the crucifixion of human life, in the communion of souls, or a group spirit, and this brings him into the Hall of Learning to witness the next ceremony.

December 7, 8, 9, 10 — The Ceremony of Consecration

LITANY

- I. *I devote the spirit that is being born within me to the service of the spirit of love.*
- II. *In this coming year I will dwell in the sanctuary of love, I will not offend against the law of love.*
- III. *I will remember that I have not to ask love but to give love; that I have to give of my very self to the world.*
- IV. *I will molest none; I will forgive all. In return, I demand that the spirit to be born in me this month shall be beloved of the brotherhood of souls, and shall be recognized as a soul of love.*

Does your spirit bear witness to this litany, or do you still prefer to live the human life of affection? There is nothing outstanding in human life except change, but the soul craves peace and rest from the ceaseless flux of the phenomenal world and its illusions.

“I will molest none; I will forgive all.” These are two things which everyone who aspires to discipleship must learn. There is no escape from them — we have to do them, or we are simply left out of all higher development. “I will molest none” — how human is the tendency to try to coerce someone else! Perhaps you say, “I love him, and I know what is best for him and what he ought to do.” Now, how do you know what experiences that soul is in need of — experiences, perhaps, that you may have passed through? Maybe you have a selfish interest in putting something over — a business deal, perhaps; or it might be to gratify something in you, and you compel another person to do that which he does not want to do, in order that you may achieve your object. The lust for power characterizes a certain type of young soul, and these individuals love to make others subservient to them by belittling them and demeaning them and compelling them to do their bidding.

“I will forgive all.” The Great Master developed this point in a wonderful way when he said; “Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” Never, never turn to the altar of you heart and pray to your God if you have the smallest feeling in your heart against anyone, for you deceive only yourself! You never can enter the Path of Discipleship until you have learned utter and complete forgiveness!

I have this experience frequently: an individual comes to my consultation or healing room and says, "Why is it that I can't be healed? I have prayed constantly, and I have been to healers and practitioners, and have received no benefit. What have I done that I can't get well?" Invariably, I find that he is nursing a sense of injustice in his heart — he feels that he has been misunderstood and wronged by someone.

Under the karmic law, you are never wronged; maybe what seems an injustice is a restitution demanded of you for wrongs you have committed in the past. When you can honestly and sincerely feel love in your heart towards all, you will find peace and you will get your healing. It is a very hard thing to do — to feel that complete and utter forgiveness. Study the law of karma, for that will help you forgive more than anything else. There are two very important things, especially if you aspire to the higher rungs of the ladder of Truth — "I will molest none; I will forgive all." The right and power to participate in the Ceremony of Consecration are won by conquering a feeling of justifiable resentment, a feeling of unforgiveness.

December 11, 12, 13, 14 — The Feast of Love

LITANY

- I. *Love is the only King; the only Ruler; the only Creator.*
- II. *Hate and Satan are one; rebel, anarchist, destroyer.*
- III. *Love's action is what men call charity.*
- IV. *The action of hatred is known as malice.*
- V. *Love has only one punishment for the sinner, and that is forgiveness.*
- VI. *To live according to the law of love is a hundred thousand times harder than to live according to the law of hatred; to this great effort I pledge myself. To live according to the law of love means the acceptance of every evil as a good. By that acceptance, if it is done in the spirit of love, the evil becomes good. It is to the conversion of evil into good in our natures, in the nature of others, and in the affairs of life, that we devote ourselves. Henceforth we do not avoid evil, we love it and transform it. By loving it, we make ourselves a part of the creative principle which is love.*
- VII. *To this great effort the disciples pledge themselves during the Feast of Love, and bind themselves together in it. It cannot be done alone.*

The disciple is pledged now to live according to the law of love. I am going to tell you this, that when you pass this point, no matter what others do to you, you must stand wholly and entirely in such perfect unity with the essence of their being — the Spirit within them — not with the reactions and perturbations going on in their lower bodies, that you can hold a conscious contact with them. There is nothing emotional about this contact, it is just a clear, cold contact that you will not allow anything to break — nor will you allow anything they do to break it.

Do you know what accepting and transmuting evil means? While you are a probationer, you have to learn to protect yourself from the astral vibrations and forces that others throw out, because if you register them your own spontaneity and creative activity will go down under them. Instead of peace, harmony, and happiness, you will experience misery, turmoil, agitation, and discouragement. While you are a probationer, you must learn to keep your own vibrations above the plane of astral disturbances. But when you have passed the probationary period, or the purification by fire, and you have pledged yourself to live according to the law of love, you can no longer isolate yourself from the forces of destruction, but you must allow these

conditions to register fully and completely in you; and then you take these forces and vibrations and transmute them in yourself and ray them back transformed to a higher plane. This is inner alchemical work that only strong disciples can do. You will suffer acutely at first, but you must do this work in order to reach this high state.

Later on in group work you must take on the heavy load of destructive and disintegrating influences precipitated against the little band of workers to which you belong. All groups have to weather one psychic storm after another. On the physical plane, the storms of the astral plane are endured until the group is utterly destroyed and scattered to the winds by the destructive influence, or the individuals of the group are driven together for protection. There is an inner amalgamation of their individual power, and then collectively they turn and fight the enemy. It is a most beautiful and wonderful experience — to witness a whole group unite and do this!

What is there about a teaching or a teacher that such terrific cyclones of destructive force are turned against the teacher, the teaching, and the group? It means that we have the Light! The stronger the Light we carry, the more is the darkness stirred up against us! If it were not for those who can transform the forces of darkness and evil through the force of love, the race would be overwhelmed. Sometimes a great work will go down and be swept away by the forces of evil because the leader lacks support. If the Great Master, Jesus the Christ, could have found even two to support him in group formation when that great world drama was enacted in the Garden of Gethsemane, he could have alchemically transmuted the race hatred of all Jerusalem into love. Go back to the story of Moses, and you will remember that the battle against the Philistines went on successfully so long as the hands of Moses were upheld — he couldn't do it alone.

When you can participate in the Feast of Love, the Feast of Union takes place in your consciousness.

December 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 — The Feast of Union

LITANY

- I. There is no more any parting of the ways.*
- II. All the different paths become but the one path.*
- III. I am but a part.*
- IV. I am but one stone in the Great Temple.*
- V. I am a soldier in the army, and from the one who is next to me I cannot swerve by ever so small a fraction; for if I did, the march of the whole army would be disordered. I remain, therefore; immovably associated with my fellow soldiers.*
- VI. I know that I take upon myself the responsibility of the whole when I pass consciously into union with it.*
- VII. I am ready, without complaint, to be cast down from the place in which I stand, should I swerve or flinch under any trial falling on those next to me; for I know that my strength can never be exhausted, since my comrades also stand unswervingly by my side; and while united we cannot fall.*

How vividly these words recall the onslaughts of the force of darkness against the School of the Sacred Science in Los Angeles in 1924! One astral storm after another broke over into the physical plane and raged around that little group of workers in the Light! But we rose to our feet at the close of each class meeting and chanted this litany together for many weeks and months. And there was an outpouring of power beyond all imagination. No wonder all the efforts of the forces of evil and destruction came to naught! It is wonderful for the individuals of a group to pass through such an experience, and if it comes to you, count it as one of your greatest blessings. Why? Because when you have passed through, you have the asset of courage and strength and power that nothing else can give.

In the sixth chapter of the Gospel of St. John there is this record: "From that time many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Peter even then felt the solidarity of the collective force of the twelve, and that is the spirit expressed in the first line of this litany. "There is no more any parting of the ways." I know that is true with many of you — you have tried with every power you have to break away from this group and go another way, but there is no more any parting of the ways for you, for your spirit has merged with those with whom you are working upward to the Light.

You can be near or “next” to another disciple although thousands of miles may separate you. It is a nearness of consciousness, and not physical proximity. You can go only to a certain point alone on the Path, without the support of others, and then you will come to a standstill. The only way to go on is to unite your strength with others, and thus gain the strength of the whole group. From this mystic sense of union, arises the state known as the Feast of Satisfaction.

December 21, 22, 23 24 — The Feast of Satisfaction

LITANY

- I. *The divine satisfaction has fallen upon me.*
- II. *I give because my heart is too full; it cannot contain all that it has.*
- III. *I am conscious that love is infinite, though I can hold but one drop. Therefore do I cut down the little tree which was the expression of my personal growth.*
- IV. *Here, on the floor of the place of learning, lies the myrtle of my life, then it will wither, and it will be swept away when the floor is prepared for the next great Feast. I am satisfied that this is so, for I have entered into all.*
- V. *I myself am nothing and have nothing.*
- VI. *Yet I have all and I am all.*
- VII. *I sleep and wake at the same time.*
- VIII. *Within me is the measureless content which is eternal rest, and which, once attained, can never be disturbed. My being is absorbed with the absolute peace therefore I am ready for ceaseless activity, and armed for incessant warfare.*

Did you ever notice the sweetness and gentleness, much like a fragrance, around one who has suffered greatly, but has not become cynical or satirical through suffering? There are three ways in which you can go through suffering. You can be poisoned by it, and turn against life as a satire that sports and plays with the precious things of the soul; you can become a cynic and turn away and say, "Oh, it's all a joke, and there's nothing worth while in it"; or you can become mellowed and sweetened by it, and the resulting gentleness is like an inexpressible fragrance which will never depart from you. This comes only from the utter and complete crucifixion of the personality. In the intensity of that aroma or fragrance comes the "sense of satisfaction," only instead of the word "satisfaction," I should say "infinite contentment," meaning contentment of the soul — "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures."

Friedrich Nietzsche has expressed his realization of this satisfaction or contentment of the soul in Chapter 70, "Noontide," of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. Get this book and read it.

December 25 — The Birth Day (of the Immortal Soul)

LITANY

I desire Absolute Love.

It is very difficult to understand the real meaning of love. It is only when I get far enough away from myself that I begin to glimpse the cosmical aspect of this force which we call love. No one can understand what love is so long as he identifies himself with it. Love is a force, a power, that is far removed from any personal handling, ordering, direction, or control. Many have experienced love in its intensity, but very few understand it, because the understanding of this cosmic force which we call love and the experiencing of Love in one's self are two different things entirely. So long as there remains in the consciousness any of the remnants of the animal soul, love will always be confused with desire. If there is anything in the world that displays man's poverty of knowledge and his utter complete ignorance, it is his egotism that he understands love, and that it is something that comes to him and someone else, for their own enjoyment. We identify ourselves with love, and love with ourselves in some peculiar way; when in reality, once it is understood, it hasn't anything to do with us as individuals, and we haven't anything to do with it. Yet it is the most dynamic power that can be experienced in an individual's existence. The cosmic phenomenon of love has no knowledge of us as personalities at all.

One almost stands timid and abashed with deference in the face of even the concept of love, but take up the thought for your meditation. Of course, meditation transcends thought, but penetrate in a meditative attitude the thought that Love is something outside of yourself, and yet it can never be experienced except in the depths of yourself. I want you to read in this connection Chapter 15 on Love from Ouspensky's *Tertium Organum*.

I have still another thought on this theme of Love that I want to share with you. It is contained in the little book by Kahlil Gibran (Lebanese mystic) called "The Prophet." The prophet is one who has reached great spiritual attainment, and he is on the eve of the Fifth Initiation; that is, as a Fourth Degree Initiate, he has been working with humanity on the physical plane, and through the very effort put forth to impart his wisdom to them, his consciousness has expanded, and he has grown till he feels the call of the Universal. On the threshold of this greater expansion, he looks back with love on those whom he has carried along with him as far as they could go, and he gives utterance "with a great voice" to his realization of love. Listen to it.

When Love beckons to you, follow him, Though his ways are hard and steep. And when his wings enfold you yield to him, Though the sword hidden among his pinions may wound you. And when he speaks to you believe in him, Though his voice may shatter your dreams as the north wind lays waste the garden.

For even as Love crowns you so shall he crucify you. Even as he is for your growth so is he for your pruning.

Even as he ascends to your height and caresses your tenderest branches that quiver in the sun. So shall he descend to your roots and shake them in their clinging to the earth.

Like sheaves of corn he gathers you unto himself. He thrashes you to make you naked. He sifts you to free you from your husks. He grinds you to whiteness. He kneads you until you are pliant; And then he assigns you to his sacred fire, that you may become sacred bread for God's sacred feast.

All these things shall Love do unto you that you may know the secrets of your heart, and in that knowledge become a fragment of Life's heart.

But if in your fear you would seek only Love's peace and Love's pleasure, Then it is better for you that you cover your nakedness and pass out of Love's threshing-floor,

Into the seasonless world where you shall laugh, but not all of your laughter, and weep, but not all of your tears.

Love gives naught but itself and takes naught but from itself. Love possesses not nor would it be possessed; For Love is sufficient unto Love.

When you love you should not say, "God is in my heart," but rather, "I am in the heart of God." And think not you can direct the course of Love, for love, if it finds you worthy, directs your course.

Love has no other desire but to fulfil itself. But if you love and must needs have desires, let these be your desires: To melt and be like a running brook that sings its melody to the night. To know the pain of too much tenderness. To be wounded by your own understanding of Love; And to bleed willingly and joyfully. To wake at dawn with a winged heart and give thanks for another day of loving; To rest at the noon hour and meditate Love's ecstasy; To return home at eventide with gratitude; And then to sleep with a prayer for the beloved in your heart and a song of praise upon your lips.

CHAPTERS IV and V

JANUARY

The Love Vigil

No great sacrifice can commence during the Sun's southern progress. The south is Yama's quarter: Yama is the God of the Dead.

A Brahmana of the Satapatha-Brahmana says — When the sun moves northward he is among the gods, he guards the gods.

— The Buddhist Praying Wheel.

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The gates of gold are those portals which admit to the spiritual life. They do not close on it — they admit to it. It is the iron bar that lies across them which alone prevents their standing always ajar, ready to yield softly to the touch of any who would enter. But the iron bar is very heavy and hard to push aside — so heavy that none can do it alone. The iron bar, so heavy, so firm, so inexorable, is an illusion; it is that artificial and temporary consciousness which makes of men separate and isolated beings. To the man who regards things from the external standpoint, this consciousness appears to be the one great reality, the one absolute truth, so profound is the state of illusion in which he dwells.

I think this particular state of evolution is more pronounced in the business world than in any other department of human life, because there keen competition has accentuated the sense of separateness. Practically alone among all his competitors, Henry Ford has risen superior to this dominating and impelling tendency in the business world to isolate oneself from all others and maintain the barriers of separation through selfishness, distrust, and doubt, and even in the face of good intentions and good offices on the part of others. This tendency is so pronounced that when one occasionally, out of the larger consciousness of love and unity and unselfishness, would render gifts to others in a spirit of true brotherliness, those in the sense of separateness immediately become suspicious of his services and gifts and begin to wonder what his 'line' is — what selfish idea or ulterior motive is back of his action; what individual advantage he will gain by apparently disarming them through friendship!

That is the sin of isolation, but Henry Ford has surmounted all that in the business world. Of course, most business people will not credit him with any generosity. They say it is only his way of 'putting it over' and making his profit. But that is not true; he is actuated by a genuine fellow-feeling and a real desire to share his profit with humanity.

I believe that Henry Ford is a splendid example of the success that will come to anyone who will believe in humanity instead of everlastingly doubting and mistrusting it. Even though you knew everyone was crooked, and that everyone would take advantage of you if he could, for the sake of the strength and the beauty and the sweetness of your own soul, believe in your fellow-men, anyhow. Your faith in your fellow-beings will inspire a reaction in them and make them better. Strive to believe they are good, even though they are not. Even though they robbed you of everything and stripped you bare, it would not be so great a catastrophe as to sear and scar, shrivel and incinerate your own soul through mistrust, doubt and suspicion. Take everything of a material nature from me, but leave me my trust and my faith, my belief and my confidence in mankind, and I have wealth and power.

The new year, the season of the return of light and heat, and of the renewed upspringing of the fertilizing life, brings the idea of hope to men. . . . As the sun returns again, bringing beauty to the natural world, so the divine light returns again, bringing love, the most beautiful of all things.

Everyone should fall in love all over again every spring with someone, with something, with everything! Seriously speaking, this should be, because all nature is budding and swelling with new life, and coming into manifestation; and you should lend yourself to the flow of force in all nature, and fall in love again. "Love" means only one thing — a spontaneous outflowing of your creative or love forces to others. Don't be afraid of love, but fall in love all over again every spring.

If it were possible and everything else permitted, all children should be conceived in May. More great souls are born in February than in any other month of the year, because they were conceived in May, when all nature is at the flood-tide of creative life. We should prepare ourselves in advance for the coming of our children, and see that our state of consciousness is worthy of so great a responsibility and a privilege as becoming fathers and mothers.

Faith, which is unconscious knowledge, is necessary to the disciple who would take part in this miracle.

That is the finest definition for "faith" I have ever heard, and I am going to record it on the tablets of my memory and use it. It is a gem! "Faith is

unconscious knowledge” — unconscious to the objective mind, but conscious to the inner mind.

If the obedient one has patience and wills to endure, he will find himself suddenly clothed again with brightness and aware of the divine warmth. It is faith which enables this miracle to take place; faith, not in a creed nor an altar, but in the unseen life and its laws of recurrence. Faith and confidence are qualities which are essential to the disciple.

In occultism, obedience is the first law. The disciple who remains obstreperous in his self-will, in his own determinations, can never graduate out of the probationary period of development. This does not mean that you must be obedient to some external teaching, to some external authority, but that you must observe the inner demand of your own Being, for you have within you the urge to Truth, the urge to knowledge, the urge to achievement, the urge to have more expansion of consciousness, and urge to more growth than you are now conscious of having. Pit against all these urges from within the lower influences of the personality — in the end you will have to be obedient to that Inner Law of your Being.

If an obedient one has patience and does not relax his will to sustain the effort, the will to endure, then no matter how many failures he may have experienced, “he will find himself suddenly clothed again with brightness and aware of the divine warmth.” You have all experienced that sudden wave of invisible influence that lifted you right out of dark discouragement into light and hope and buoyancy.

I believe that one of the greatest occult crimes one can inflict upon another is to rob him of his faith and confidence, for they are the instrumentalities by which we mount upward; and once lost, then patience and the will to endure must be maintained until they are reborn and rekindled again. Be an honest, straight thinker, be scrupulously exact. Don't destroy another one's faith and confidence through duplicity and falsehood.

The disciple who would enter the School of Love must pass through a severe preparation, and must have attained possession of the five qualities and seven attributes which mark these scholars. The two first qualities are Faith and Confidence; the third is the gift of charity, which makes the forgiveness of offenses a natural act, not an enforced one.

When you can understand the basic state of development of another; when you can understand the inhibitions and conflicts from which he is suffering, and see that his intolerance is only the revenge of the will — the

substituted form of expression of the constructive force which has been repressed; when you can understand the motives which actuate another, then it is easy to be tolerant with him, no matter what he manifests. Understand another's misunderstandings of yourself so completely that you can see that he is doing his very best, under the circumstances; that his best, which may not be your best, is his very best. If you can do this and give him credit for it you have real tolerance, which is charity.

When the disciple can attain to this, he renders up all the weapons of offense or warfare. . . . All motive for combat with any other, or even for defense from any other, is gone, once and for all. The spirit of the disciple becomes as a dove that is clothed in white plumage.

If an individual, through faith and confidence in the inner laws of life, and in the belief that everything works together for good, is able to rise to the point where he has that sympathetic understanding or charity or tolerance with another, he no longer reacts to anything the other may do against him. And when there is no reaction in him, a higher force or influence will flow into him and radiate out to the other one.

If you happen to have reached that high plane of consciousness, one of two things will happen in such a case: if you are a channel for the Force, and you stand aside and allow that Force to go out to the resisting one, he will be stricken in a far worse way than through the methods of combat and warfare. If you can stand in that Force, instead of being a mere channel for it, you can use that Force and accept in harmony the destructive vibrations of another, and transmute them through an inner alchemical process into a higher, positive force, and then ray them forth transformed into love. When you learn to do that, you will find that you have a greater protection against evil and injury to yourself than all the worldly wisdom of doubt, selfishness, combat and legal procedure put together. Stand confident in the inner working of that higher force, while the forces of darkness plot and scheme for your betrayal, and at the psychological moment their plans fall through like magic and nothing happens. "He who sitteth in the heavens shall laugh." Throw yourself wholly on this inner law, and see what it will do to you — "The spirit of the disciple becomes as a dove that is clothed in white plumage." You can afford to be soft and gentle, for no one can hurt you.

The fourth quality is the Power of Pure Love, which gives without expectation of any return.

That is pure love — to love without desire, to give your services, your energies, your life, without expectation of return. Your compensation is in the joy of love, in the joy of service, and not in what you are going to get out of it.

The attributes are partly psychic and partly intellectual. Discernment, reason, justice, honor, are recognizable by the human mind, and are therefore called intellectual. The vision of the inner eye, the hearing of the inner ear, the sense of spiritual touch, are purely psychic, and their use, to the disciple, is that of spiritual enlightenment.

In the School of the Sacred Science, we use the word “psychic” in two characters. One is the result of repression. Force repressed turns destructive and creates hallucinations and substitutions. That is the lower sense of the word. But the word “psychic” as used in this paragraph refers to the higher or third level of the astral plane. It means the feeling or instinctive discernment of a force of power, quality, thing or condition.

Many of you who have listened to this lesson talk have heard with the inner ear of discernment and understanding.

There are many more psychic attributes which develop as the whole psychic man comes to his full growth; but these seven are necessary to the disciple before he can learn the first lesson in the School of Love, or pass the first initiation.

That means the first initiation of the School of Love — not the first initiation of the awakening of the Ego.

A devotee of the Sacred Science does not disparage the physical body. There is nothing like the exhilaration of having perfect physical health; not only that, but the body becomes a finer instrument for whatever use that you, the dweller within it, desire to put it to, when it is free from impurities and is high vibrating. The same attitude should be maintained toward the astral body, for it is the vehicle with which you function in all those things you feel and desire; and when the astral body is healthy and vibrant with creative life, there is a greater enjoyment, a greater thrill, to being than there is in the perfect physical health and well-being of the more objective vehicle in which you function. To purify the astral is to eliminate and overcome all the undesirable elements through the telestic work.

It is with your astral body that you enjoy good music, beautiful scenery, wholesome friendship. We lay great store in the things we call faith — which is unconscious knowledge — trust, confidence, belief in the unseen powers of guidance, or protection of the Higher Intelligences, but you could have no confidence, no faith, no hope, if it were not for your astral body; and you could not experience that form of expression which we call the religious phase of the work and which is the prerequisite, the stepping-stone into

higher states of realization. How much greater is your enjoyment of these desirable psychic qualities than your contentment in physical well-being. It is through the cultivation and expression of these psychic attributes that we rise to the higher plane we call realization.

It is the emotions only which admit to the citadel of the soul.

These are the higher emotions referred to — faith, hope and the deep reverence we feel in a spiritual presence. Have you ever looked at a sunset until the forces in your cardiac region felt as though they would burst with something? Have you listened to a beautiful musical rendition until you felt that way? Then is when your consciousness is expanding into higher realms! And so with your love, devotion, and with things of the Spirit.

I often feel as Pythagoras must have felt when he decided to impose certain restrictions upon his student groups or else not teach them at all. Those who entered his school were not allowed to speak aloud for two years, and they had to agree not to teach others for two years more, while they sat and listened to his teachings.

I try to overcome the handicap placed in the way of students when they come into this work because of the garbled way in which the older students teach them by saying to the beginners occasionally, "Let anyone talk to you, but don't register anything they say, for it is false; they haven't the understanding yet to tell others what this teaching is. But talking is a substituted form of expression with them — a sort of safety valve — and so it is best to let them talk; but I take no responsibility whatsoever for anything they say."

It is through the heart only that you reach yourself. It is through love you must learn.

The I AM is born in the heart — never in the head, but always in the heart. Listen to the secret desires of your heart — the desires that have been hidden away in your heart for years and years and have never had an opportunity to come out into expression. When you have discovered your inner desires and longings, you have found your basic point. It tries to make itself known to you through the heart; but, of course, the head begins at once to tell you ten thousand reasons why you should not listen to your heart. Listen to your heart; "It is through love you must learn," because love is the one force that gets you out of yourself.

Take your heart and all its emotions, divest them of all covering and gaze upon them. Learn to do so critically and without flinching.

We cover up our emotions and pretend we don't have them. Trot out the 'menagerie' and look at it carefully; it takes courage to face yourself and admit what you find there.

Deal thus not only with your own heart, but also with the hearts of your true companions.

To be a good pal, you must understand the hearts of your true companions, be under no illusions in regard to them, and yet love them just the same.

Only from those who are true can truth be obtained.

You must learn to be severe in the honesty of your thinking in regard to yourself, for only when you can do that will the little hidden idiosyncrasies, perversities, secret longings and desires appear in your consciousness. As soon as you can be absolutely honest with yourself, no one can hurt you, for no one can know half as much of the truth about you as you have discovered about yourself.

I used to say to students who told me the horrible things they had heard about me, "That is only half of it; I know a whole lot more that you haven't heard, and I will tell you."

If you find a monkey or a peacock or a hyena in your 'menagerie,' look at it and enjoy it, at least to yourself. For these animals are all there in your consciousness — all of them — and others as well. When you begin to squirm and suffer under what you discover, suffer cheerfully.

Suffer cheerfully, knowing that by suffering your grossest parts of self are burned and consumed. In the experiences of the heart, and in the lessons of love, there are both profound pleasure and acute torture. If you lend yourself gladly to the torture, the sooner will it be ended.

Many want to be like the humming bird and sip the honey from the flowers, but the moment they suffer, even through love, they rebel and would put an end to it or get away from it. This is particularly true when your love forces are directed toward the things of truth.

Do not fear the hard names your animal soul will use toward your great self.

If this truth work makes you suffer so, why don't you get out of it and do something else? Why not go back to your old life and self interest and pleasure?

My animal soul has said to me ten thousand times, "If you should devote a tenth part of your energies to a professional life, you could be a wealthy man, and free from the trouble and turmoil that comes from trying to teach and guide these undeveloped souls who think they want truth, but who really want only self gratification." But I have learned not to pay any attention to the hard names my animal soul calls me.

Until the attributes — discernment, reason, justice and honor — are attained, the disciple cannot enter upon psychic experience, for his development must be perfect and equal as are the petals of the lotus flower.

It is easy enough to be kind, the difficulty comes in being just. It is so easy to be kind because we are cowards — we are afraid of hurting people's feelings. We would rather be cowards than tell others the truth about themselves! But we must learn to tell the truth, though of course, not with the intention of inflicting a wound. Be just until you learn the great love there is in justice.

The disciple, when his psychic senses are opened, finds himself in his own place in his own school. He does not wander in the highways and byways of astral life which are as full of danger and evil as those of earth.

I warn everyone in the School of the Sacred Science against opening himself to any astral condition. Never allow any vibration to register upon you below the cardiac center. Keep the solar plexus closed, for the Pharaoh and his host cannot cross the Red Sea.

Only when recognition between the true companions has taken place in the psychic life, can full initiation become possible.

This emphasizes the need to study the law of polarity. You can go to a certain point in evolution alone, but to go on, you must synchronize with a polar opposite.

No one, who has once seen the whiteness at the Feast of Love, can ever rest again in the sloth of indifference in which men are plunged, and in which many disciples linger. This is henceforth impossible. The heart opens itself even to those whose deeds make them a pain and weariness even to think of Then comes the

surpassing wonder of the voice of the silence, which comes softly and mysteriously like a pulse beating a little more loudly than before; and by slow and strange progress becomes definite and clear. It does not come as a miraculous sound penetrating to the intelligence on rare occasions, but as a constant guide and dictator.

That isn't a very good description of it, because its rhythm and cadence are too rapid for a pulse beat. It is more like the flutter of a multitude of small bird wings through out the region of the breast. It is the fullness of the heart in love for the world, for all humanity, for the cause in which we are enlisted. Once you hear this "Voice of the Silence" within you can refer anything to it, and then go right ahead — it will be your "constant guide and dictator." But become obstreperous and decide not to go with it — you will find yourself in the vice-like grip of something that is absolutely terrific, and you will know the meaning of "I am a jealous God."

Separation of the body from its surroundings, were it possible, would mean death. So with the spirit. It is never separated from its spiritual surroundings; it is only an illusion that the material shape isolates it.

Here is a common experience of consciousness. I have felt many of you at times writing a letter to me, and I have answered your letter before you even mailed it. I feel a certain vibration. When I concentrate my attention on it, into my consciousness comes all that you are asking me in your letter, and I answer you right then and there. And soon I receive your letter saying you received my answer and the relief you asked before you ever mailed your letter! That is why I tell my beloved ones to "write to me often. I may not answer several of your letters with a written message, but you keep on writing to me." Spiritual surroundings refer to that nearness in consciousness, that inner presence or communion of souls.

He who decides to go upon the high path does so because he desires to, and his suffering becomes to him as joy; thus he enters into ecstasy.

One of the greatest mistakes we all make is to become over-anxious to bring a loved one into Truth. We cannot do a thing with another if he does not desire to come of his own volition, because we cannot put the desire into him. We must simply stand back and wait till he desires it.

Man can rebuild his physical nature and create his divine nature out of it, only when he knows that neither it, nor the animating power within it, are his own, or are even himself.

We have that idea wonderfully developed in our teaching. If there is a keynote to the Sacred Science instruction, it can be summed up in the thought that, "Every individual motion is a universal movement." (We emphasize it to such an extent that we lose sight entirely of the idea that we, of ourselves, do anything, are anything, accomplish anything, or have any power, ability, or will, or anything of our own.) Without the universal focusing itself, there would be no individual activity at all. Nothing gets us out of ourselves so effectively as to contemplate an idea of that nature, because it is one of the great, eternal verities of life.

While he regards himself as apart from others, even from any whose sin he loathes or whose hatred he has incurred; while he has any desire for himself, even the desire of rest or of quiet, so long is he blind and dumb and helpless in the presence of the Great Ones.

When you "pity" another, you are secretly enjoying his suffering through repressed cruelty. But in real sympathy for him, you suffer with him and for him and try to lift his load. To have no aversion to anything in anyone is one of the characteristics of that "aristocracy of the soul" and of genuine brotherhood. "Brotherhood" refers to the protective love and responsibility that the elder brothers feel for the young and helpless and irresponsible of the human race.

It is the emotions which admit you to the citadel of the soul; it is through the heart that you reach yourself.

It is by transforming the emotions that the fever of life is cured, and its madness cast aside.

Transform all feeling into power.
Take emotion and make it purpose.
Take fever and make it force.
Take madness and make it divine confidence.

Have strong feelings, especially in your human affections, your love and your passion, and your desire for the beautiful. Evidence them in the outer side of your being — don't repress them. But set a goal, fix an aim, create a purpose, gather together your scattered forces, as the rays of the sun can be focused in a burning-glass, and you will achieve results. "Take fever and make it force." Do you know that the burning force of human desire, which courses like molten metal through the bloodstream, can be put under the control of the awakened Will and become the greatest force that we have in teaching and healing and creative work on all planes? It becomes the healing balm of the nations. It becomes the creative force by which we realize

stupendous and incomprehensible things, and by which we bring them into realization and expression.

“Take madness and make it divine confidence.” Do you know what makes us mad and why we become destructive? When, through selfishness and doubt, the creative force is perverted; when, through broken harmony, broken rhythm, broken creative movement, the creative force turns upon the individual and avenges itself, and then strikes out blindly against everything else. Only one thing — divine confidence — will save it. Confidence that all things work together for good, confidence in the unseen helpers, confidence in the Path, in progress, in growth, in development, in protection, in support; confidence that nothing can happen but what is ultimate good. This strong, beautiful, influential force within us that creates madness will also save us and set us free. Don't degrade it and besmirch it — that is only the value the repressed and perverted and stultified ones give to it. Glorify it and apotheosize it, and through it we shall learn that it is a spiritual love which transforms us into Divine Beings.

Desire peace fervently. The peace you shall desire is that sacred peace which nothing can disturb, and in which the soul grows as does the holy flower upon the still lagoons.

— Mabel Collins
Light on the Path

CHAPTERS VI, VII, and VIII

FEBRUARY and MARCH

Human Life and Human Death

The month of February is devoted to a vigil of preparation, during which three steps have to be taken. . . . These steps mean, respectively, the attaining of self-control, self-reliance, and obedience.

...

Life is starred by strange moments, which differ from all the rest of time by reason of the fact that great decisions have to be made in them, decisions which can only be dealt with by the higher self. When these moments arrive, the man is either entirely helpless before them, or else he realizes at once that now no mundane or ordinary considerations can weigh the balance.

I will try to explain this thought by telling you how I arrive at a decision. In the small events of daily life I use my ordinary discretion, and do not call upon the deeper stratum of my nature — that must be kept in reserve for really important things. When a real decision must be made, I cast about the field of my outer consciousness in a superficial way, and I may ask the opinion and advice of several people. But I pay absolutely no attention to what they say. It isn't to weigh everything and select the best plan that I do this, but I make all this surface preparation to create the right condition — to invoke my inner powers and forces — and the more dramatic the situation, the better for the purpose. I set the stage as for a little drama, but when it is all completed and a real decision must be made, I retire to my private apartment and absolutely refuse to think pros and cons. But I call upon my Inner Self. How do I call upon it? By an expectancy of attitude. I hold this deep, inner expectancy with no activity of thought or feeling. I do not color the situation by predilection; I am equally willing to do or not to do.

When you first try this, you will get no response, for you have to cultivate it patiently and persistently. Do not formulate ideas or allow the psychological workings of the emotional nature to come in and color the decision by something you desire to do, because when the answer comes, the chances are good that it will be something you do not desire and will not wish to do. You must keep even the subjective workings of the desire nature in abeyance, as well as the functioning of the mind. You must hold resolutely to that inner and upward expectancy, and go right on about your daily business. And then, when your energies are absorbed in something else, hours or perhaps days afterward, unexpectedly into your consciousness will

come the answer — the decision that has to be made. I have been awakened out of a sound sleep by this inner and higher decision I had been expecting, and many times it has been the very last thing of which I should have thought.

It is only a matter of cultivation. These inner faculties are like the muscles of the physical body — they are developed and trained by persistent exercise and daily use. After the inner expectancy is once developed, the answer to any problem comes at once.

Of course, the mind will step in and furnish all kinds of objective justifications for the decision, but pay no attention to it. Once a decision is made, never alter it. If you do, you destroy something — a force, power, or concentration — and then you are again set adrift, dissipating your energies among pros and cons and whys and wherefores. When you have made a decision, do not change it, though you make ten thousand mistakes. You had better make mistakes than destroy that something within; and anyhow, the fundamental current in your life will eventually be to do what is right and best. If you can develop and preserve that deep sincerity of purpose and honesty of intention, everything in your life will soon right itself.

The events of life, unfolding out of each other with all the silent mystery of natural growth, lead a man by imperceptible and subtle progress to one of these great moments, and he finds himself constrained to make a decision of such a character that his whole being is compelled to take part in the struggle. The man who is helpless before these trials yields to feeling and emotion, becomes a prey to fever and to madness.

When disaster overtakes you and all manner of evil is said against you falsely because of the true teaching to which you are giving your allegiance, you can do one of two things. You can go down under these experiences and be overwhelmed by the value you give to them, or you can rise on the crest of the wave. In all these experiences there is a trough and a crest of the wave. With a little effort, you can rise to the crest and outride the storm victoriously. If you go down and allow yourself to be submerged, it will require long, arduous discipline and training to rebuild confidence in yourself.

Life brings about these intense situations where momentous decisions must be made. Sentiment may be involved on one side; the higher right which is governed by the inner law of your Being may be on the other side. If you can polarize your mind to the Law of your Being and make the decision, tremendous strength of will and character will be developed; but if you allow an appeal to your sympathy to sway you, you will become enslaved and incapable of a true decision. When you permit pity or sympathy or

sentimentality or commiseration to influence you, you render no help or service to another individual — you merely encourage him in his perversity. When realization of cause and effect came to me, it worked a miracle in my nature, and I saw where indiscriminate giving to beggars is absolutely a method of creating indigence. It is really far better for beggars to freeze or starve, for then they learn how they got into such a deplorable condition. Does that seem cruel and heartless? It isn't though — it is the deepest charity!

The highest motive he (the disciple) can see or reach to must be his guide, that and none other; the most selfless action possible must be the one of his choice.

Never make a decision that is favorable to yourself, for you cannot develop character or the higher faculties when you do that. Do not allow even your creature comforts to influence you, for there must be a certain amount of Spartanism and fortitude in your decisions.

If he (the disciple) adheres unflinchingly to this standard, suddenly he will find the fever within him abate, while those around him will be sensible of a force emanating from him, which leads them also upward, and compels them to follow the highest motives known to them. Then the despair and misery, which will be capable of producing madness in men not so led and guided, will suddenly turn to confidence in the unseen and beneficent powers, and out of a vortex of passion, or a sea of suffering, the spirits of those involved in it will arise purified. . . .

Those who live through their human life with the sole object of obtaining pleasure and avoiding pain, refusing to take the step of acquiring self-control, not only retrace their course until they can follow it rightly, but find experience more and more intensified, the torture more defined and acute. For man, if he will not learn, must be taught. Through incarnation after incarnation the unwilling students are compelled to learn, by severity of trial and misfortune.

That is why you should learn to love even menial tasks, for then you will not be forced into any situation that might bring acute suffering and torture. One is often mystified to find a delicate, sensitive, flower-like soul environed in the midst of poverty, squalor, affliction, and degradation, and every sensibility of the observer rises in protest. But the truth is that this soul sipped the honey from all past experiences and avoided the exacting duties of human experience, and now finds itself in a situation from which there is no escape — cruel, merciless, relentless conditions which produce an agony of suffering. But through the misery this soul is refined and emerges at last, and it will never again attempt to avoid the high call of duty, even at great

personal inconvenience. The very willingness to respond to the call of duty obviates the necessity of it in due time.

The Hindu teacher with whom I studied for seven years once turned to me suddenly and said: "Ralph, you are certainly in for a difficult incarnation! I just saw it! You neglected the work given you to do in your last incarnation, and so you will have to work harder in this one. You may not get any rest at all."

Probably that is why, after eighteen years of itinerant teaching and healing, I am still in the field doing this work, instead of the things my human soul still longs sometimes to do. The Sannyasin period is fourteen years ordinarily, but I am in my nineteenth year of ministry in Truth. Others are beginning to come forward now to help me with the objective and relative details; my work is the Teaching and the creation of the Teaching, and here is a pledge that I stick to my job!

The second step, the attainment of self-reliance, compels the disciple to call upon the warrior — his own higher self.

One of the most difficult lessons for the disciple to learn is that he can do nothing by conscious effort; he must learn to stand aside and wait until the accumulation of inner power becomes sufficiently strong to cope with the situation. When he learns to look to the warrior, the Self within, his strength is engendered. If the disciple does not expect strength, it is not developed in him, but is withheld until he discovers how puny and futile his human, personal efforts are; and here he utterly faints and falls exhausted, or gives up with a realization of utter impotency. He is impotent, so far as conscious effort is concerned, but when he turns to the Self within, strength comes. His duty then is to avoid getting in the way, and let the warrior come and do the work.

Self-reliance is an asset which can only be cultivated by the development of inner strength. The self-confidence of the personality is only the camouflage of a weak soul who simulates strength, but if his "bluff is called," his weakness becomes pitiable. The self-confidence of the personality is really lack of self-reliance; for self-reliance is an Egoic faculty, and it is developed from the habit of looking to one's self for justification for one's own thoughts and actions, and to none other.

The man who acquires self-reliance in the experience of daily life, can trust to the guidance of his intellect or of his animal soul, either being capable of dealing with selfish interests to the advantage of the self. But the disciple has to decide on questions which have to do with the good of others, with the good of the all; and he is

compelled to do so without help from his teacher, or any guidance save that of the light of the Logos within himself, in order that he shall acquire self-reliance.

The one who has reached the status of discipleship on the Path wields a tremendous influence in the lives of many people. What he does hinders or helps others; what he says has a profound and far-reaching effect upon the lives of thousands of people. The disciple does not wish to influence others, for he is wise enough to know the karmic consequences of his instruction and his example, but it is a state of his Being over which he has no control. After the disciple has witnessed the effect of his decisions upon others, he awakens to the fact that he is no longer a separate, isolated entity, and that his words and actions, and even his thoughts and attitude, have far-reaching effects. And so he learns to make his decisions out of the accumulated force and faculty of self-reliance; and a deepening sense of responsibility and a great conscientiousness develop within him. He can only accept this new responsibility — not with a sense of resignation, but with real fortitude.

Very often, where but little is said or done by the disciple, the influence of his force in the consciousness of other individuals with whom he comes into contact is so great that the interests and associations and contacts and the very lives of these persons are completely changed or reversed. Meanwhile the disciple has been wholly unconscious of it, so assuaged has he become to the presence of this inner force or self-reliance within himself.

Whenever the emotions he experiences show him that the lesson has been incompletely acquired, or the decisions falteringly made, he resolutely turns back, and goes again over that step, seeking another similar incarnation in which to accomplish it successfully. He is not told to do this; the repetition would be worthless if made at the bidding of another, even that of the highest initiate. The disciple must rely upon his own judgment, and trust to his own observation.

Those of you who are preparing yourselves to be teachers and representatives of Truth must carefully avoid giving specific advice or direction to a student, for if he should follow out a line of conduct or a course of action pointed out by his teacher, he would miss the growth and development which should be gained through his own efforts. If one does a certain thing because he has arrived at a decision within himself, by his own initiative, he has gained an asset in several directions other than self-reliance, and he will reap the true results of the experience, irrespective of what his decision may be. And so you must avoid weakening a student by giving him specific advice, even though he insists that you tell him what to do. Compel him to make his own decisions in order that he may develop individuality and self-reliance and reap the result.

The desire of birth, and the accomplishment of birth, followed by the experiences of love and life, have been the subject of the occult ceremonies and vigils so far. They are the subject of the whole Christmas and New Year celebrations, under all disguises, in all religions, and howsoever veiled and obscured by latter-day tradition. These being completed, it is now necessary for the disciple to turn his attention to the ritual concerning the soul's descent into matter, which was given in Egypt as an esoteric teaching only, for the enlightenment of those who were ready for knowledge. . . .

The descent of the spirit of man into matter was the outcome of the need for purification and regeneration. Unless he secures regeneration, and obtains the power to retrace his steps and become reborn again in higher states of being, he will descend too deeply into the Tomb, he will have missed his mark, and risk becoming engulfed altogether.

Among advanced occultists there is what is known as the Eighth Sphere. It is below even the lowest materialized animal consciousness, and this "descending too deeply into the Tomb" has reference to it. It is very exceptional that an individual will deliberately brutalize his nature until the Ego withdraws from it and allows the animal soul to descend under lower influences and be reborn in the animal kingdom. It doesn't seem possible that such retrogression could obtain, but if an individual so lowers his vibration, through the use of alcohol and drugs particularly, that the conditions become intolerable, the Immortal Soul will withdraw from its vehicles. The animal soul will take possession and come under the elemental influences to such an extent that the life forces will reincarnate in the animal state and be forced to begin the long, evolutionary process back again, because they have lost their human status in evolution. This is what is meant by "becoming engulfed altogether."

The office of the ministering angel, Death, is to free man from matter temporarily, and to instruct him in his danger. Death is, in fact, a great conscious, devoted loving Power which strives ceaselessly to help man to strike off his bonds.

After a night's sleep, many of us have had the experience of consciously returning to our bodies in a very high and exalted state, but we soon noticed a lowering of the tone of vibration, due to coming under the influence of the lower instinctive nature when re-entering the body. From this, what takes place after death can readily be seen. With the release from the physical body, the soul immediately experiences a higher vibration and higher state of consciousness.

To those who understand this, the death-bed scene is a beautiful thing, instead of something to be dreaded. Death is really a wonderful provision of the cyclic or rhythmic law to release the soul and let it rise to a higher plane where it can strengthen itself spiritually before coming back to work out its incarnations further. When we begin to study death from this aspect, we shall see that death is really beautiful, and we shall see the similarity between love and death, because there is the same kind of beauty and joy in both. Love serves the same purpose to the soul as death.

No man dies alone, for Death himself is with him; and the dying man finds in him a familiar and most true friend. To the ancient Egyptian, this was known, and accepted, and he devoted himself to considering the steps he must take when he passed from his body, and from earth, in the charge of Death.

Because of the unprepared state of consciousness of the vast majority of people at death, a great amount of work has to be done for them by the astral workers when they pass over; and this condition is particularly chaotic in times of holocaust and war, when so many young and unprepared souls are thrown violently out of their bodies in a frightened, bewildered state.

This knowledge was accepted by the ancient Egyptians and they were prepared for the transition called death. It is a part of the occult training of the sacred science or ancient wisdom. To those who live in surface considerations, death is the last subject they want to entertain, and therefore they are wholly unprepared when it comes to them.

I remember vividly what a stir the consideration of "Thanatopsis" created in my soul when I was a mere school boy. I believe it a most beautiful and valuable thing to create this aspect of death in our consciousness, so that we shall anticipate it with pleasure, just as we look forward to a night's rest in a comfortable bed after a hard day's work. At the end of an incarnation, we should be able to say with the Apostle Paul: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith!"

In the Devaduta-sutra is given a conversation between Yama, the God of Death, and the spirit of a wicked man in his charge, in which Yama explains the law of Karma to him, and urges him to take warning. He impresses upon the spirit of the man, strongly, how absolutely responsible he is for his own unfortunate plight.

Through understanding the significance of things, we are able to raise ourselves higher and prepare ourselves by utilizing the time between incarnations in the assimilation of experiences, which results in the

development of faculty. Then in the next incarnation that which was arduous and laborious effort will have become opportunity and aptitude.

“These, thy evil deeds,” says King Yama, “thou alone hast done them all; thou alone must bear the fruit.”

I firmly believe that in our Sacred Science work we should emphasize the doctrine of karma more, for there is nothing which makes one walk the straight and narrow path as to know absolutely that he cannot perpetrate a real wrong — mental, emotional, or physical — without creating suffering for himself.

This is a part of the occult truth, discovered and declared by Tolstoy, that in the life of the spirit, *direction* is all-important.

Energy follows thought. It is in the direction in which you steadily maintain your thought that energy will flow. No matter what may be your highest aim, object, or purpose, if you will hold your thought steadily upon the secrets and mysteries of it, you will attain it. No matter what you desire to penetrate, if you hold right to it, the ultimate mystery of it will open to you.

I once came across a thought in the Bhagavad Gita that was a supreme mystery to me. It was the words of Krishna — “By my nature I create, O Arjuna, by my nature I create.” I concentrated on that thought until its significance was born in my consciousness, and the “Manual of Instruction” given during the 1927 Summer School was the result of my realization of it.

The experience of death, which comes to every man, is not in itself a preparation for the great Good Friday ceremony. It is only by looking straight upon Death, and asking of him his secrets, that the passing into his charge becomes a preparation. He will answer you, be sure; and instead of explaining to you, as to the ordinary man, that law of Karma of which he is one of the administrators, he will enter upon a different and much more difficult discourse. He will show you the nature of matter, and what its power is over the spirit of man, and he will prepare you for the mystery of the Tomb. The disciple who has not attained sight, can only demand it ceaselessly, and continue to direct his unseeing gaze toward that which he longs to know and understand.

Have you ever seen anyone die? We have all experienced that hushed and awed presence — that indefinable something — in the face of death! But we attributed these feelings to something in ourselves — to our imagination, our reactions to superstition, maybe.

Here is the difference between one who lives the outer life and one who lives the inner life: one who has the inner consciousness of things comes to realize that the conditions — the “presence” felt at the death of another — are actual, powerful forces on other planes, and not his own psychological state. There is never a power or force except as it is focalized and becomes a being or entity of some realm. Any condition that you feel you think of as a force, but on some other plane it is an entity.

There are numerous classifications of these entities. In the deva line of evolution alone are more than ten thousand groupings of the nature spirits, which live on the etheric and astral levels, and some of the higher ones — the devas — live on the mental plane.

There is one division of entities known as “occult creations,” which are the pseudo-creations of the perverse thoughts of mankind. There is another division of discarnate spirits who never come into physical bodies at all, and yet they live in worlds that are more complete and more vivid than our material-plane world.

There are many degrees of development among all these beings or entities that function on successive planes of consciousness. Do not think of these planes as one above the other or below the other in strata — that is only a figure of speech. They all occupy the same space, but because of different rates of vibration, they are incomprehensible to one another, just as our atmosphere is congested with radio-active forces from various broadcasting stations, but all in different keys or wave-lengths, and producing no interference with each other. and so we use a fourth- dimensional measure when we speak of “lower” or “higher” planes.

We sense a great deal of this force and vibration of the entities of subtler planes in our everyday life. The “presence” experienced in the death-chamber is not merely a superstitious awe, but a universal power that our spirits have contacted temporarily and that has registered in our consciousness. In order to cultivate living the inner life and not merely the outer existence of values and reactions to these things, we should always think of them as actual forces and powers having existence on other planes.

I never get anything out of love but terrific force — I always feel the awfulness, the tragedy of it that hurts. There is a great beauty in love, too, that requires a high degree of development to understand. There is a great identity in love and death.

To the ordinary man, who seeks no such experiences as these, the profound abyss of grief is that place of consciousness in which he

first becomes dimly aware of the stately presence that is so near to him. He suddenly recognizes that what is happening is not only the loss of one close to him, but that there is a new and great presence, benign and beautiful, pressing upon him. As he contemplates it, he experiences the sensation of being blessed; from the presence of death comes a profound good-will to man.

Were you ever able to get far enough out of your grief, at the death of a loved one, to get that feeling? In love we get so involved in our desire that we can't catch the real impersonal meaning of love at all. Many of the boys of all nationalities returned from the world war with their souls almost transformed by this force. In the daily presence of death they became softened by it and they felt the greatest good will to all mankind. When they first returned they had a new outlook upon life, but they soon lost it under the influence of the old race-mind forces which again engulfed them.

Have you observed how everyone, in the presence of death, always thinks and speaks of the good deeds of the departed — never the evil that he may have done? Do you recall the great wave of this good will that swept the United States when President Harding's funeral train passed through San Francisco? It is always so.

None can make this great essay, of taking the knowledge of death and learning the mysteries that lie in its keeping, who has not been perfectly obedient to the simple rule, "Thou shalt not kill." Man hinders his progress on the path by arrogating to himself rights which are not his. The Buddha taught men explicitly that they had no right to take life, but mankind has not yet begun to learn the lesson. The disciple is told to respect life as those do who desire it. The knowledge of death is utterly hidden from those who do not realize its sacredness.

As disciples, this teaching is something to which we should pay more attention. We have not lived up to it, because we all kill in the very worst way, for we kill by proxy — we compel others to do our killing for us, so that we may have meat to eat, shoes and furs to wear, leather goods, etc., to use in our modern civilization.

There are certain cults in India who observe this prohibition against taking life literally, and surrender their physical bodies for vermin to infest. An extreme view, of course!

The solemn and beautiful presence of Death comes in its majesty equally at the end of the little fluttering life which lasts but a few hours, as to the deathbed of a king, because every spirit which casts aside its physical sheath is in his charge. These great forces, Life and Death, two of the powerful pairs of opposites, remain unalterably

splendid. No sordidness of human conditions, no briefness or insignificance of the creature's span of life, can alter the splendor of the possession, or the dignity of that which takes it away, or rather, which transforms it. For Death, in his true province, is not a destroyer but a transformer, one who by a magic touch changes all things. . . . He shows to the disciple that he is both Death and Life to the occultist. It lies with the one who is enduring the initiation to take Death and make it Life.

If we can learn to see death from this angle, we shall see it as life, not as destruction.

With every Ceremony witnessed, every vigil observed, every ordeal endured, the disciple changes not only himself but the world in which he lives. He helps the great Powers towards their release from service to man, and he helps men around him in every crisis of life. His knowledge of death as being life emanates from him without any need of speech, and helps others in critical and terrible moments of human suffering.

On 21st March, the day on which the sun shines exactly on the equator, when the whole material earth is assured of its annual rebirth into full life, the ceremony of the vigil of death is observed by the disciples. To the 'one who walks', birth and death are the two parts of one action.

Death itself is blessed, but it is not within man's province to give that blessing. When he kills, he makes himself accursed. Death transforms the ill deed for the victim, but he cannot do so for the sinner. The greatest theft of all has been committed, and must be suffered for. The spiritual law has been broken, and one who transgresses the spiritual law remains a transgressor, though all the beneficent Powers should unite to transform the effect of his deed, and though the effect of his deed be transformed.

* * * * *

Before the eyes can see, they must be incapable of tears. Before the ear can hear, it must have lost its sensitiveness. Before the voice can speak in the presence of the Masters, it must have lost the power to wound. Before the soul can stand in the presence of the Masters, its feet must be washed in the blood of the heart.

— Mabel Collins
Light on the Path

CHAPTER IX

APRIL

Good Friday and Easter Day

Of all the church festivals of the year, Easter appeals to me most. I cannot begin to tell you what I experience when Easter approaches. Without any conscious effort whatever, I feel my own forces rising a week or so before Easter. My powers just increase and increase, and the process culminates at Easter. I do not know, but I can infer, understanding as I do that all Power of this nature which we experience is a higher plane substance directed by some great Intelligence of that plane, that I am being made a channel for the outpouring of the Force — not only for those who are en rapport with the consciousness from which I teach, not only for the lifting of the powers of the group to which I belong but I believe it has a wider significance and includes the entire race. I am convinced that many other individuals who are receptive to this Power are used likewise at this season of the year.

If possible, I always conduct a special service on Easter Sunday. Last Easter it happened to be in Dallas, Texas, and a tremendous outpouring of Power was experienced.

Easter has a very great influence and a significance that nothing else in the entire year has. It is not the influence of the conception of the final resurrection of the Ego from the tomb of matter which it symbolizes, but it is an unlimited, exalted *Freedom of the Spirit* which is experienced at Easter time. What takes place on the inner planes I know only by experiencing the Force in my consciousness at that time of year. It is the only way of knowing what must take place on the inner planes, and so the ceremony described in this little book *When the Sun Moves Northward* must be true, and there must be a tremendous accretion of the Higher Powers at that time.

Several of my students have since said to me, "What did you do last Easter?" "Nothing, except that I held an Easter service." That is about all that can be said, for that is all that was done. It is not what we do, however. I believe if the question were asked, "What happened to you last Easter?" I might approach an answer by saying, "There was an outpouring of Power which was excessive — greater than at any other time during the year."

With April comes the glorious idea of resurrection.

Never allow yourself to think of the Great Master, Jesus the Christ, as an historical character and as having risen from a literal tomb — never! That is all symbolical! Keep your forces and your consciousness wholly within yourself, but know what that symbol is intended to represent — the final triumph of the Spirit over material concept. That is what it is — it is the culmination of the incarnations when the Ego finally releases itself and gets out and discovers what it really is to breathe free air. For the first time the Ego breathes free air and becomes almost intoxicated by that 'air'. And so this glorious idea of the resurrection is the final triumph of your Spirit, your Ego, over the aeons of being dominated and entombed by material concept.

The disciple leaves the dim and sad places in which he has been keeping vigil, and moves into the splendor. He is ready now to devote himself entirely to the contemplation of the most superb conception known to man. The Easter season is the ecstasy of the year.

...

That is just as literally true to my consciousness as anything in this material world.

The Easter season is the ecstasy of the year, culminating in the great Feast of Resurrection, celebrated throughout Christendom on Easter Day.

Contrast this glorious conception of Easter with the parade on Fifth Avenue! Isn't that a caricature? If the School of the Sacred Science ever amounts to anything, and we reach a point where we can instruct our younger disciples, we will impose for once, at least, the most simple garb imaginable on Easter Day and no bonnets at all! Let us take off our hats and stand bareheaded before the glorious conception of Easter that we celebrate!

Then follows the purely spiritual and occult vigil of transmutation, after which the disciple, retaining firmly the place he has reached while the sun moved northward, repeats and recites the lessons he has learned, resolutely aiming at being born into a still higher state of spiritual life when again the birth month (December) is reached. The Easter season perpetually illustrates and commemorates that freedom which will be obtained by man at the end of his pilgrimage, when he has acquired all the knowledge to be obtained by human experience, and has cast off the last vesture or sheath of the spirit. When that freedom is obtained, the spirit will have finally left the Tomb — risen from the Grave — and matter will know it no more.

Having once risen clear and free of material concept (matter), never again can you go back into it.

At the commencement of this great Feast of Resurrection, the Hall of Learning is full of life and activity. The Teachers await their disciples, looking with hope for those whom they have prepared, trusting that they will have the courage to embark on this great enterprise. There is no longer any warfare on that battle-field where the Arjuna of the Bhagavad Gita fights his lower nature and his evil passions. That battle has long since been fought and won by the disciple who is strong enough to enter upon the Easter feast, and take his place in the Hall of Learning. This wonderful palace of wisdom was built, and is preserved in the ethereal space that is within reach of the spirits of men, by the initiates who are followers of the Christ, and remain near the world of men to teach and help them.

You must remember there are many initiates who are not followers of the Christ, because they are universalized enough to give recognition to all the illumined world teachers; but each initiate has a closer intimacy or tie with some outstanding World Light. It is the age and the ray and many other inner kinds of affiliations that determine which one of the great world teachers the awakened and developed Ego or initiate becomes en rapport with and works under his force and guidance.

All are bidden to come here, all are helped to enter; but only a few are able to do so. Those who can pass through the doors at this season feel the divine airs, and become aware of the Great Presences. Quick-growing grasses spring up about their footsteps and they enter; all is green around them. It is the time of green leaves; of the opening of buds. Once they are within the doors, the Hall appears to them as vast as the surface of the world itself; for the great invitation to all to come makes the walls recede till there is room for the spirits of all men to stand within them. On all sides are groups and processions of priests, wearing the robes of the world's religions. All alike chant the resurrection hymn. Many of the priests who do office at this season have become enlightened during the preparatory vigils. Some of the worshippers, who have blindly sought the way and earnestly prayed for guidance, are led into the mystic precincts. Those who have intelligently observed the vigil of death are able to hear the chanting of the Good Friday litany. A few, each year, are able to take part in it for the first time. All through the Easter season this glorious litany is maintained ceaselessly by triumphant voices.

- I. *I see Death.*
- II. *I know Death.*
- III. *I am Death.*
- IV. *I am Alive.*
- V. *I am dead; I am alive.*
- VI. *The Divine says: I am that which is evil.*
- VII. *The Spirit says: I am that which is matter.*

The whole object of the preparation and suffering lies in this miracle of transformation and transmutation. Here is the supreme mystery to be entered into by the disciple while he remains man. Destroy no thing, but make all things good, all things beautiful, all things desirable. Remember that hate is the destroyer, love the creator and builder. Take death and make it life, as you take evil and make it good.

As soon as we see the beneficent lessons which so-called experience teaches us, we have made that evil good, blending the pairs of opposites. So take death and transform the morbid aspect of it into the great server to the souls of men which it is, and you have blended that great pair of opposites. Take death and make it life, as you take evil and make it good.

The divine cannot be tarnished by evil any more than gold can suffer by contact with fire. Spirit can no more become matter than water can become one with fire.

This refers to material concept; that is the only matter there is. Do not confuse the word "substance" with the word "matter". Metaphysically speaking, they are two different things entirely. "Substance" is the body of Spirit and is the Spirit's awareness of itself. Metaphysically speaking, "matter" is the objective concept of substance; "matter" is just your limited objective concept — the concept born out of your sense of separateness. Remember that the personality is the identification of the Power-to-be-conscious with that concept of substance, and that is the tomb from which it awakens. We could just as well read: "Spirit can no more become objective substance than water can become one with fire."

Gold is purified by burning, and the divine does but throw aside all that is not absolutely itself.

And it does this so ruthlessly with our sensibilities that it is like a powerful horse taking the bit into its mouth.

As it passes through the fiery ordeal. . .

It is when your personality is suffering out of disappointment with the objects of sense that something of your unpurified nature is being burned up.

As it passes through the fiery ordeal, Spirit, when it identifies itself with matter, sweeps it away as water obliterates fire. It must long to become one with the fire, before the miracle can be accomplished. The spiritual part of the man must so recognize the darkness and death of the physical. . . .

Remember this — the esotericist, the occultist, the one who lives the inner life (not the life of the appearance of the appearance, but the one who lives the inner life), never speaks of the passing-out of the body as “death.” To him death means being in the physical, astral and mental states of consciousness and limited to their identification — that is, limited to the identification of the Power-to-be-conscious. That is death — the only death known by the awakened one. And so we must learn to know even the most exhilarating stimulation of the senses in physical experience as nothing but darkness and death, because immediately there comes the aftermath, which never follows the exhilaration of the soul in spiritual enjoyments.

The spiritual part of the man must so recognize the darkness and death of the physical, must so completely and willingly enter into it and transform it, the inevitable ill, into a thing desirable, that it shall dissolve away, and vanish in its character and quality as that which is ill or evil. So, in entering the Tomb, the Christ of the world, the Buddha of the world, the Krishna of the world, destroys the Tomb itself.

Enter into it willingly and transform it and bring the kingdom of heaven to it. This teaching is sound, and I endorse it. It is not pulling yourself up and beyond objective consciousness into a transcendental state; it is not trying to reach something back of or other than the astral and physical substance, but it is entering the material conditions of consciousness willingly and dwelling there until the material view has been transformed into the release of the substance. This can be carried to such an extent that the divine precept of the Illumined One becomes literally true. “More uprightly and purely speaketh the healthy body, perfect and square-built; and it speaketh of the meaning of the earth.” This is Freidrich Nietzsche's doctrine of the meaning of the earth. The earth has a meaning — it is not a material concept, but it is divine substance, and he who touches the physical body touches God.

That is the doctrine; stop running away from it and enter it until the material concept of it is dissolved away, until the character and quality which appears evil has completely vanished. You have not left it, but you are still there blended with it as the substance. Then think of the whole sidereal universe and of the orders of Beings embodied; think of all that as the body of God — and you have arrived! This is the significance of the resurrection. It is not pulling yourself out of objective consciousness and going on up somewhere; it is transforming it. When you can do that, you have resurrected yourself from material concept — the tomb — and there no longer is a tomb.

His supreme spirituality is stronger than that which would hold or bind him, and his supreme Love changes its nature into that which does not hold or bind.

I wish that students of the School of the Sacred Science could so learn this attitude that it would serve as a yardstick with which to measure all teaching, and as soon as they detect any teaching that even hints or suggests “this low body, this world is not my home, heaven is my home, etc.,” they would say, “Away with it! That is all a delusion! That is only the result of disappointment with sense objects!” Examine such ideas, psychoanalyze them, look into them, and see what is there. That is the great point in this work. I always carry this yardstick like a chip on my shoulder.

Thoughts like this wake me up — thoughts to which my soul thrills. Stay close to the earth and dispute all those who teach that the world is base and mean! This is the world, and you will keep coming back into it until you have conquered the last enemy and will not have to pass out of the body any more. By your attitude toward it, transform the body into divine substance. You do not want to withdraw from this body, but you do want to transform it by the power of your awakened soul. You will keep coming back until you can do that; you will never find heaven anywhere until you can do it. Start by looking at it. Keep going right into it; keep transforming your values and the properties of your own consciousness in regard to it, and some time it will be the divine substance with which you can clothe your doctrine.

Carry your yardstick everywhere, and you will see how many false doctrines are masquerading under the name of Truth. I have no patience with these doctrines. I am going to live in this body and on this earth until this existence becomes so divine that I love it — until I have no material thought or concept about anything I see; until I can see nothing but divine substance — the radiant substance of the body of God. Love your body, the divine substance of God! Such an attitude will make your flesh become radiant. That is the attitude you must learn to hold.

Touch this body and you touch God — that is the significance of the Christ entering the tomb, and when he is resurrected, there is no tomb; it has vanished!

And so, after the deep silence of the hours (or ages) of effort, of abasement, the grave yields up its dead, and that which is dead is alive.

What grave? The grave of your material concept about this divine substance! “O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?” Even this matter is alive — that is the resurrection; that is Easter!

It is useless to attempt to understand the true meaning of resurrection until the previous ceremonies have not only been entered into, and fully understood, but their ordeals endured. In this manner, the story of the year follows the story of the life of the ego, the 'one who walks'. Until the winter is experienced and endured, the green leaves do not come. Until the lessons of human life have been learned, that which lies beyond it is unapproachable. A formidable series of ceremonies and ordeals has been hinted at, and superficially surveyed, in the course of this treatise. Each and all of these must have been fully entered into and understood, grasped from within, not surveyed from without, before the disciple can be more than a witness of the marvelous Feast of the Resurrection. Until then, he can but kneel and pray, and strive to see. It is the sad lot of many disciples who have believed themselves ready to take part in the Easter feast to find that they are unable even to witness it. The glory of the miracle is too great for them to endure to gaze upon it, and the possibility of taking part in it is altogether out of their reach.

None cast them forth, for the disciple's right and privilege is that of endurance to the uttermost. But when the splendor becomes blinding, the spirit falls back into the refuge of darkness, and no hands stretched out to help, no call from the master, can prevent this. Then the way has to be recommenced and trodden again, and perhaps yet retrodden, until the wayfarer is able to discover with certainty where he has made the false step, and to pass over that point without fault.

If you could be helped through the test, it would destroy the absolute integrity of your Being. By effort you must accumulate the asset of strength — then it is yours. But who would want to accept help until he has earned it anyhow? Well, it is the law whether you want it so or not.

Do not think that we who have made this point arrived without effort or struggle! I consciously enter the resurrection feast every year. My soul is right there every time it comes, and yet when I look back I know that I had to make ten thousand efforts at every point. I felt miserable the first few times; over and over I wrestled with it and gained a little strength each time I went over the top.

If you fail ten thousand times, do not give up. There is the whole crux of the matter — never give up. Each effort creates a little strength. The only disgrace is in giving up the effort. You will have no use for yourself, and nobody will have any use for you if you quit. Every one of us makes thousands of mistakes and fails in everything worthwhile before success comes! The glorious thing is that we never give up the effort. That is the saving grace, for after a while we gain strength to go over the top.

This ecstasy of the year is the true awakening hour of the spirit, when man knows the mystery of love in its fullness, if he is able to take part in the ceremonial. The disciples who enter range themselves like brethren, those who are near each other in the occult sense standing side by side, and pressing together. The infinite spirit love passes through the ranks of its army like a shape of light, and yet it is a thing, solid and eternal.

Those who have passed through the Easter Ceremony once can never hurt or kill or give pain any more; and with each season that they pass through it, do they penetrate more and more fully into its glorious depths; they grow in strength, and become vital and irresistible forces in the world. For they have more and more of the power of the united army to use, with every advance they make.

In the deep place of the animal soul is darkness; it is conscious only of material things, of passions and desires. There is no knowledge in it, even of the phenomena of earth life, save by the help of the senses. These are not inalienable possessions, as are the psychic senses of the spirit, which may be closed by the action of the law of Karma, but can never be taken away. Whereas the physical senses can be entirely destroyed, so that the animal soul and its instrument, the brain, are left without any information as to outer things.

But it is in this deep place of the soul that the spirit sits shrouded, and it is here that is the quick spring of love and life eternal. Here within every man, is the Tomb, the place of darkness where the miracle takes place, from which the spirit rises, in which the spring of life and love bursts forth. Taste of this spring, bathe in it, asking no questions, but simply drinking of it, and the hunger for knowledge and longing for light will pass away. These desires of the spirit, which fill it with restless craving, will pass away, because illumination will have been attained.

The water of life will so gush forth that you must give of it to others, and in so doing, an unutterable joy will arise within you. You have now all that you need and more; enough for others; enough for all the world. You have achieved the miracle of the resurrection, you have made the greenness spring forth within yourself; and in so doing, you are making the earth green about you, and bringing the joy of new life upon the world. In the school of love there is a pledge to be taken at the very door, before you can enter.

This pledge, already taken in the ordeal of the Feast of Love, must be said in the heart of the disciple at the Easter Feast.

“I WILL LOVE.”

You no longer desire love, or ask love, or look for love, You
give it.

You give love to friend and foe alike; you are unable to give anything
else except love after you have once partaken of the Easter Feast.

CHAPTER X

THE MASTER AND THE DISCIPLE

The Master is the servant of humanity, and obeys the demand of the disciple. At the Easter season he awaits those who call on him, within the doors of the Hall of Learning. For it lies with the spirit of the man to arise and step out and forth, and to enter the places of illumination. That which is known as the Hall of Learning stands first outside the gate of matter, and whoever is ready to go into it will find a guide near at hand ready to lead him on. His Master awaits his bidding, and if he demands to be shown the wonders within that mystic place they will be shown to him. This, to the seer a place, is in truth not only that, but a state or condition of the spirit in which, by its own energy and power of demand, all lessons possible to the human spirit are to be interpreted. The cathedrals, built by man on earth, are shaped according to the plan of the Hall of Learning; undoubtedly the great architects who designed them were seers, and drew their inspiration from beyond the gates of matter. When this ethereal cathedral, the one great worshipping place for all the spirits of men, is filled with worshippers, the disciple who can see perceives that the dim vault above is no roof but heaven itself, and knows that the mysterious open space above the great altar leads to the throne of the Supreme. Chapels surround the body of the building, into which the disciples are admitted, and to which they are led by their guides. When one first is able to remain within this sacred place at the resurrection season, he finds himself taken in a strong grasp, and led across the vast floor as a little child might be led, to whatever door he has earned the right to enter. For the first time since the desire of birth brought him into matter and he became a man, for the first time since he entered upon the long pilgrimage and found the path, he is utterly content knowing that he is now at home, and in his own place. The door before which he stands will be opened for him, the Master-hand will turn the handle. . . .

A disciple has more power over a Master of the Wisdom than the Master has over the disciple. You see, the Master's consciousness is liberated — he hasn't any object or aim or purpose or ambition. He hasn't expression even, he has only one thing — dharma — and he lives in the dharma of his Being, without value and completely without color. One would think that this would create a very monotonous sort of existence, but the color, the value, the expression, and the ambition — the attachments which make up the greater part of the activity of the personal consciousness — are entirely displaced by what we call the ecstasy of pure spirit; that is, the activity of Being. The Master is in a state where he is, as we would say, “lit up” with bliss and

ecstasy; but he has lived in them for so long a time that they have sunk into his consciousness and are felt as a deep undertone of joy and contentment.

In the state of consciousness in which a Master lives there is nothing for him to fulfill in the nature of goals, aims, objects, purposes. There is nothing for him to work out. His consciousness rests on the surface of the ocean in a state of *Isness*.. That ocean is placid — there are no tempests, no ripples — but it is an ocean of power. It is extremely difficult to arouse a Master, to activate that power, but once aroused, the power is terrific. A Master's placidity and contentment are most disarming and deceiving to a human being, because he thinks the Master is negative and “easy-going.” If an obstreperous personality demands of him, he will go along with him a mile — two miles, perhaps; but don't be deceived if you ever meet one.

The Master doesn't exercise any power over a disciple because he hasn't any purpose to fulfill. What can a disciple bring to him? Nothing at all! Gautama the Buddha said, “What can be added to the happiness of one who is already full?” You cannot bring a thing to him, and he watches that you don't take anything away! Do you think he cares for your services? Not in the least! He knows that immutable law is governing everything, and that it will work itself out in its own way in its own time. So he is exceedingly careful not to carry out any plan himself. He uses methods that are incomprehensible, because he always goes to the next higher plane and governs the forces of that plane, knowing that effects are carried out on the lower plane. And so he does not exercise any influence in a disciple's life, and he has no wish to, because he has no motive.

Now, how is it that the disciple has more power in the Master's life than the Master has in the disciple's life? If you can comprehend that fact, it will be a very important key in your hands. I will tell you how I learned it. I was once associated with a master soul, and after being with him for six months, he sent me away from him. Then I received in the mail a little typewritten slip of paper signed in blood — the blood of his own veins — and on this slip he said, “You have the right to demand anything of me if you know how to demand.” It was signed in blood with his inner name! It was an enigma to me, for I didn't know how to demand anything of him, but it was a spur to my perceptive faculties, and his use of such a dramatic method as to sign it in his own blood startled and haunted me. It took me a long time to learn what he meant.

When a disciple can divest himself of all ulterior motives, concealed even to himself, perhaps — personal objectives in seeking Truth — and he is fired with the urge to service (not the beautiful, grandiose bed of roses that the novice pictures of service) then he has the right to demand. Moreover, he

must learn to withstand having all manner of falsehood said against him, all kinds of persecution (and I think mental plane persecutions are as severe as any on the physical plane), all kinds of discrimination used against him, and have his real urge to service distorted and warped and misunderstood and thrown back into his face in subtle forms of accusation. That is the kind of service he must render. Persecution and misunderstanding take the heart out of one if he has any heart left.

The disciple must put himself into that inner condition where he is fired with the urge to service and he unconsciously sacrifices himself in every possible way physically — his home, his comforts, his children, his money, and all the energies that he can create or generate. He must reach the point where all is unconsciously given; that is, he doesn't stop to recognize the vast expenditure of his life energies, and he does it all with no particular purpose. He must learn that he will achieve nothing by it except odium and calumny, and he must not become embittered by the experience. He must keep his belief and his trust in humanity all the time, too. If the disciple can get himself into that frame of mind, he will find that he has the right to demand, and that the Master is utterly powerless and helpless to refuse when the demand is made. He is more helpless in the face of that demand than the disciple is, for the disciple has invoked a cosmic law under which he operates, and which is mandatory upon him.

That is what I learned — the terrific power of the disciple over the Master, and how helpless the Master is after the disciple gets into the right way to approach him. But if a Master detects the most secretly concealed personal ambition, object, aim, or something that a disciple is going to obtain, all the right to demand will be nullified. He will forfeit all of his rights and all of his standing — no matter how great his gifts. He could bring a million dollars and lay it at the feet of the Master, and it would mean nothing if there was a personal tinge to the gift.

Do not infer that I am tacitly assuming mastership, for you have heard me say again and again that I am not a master of anything. You know that a disciple, through sincerity and honesty of purpose, coupled with imagination, can reach up and function in the consciousness of the Masters. I am a disciple of the Masters.

The occult significance of blood is this: if you sign anything in the blood of your own veins for another, you give that one magnetic power over you; and if he is unscrupulous, he will use that method to enslave you — you will be magnetically enslaved to him on the astral plane. Why did my teacher sign his note to me in blood? To show me how utterly he abandoned himself

to me and gave me the right to demand of him — a very unusual tribute from the higher one to the lower!

When you are ready for the higher life, you will find a guide at hand to lead you on, no matter if you are isolated in a little cabin in the deepest mountains with no habitation near. But a Master cannot do a thing to make anyone come in, because there is no law in his relation to the disciple or aspirant, except his respect for the integrity of the soul. That is so binding that he cannot superimpose anything on anyone, even to bring him in. The Master must simply wait until the individual has developed the ability to put forth the request, the demand, the bidding. The Master awaits your bidding for a variety of reasons. It would be the easiest thing in the world if you could find someone to do the work for you, but that would destroy your free moral agency, the integrity of your soul, the building of faculty and strength. You must build faculty yourself — then it is yours and not another's. No amount of personal ambition is a demand, and it will be completely ignored. The fitting of yourself for service gives you the right to demand.

If you know how to arouse your will and make demand, nothing can be denied you in the objective world. When you don't want to demand anything on the objective plane, and the things of the objective world come to you, it creates terror in your heart rather than gladness in sense of possession, because all these things make too many demands on your time. They enslave you and swallow you up in darkness, when your spirit wants to soar in unlimited air and sunshine and open spaces. So when the disciple learns this and can make demand, it is the last thing in the world he will do.

As a disciple, you become free from all ties in time, and after once earning your freedom from attachment, you never go back again. You turn your demands toward the eternal verities — the treasures laid up after all temporal things have passed away. In demanding the eternal verities, you have to learn the utterly ambitionless state of consciousness.

There is no mystery so profound or deeply concealed from ordinary sight but will become an absolutely open book to you. That is the right of selfless demand; it is a tremendous power — the greatest the disciple has.

Do you know where the plan of the Hall of Learning is obtained? It is taken from the astral edifices that are built by a group that is studying together. Get the book *The Science of the Sacraments*, by C. W. Leadbeater, from the Theosophical Society. Make a study of those edifices built from the substance of the astral plane, which worshippers experience as feelings of exultation, devotion, and ecstasy. Don't forget that what we experience as the energy or force of the lower plane is the substance of a higher plane upon

which things are manufactured or built. If you can get this, you will understand the whole key to the inner relationship of planes. Now take an inventory of your own qualities of consciousness, and you will know just what kind of a building or edifice you have — even the individual touch on the piano is certain substance.

The spires, frescoes, and minarets on cathedrals have their origin in the consciousness of man, and we have their replicas in stone and mortar on the physical plane. Through love and devotion and service you build these chapels of the Hall of Learning and you add rooms to them by unselfish thought and by constructive service. When your building is completed, you will be led to it, and it will be just as tangible as anything in the objective world.

Do you know how it feels to get home after traveling around and eating in hotels and restaurants? Well, that doesn't compare with the satisfaction of getting into that place that you have built, worked so hard for, and finally won the right to enter in the Hall of Learning.

CHAPTER XI

THE INITIATIONS

The Chapel of Action is open to all comers who can enter; it is a question of strength to obtain entrance here rather than of devotion or spiritual intelligence. For here the work in the world to be done by disciples is considered and arranged by the Masters. Those who enter find their own place, which none else can fill, at the great table, and here they sit and await that which shall be given to them. Most often it is the order to undertake an apparently hopeless task which they receive. There are two doors in this chapel, opposite each other; during the Easter season they stand wide open. One admits to the Hall, and through it the great altar can be seen, white with the tall lilies which the seer-artists of the past have shown as growing out of the grave itself. The other door opens on to a stretch of beach and that mystic water which separates the spirit of man, while still embodied, from the life beyond. Across this water come those who, having left earth life for a long period, yet have duties to perform and to complete upon earth. They come and sit at this table with the entities which are the spiritual intelligences of men upon earth. Only here, on this high plane, can man while embodied hope to meet the friend who has crossed the mystic waters — (those waters which are beyond the firmament which God called Heaven) — “spirit to spirit, ghost to ghost.” “He cannot return to me, but I can go to him” is the plain statement of the truth. Man can so raise his spiritual intelligence that it may meet the pure disembodied spirit of a lost friend, on the highest plane attainable to man. But this can be done only by the disciple who has learned how to go forth into the world of spirit; not even he can bring back the spirit of one he has loved to earth between the incarnations. Those who grieve for loved ones taken by death, and whose eyes are blinded by tears, cannot enter far into the Hall of Learning, though profound devotion and worship may enable them to enter its doors.

In the Chapel of Light — so called because it is always illumined by the jewels on the walls, or by the greater glory of the words — there is a great Volume with clasps that can be locked. most often this book is closed and locked. On Easter Eve it stands open on a high reading-desk, which holds that and nothing else. It contains the pledges of disciples to undertake various tasks in the world; here come those who desire to work for humanity, and write their names in the book beneath the pledge taken by them. When this is done, they are led on to the Chapel of Action where places await them at the great table, which sometimes wears the aspect of a table of work, and sometimes of a table of sacrament, with a cup of bitterness for each to

drink. But in that cup is contained also the mystic transference of energy, which is the basis of the rite of the Holy Communion. . . .

On Easter Day the table in this chapel is full; all are called to come to it who are capable of doing so. The Christ Himself sits at the table, calling upon the Christos in the spiritual nature of the disciples; and each who is present drinks the wine of life. . . .

Between the altar and the door into the Chapel of Action . . . is a small dark door which is seldom opened. . . . Another door from this place opens into the Chapel of Action, and on Easter Day this stands wide open, and the spiritual beings who are there pass in and out; sometimes one raises his cup to his lips, drains it to the dregs, and then rises and goes quickly through this open door right into a clear, intense flame which burns here always. . . This is not fire of the kind that keeps men alive; it has no material element in it; it is the bitter fire of purification, the fierce flames that rise from the crucible of life are those which consume the alloy in the trembling, quivering shapes that willingly endure the agony of standing within it. They experience pure spiritual suffering, for which there is no alleviation, which ceases not till its task is done. Therefore the disciples seek the suffering, and do not attempt to evade it, knowing that until all which is capable of being destroyed is utterly burned and consumed there is no true birthday. . . .

No step in the great Path can be taken hastily without regret, and too often haste necessitates the retracing of the step. "Grow as the flower grows, eager, yet absolutely obedient to the laws which govern it, so that its unfoldment is gradual yet perfect. . . .

Since we have been reading this little book *When the Sun Moves Northward* and our attention has been directed to the life out of the body on the astral plane, a great deal of memory has been stirred in me. It has awakened a lot of things that I had forgotten, and I came to the realization the other day of the vast amount of work that I used to do on the astral plane (and that I do none of now). It also brought me to the recognition that we have a very active life on that side now, for many of you are consciously functioning on the astral in a great deal of activities described in this book.

With the reading of Chapter XI we take up that phase of astral life in which those who work on the physical plane in the Greater Cause participate. Most of you are more or less conversant with what is called Initiation. Initiation deals entirely with the Ego, which is the radiantly active and vibrating force or power within you spoken of as the Soul. Initiation does not deal with the personality at all in any of its phases. So long as the consciousness is wholly occupied with physical activity, with emotional

concerns, and with mental interests, the Ego is unawakened. The power with which the personality functions in physical activity, in emotional concerns and affairs, and in mental interests is derived from the Ego most certainly, but the Ego is not conscious of itself as anything more than the physical activities, of the emotional and mental functions until it awakens. That is, it becomes conscious of itself in other ways than its physical activities, emotional conditions and mental interests, and then it has conscious spiritual interests.

The spiritual interest commonly known as religion pertains only to the emotions, and has no relation to the Egoic awakening whatever. There are many degrees and gradations of emotional activities called religion. The cruder forms, which are but substituted forms of eroticism, express themselves in fanaticism — shouting, rhythmic singing, etc. But there are higher forms of religion exemplified in beautiful faith and trust, in devotional services and ceremonial or ritualistic observances that awaken the higher astral responses. These are true and genuine and not substituted forms of expression, and yet they are emotional and pertain to the astral plane.

Do not confuse spiritual activities with religious expressions. Spiritual activities consist of an interest in and pursuit of the conscious continuity of life and the conscious participation of the inner activities beyond and above the mental plane. To develop the Causal consciousness is to learn to consciously control and direct the emotions sustained in physical activity resulting as effects — this is a spiritual interest.

When the Ego becomes conscious of itself beyond the limits of the mind, the emotions, and the physical body, we call it the First Initiation. It is symbolized in the Christian scriptures and the birth of the Christ in a manger, discovered first by the shepherds (love nature) who were tending their flocks (the conjuries of entities of which the vehicles are composed). The love nature always keeps the flocks together. The Ego is born in the animal (creative) nature, which is symbolized by the stable or manger where the animals come to get their food. This is the birth — the First Initiation.

When you take the First Initiation, you go through a ceremony on the astral plane in one of these chapels of the Hall of Learning, as described in this book, *When the Sun Moves Northward*. Ceremonies actually take place when the First Initiation occurs. The disciple has no conscious objective memory of it at the time, but his memory of it will come to him later.

The first work that is done by the Ego when its powers are awakened is to strengthen itself — to “increase in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.” To do this, all other interests must be abandoned, and that is the way that an individual knows when he has gone through the First

Initiation. His sole interest now is to learn more of the Truth and to teach it to others. He "must be about his Father's business."

No matter if he is in business and if he has all kinds of relative physical obligations; no matter what vocation or avocation he has pursued, he loses interest in it and he can't follow it as before. That is the effect or result of the First Initiation, and sometimes it becomes very distressing to the initiate, because he doesn't know what has taken place within himself. He is confronted with his old obligations, affiliations, and habits of mind, and he tries to continue with his work, his duties, and his former life, but it cannot be done. What was once a successful business becomes a failure, perhaps. His former friends have no more use for him, because they sense his changed vibration, and he flounders about until he finds other individuals like himself, among whom he feels at home, and he is irresistibly drawn to them. He is generally attracted by someone who has gone through the same experience, who understands his predicament, and who is able to interpret to him and show him what a truly wonderful thing has happened to him.

This transition takes place within your consciousness when you awaken, and it changes everything in the outer world and in the life you have lived before. It is certainly a glorious experience to meet someone who knows all about it and can give you an understanding of yourself, for then you gain strength to surmount and overcome your emotions.

We do not want to kill out our emotions, for we cultivate our faith, our higher devotions, and our beautiful friendships long after we have experienced several initiations. But we are no longer controlled by our astral natures and the lower forms of emotions — the attachment to passions and persons and things and places and objects and desires for sensation. By "sensation" in this connection, I mean the "bright lights of the city" — society, the shows, the opera, travel, etc. That is passion and desire. All desire for these forms of enjoyment drop out of your consciousness; not that you cannot enjoy them, but you are no longer under their influence. Before the First Initiation of the awakening, these things may have constituted your whole life; you lived with the world of men, and all your mental activity was involved in them, probably.

As your spiritual strength increases, you are confronted by a series of experiences due to your attachment to home, friends, loved ones, on the one hand, and to your longings and newly awakened urgings to the things of Truth on the other. But you gradually learn to control and surmount your emotional nature through the development of your spiritual will.

When emotional things no longer can dominate or control you, you have undergone your Second Initiation. Do not confuse the domination of the emotions with the functioning in them. When you are able to control a thing, you aren't afraid to function in it at will, for you can lay it down and walk away whenever you wish and not be affected by it at all.

I once know a man who keenly enjoyed smoking his pipe and his cigars, but when he decided to quit the tobacco habit he had no craving for it. That was because he had gone through the Second Initiation. There is a difference between doing a thing and being controlled by it, and doing a thing and not being affected by it at all. A vast transition takes place in the Second Initiation, for then you have conquered the astral world and all its varied emotions. This is the baptism by water as recorded in the Bible. The astral world is always symbolized by water, because of the restlessness of the emotions and the storm-swept condition of the astral plane. After the Second Initiation, the Ego has become strong enough to control the astral life and not be controlled by it.

When you have made that point and passed through the series of tests which prove to you that you have made it, there is a ceremony that takes place on the astral plane in the company of many disciples who have experienced it and who are then going through it. These meetings on the astral plane are just as actual and definite as our class gatherings, and if we used some ritualistic ceremony, it would be no more real and vivid than these that take place in the astral world.

When you undergo the Second Initiation, you may remember it, but not as a rule, just as when you go through your First Initiation you do not bring back the memory of it; however, you grow constantly stronger in your Egoic functions during this period.

There is a longer interval between the Second and Third Initiations than between the First and Second Initiations, because in this interval the disciple has to expiate most of the karma of his past lives, and instead of living in a state of bliss and ecstasy and joy and peace, his outer life between the Second and Third Initiations is one of turmoil. It is a peculiar anomaly, because within himself he is really happy and joyous, but in his outer life he has "the devil to pay." Everything seems to go wrong when he strives to do everything right. He has the kindest and most loving intentions toward everyone, but he is misunderstood and is falsely accused and is blamed for everything, and he may even be thrown into jail for something of which he is entirely innocent.

Some souls go through this period rapidly; others take it slowly. If the disciple is fired with ambition and is full of force and creative power, and he is “raring to go,” he will have a hard time; but if he is peaceful and placid by nature, he may take several incarnations to pass through this interval, and he will not be so subject to financial losses, loss of friends, loss of good name, etc. But here is the point: It has always been said (and so little understood) that “whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.” That means they are “favored” ones, and they have to go through the expiation of karma and finish the purificatory period quickly because they are needed in the service. That is why the storms of adversity beat so hard upon some — they are favored ones.

You finally get through with all this, but while the process is going on, you often think it is a lane that never will turn, and you almost faint in despair. But in time the astral storms rage less fiercely around you, and you will approach your Third Initiation, maintaining your strength by keeping your trust, your faith, your confidence. This is why these qualities are so important. You must be like Job and say: “Even though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him;” and that carries you through the dark waters. Just think of the power you develop while holding your trust and faith and confidence in something you know very little about!

When you go through the Third Initiation, you are always conscious of it. There is one outstanding ceremony that will take place on the astral plane during this Third Initiation, and that is the complete and utter surrender of your personality. You will have to go through the conscious and vividly realistic test of laying down your life. On the astral plane they will put you into a coffin and lower you into a grave, literally; your personality is actually buried in the process, and you will think that oblivion has come, and that you will never be resurrected. When they take you up out of this grave, the personality remains buried, but the Ego has arisen!

The Ego is now fully conscious of itself as Ego, and the disciple never lives the personal life again. He is now more misunderstood than ever, because he cannot live in personal things any more. He enjoys life and gets more out of it than ever before. He is in the world still, but not of it — that is the difference. The third-degree initiate is as harmless as a dove, but he is dangerous to associate with, for the reason that if one who is still in the personal life associates with him, he assumes things in a personal sense, and the initiate will presently walk away and not even know that anybody has placed any dependence on him. His capacity to love is very great and strong, but he will leave the personal love of others behind and not realize they are being hurt by him. He loves others in an eternal way — he loves the souls of others and wants them to awaken and be born free from illusion, which he sees, but which does not cling to him.

If you can enter the initiate's world and love him there, it is the most wonderful thing in the world, but if you love him in any other way, you will suffer terribly until you can rise out of the personal phase of love into the union or mating of Spirit on the higher planes.

It is characteristic of the Third Initiation that human memory and reason and logic no longer govern. After the Second Initiation, the astral forms of feeling and emotion no longer govern or control, and the reason and logic and judgment become the controlling force on the mental plane. After the Third Initiation one rises above that mental realm, just as he has risen above the second realm in the Second Initiation. He is immune from the conditions of the astral and mental worlds now and is no longer affected by them.

Often when his inner dharma appears most unreasonable, the individual will go right on and fulfill it because he will not allow reason to influence him. When he has received the inner direction he obeys it and allows nothing to dissuade him. From following this course comes the ability of the Ego to function in the forces beyond the mind. This doesn't happen precipitously, but gradually the consciousness begins to lay hold of vibration.

Before the Third Initiation you feel vibrations all through your being — in your centers and all around you — and you feel vibrations coming to you from others whom you meet on the physical and astral planes; but you can't control these vibrations. After the Third Initiation, however, you will notice a gradual control or ability to direct them. Instead of simply being vibrated by everything, you determine by what you will be vibrated; it is then analogous to "being in the world, but not of it." Gradually you learn to direct vibrations in different kinds of work until you begin to function in Force of Being, and your Egoic powers are so developed that you arrive at what is known as the Fourth Initiation.

It is very difficult to describe the Fourth Initiation. It is the complete orientation of consciousness on the Causal level, and you use the Causal vehicle with which to function on all planes, except the physical. The Fourth Initiation marks the beginning of the destruction of the astral and mental bodies; everything in the astral and mental bodies is burned up, with the exception of those elements of a supra-mental, impersonal, universal, nature. These are taken up out of the astral and mental bodies into the Causal level, and are used there to build up the structure of the Causal body.

There is one outstanding point in the ceremony of the Fourth Initiation. Up to this time you have been serving as an apprentice under the leadership of some higher one — generally under a fourth degree initiate or world

teacher or avatar. In your work you have had a very active life on the astral plane, and you have been doing a great deal of teaching there, participating in the ceremonies of the astral world, and perhaps doing a very large amount of work in the physical world, in addition to your astral plane work. But now you will be given the right to elect one of seven forms of service. There is nothing obligatory upon you when this choice is laid before you. You are allowed to see these seven different forms of service in perspective — you are given a bird's eye view of them.

You can pass into the Causal levels and do archetypal work — study the patterns of things which are being prepared for humanity on the lower planes. It may be the archetype of something that will be given on the mental plane — a new system of thought like the Einstein theory of relativity — or it may be the plan of something to be given humanity on the physical plane, such as the Wright Brothers' airplane. Where did Marconi get the idea of wireless telegraphy? These ideas are impressed upon the consciousness of mortals by immortals working on archetypal levels, and they are inspired to new "inventions" and "discoveries."

You may be given the choice of working on the mental plane and have access to libraries where research work can be carried on in the most undreamed-of way, and then some scientist like Pasteur can be inspired to create the work on the physical plane. An absolute cure for cancer will be worked out on the inner planes long before anybody connects with it on the physical plane and gives it to humanity. When man ceases to commercialize these new ideas that are given to the race, humanity will be flooded with discoveries and inventions for self-advancement in every line of endeavor that makes for comfort, culture, improvement, and progress. Think of having the opportunity to go out on the mental plane and do research work like that for humanity! It is so vast and illimitable that it becomes incomprehensible to us.

Think of cooperating with the devas on the astral plane and helping them perfect color combinations and musical symphonies, so that they can be given to some wonderful channel like a Beethoven to record. Think of working with the nature spirits and taking the substance of that realm and molding it into the marvelous creations which will come out in nature! And that doesn't even touch the possibilities of working on the astral plane. I know souls who are working with children on the astral plane, teaching and training them in the freedom and beauties of life and nature, and the esoteric wonders of the inner world.

At the Fourth Initiation you are given a choice, and you can do any one of many things. You are given an opportunity to generate force for those who

do creative work, for there are great workers who have to draw on others for force with which to work here — those who have the powers of consciousness to transform conditions, to lift the consciousness of many, to work with powers. All the power used in creative work has to be generated, and there are individuals who do nothing but that. It is analogous to storing up power in a reservoir for the use of workers on the physical and astral planes.

You are also given opportunity to work on the physical plane with embodied souls, and if you choose this work you will be in continuous incarnation and won't have any opportunity for rest between incarnations. Of all the work for humanity, that on the physical plane is the hardest. It takes more combative energy and a more relentless type of spirit to work on the physical plane than on any other plane. As soon as you make a choice, all other lines of work and all other avenues are shut off, so that you cannot function in them any longer. It is like standing at the entrance to seven avenues — as soon as you select one, curtains begin to drop at once before the other six.

This choice of service characterizes the Fourth Initiation.

Kill out all sense of separateness.

Note: Do not fancy you can stand aside from the bad man or the foolish man. They are yourself, though in a lesser degree than your friend or your master. But if you allow the idea of separateness from any evil thing or person to grow up within you, by so doing you create Karma, which will bind you to that thing or person till your soul recognizes that it cannot be isolated. Remember that the sin and shame of the world are your sin and shame; for you are a part of it, your Karma is inextricably interwoven with the great Karma. And before you can attain knowledge, you must have passed through all places, foul and clean alike. Therefore, remember that the soiled garment you shrink from touching may have been yours yesterday, may be yours tomorrow. And if you turn with horror from it when it is flung upon your shoulders, it will cling the more closely to you. The self-righteous man makes for himself a bed of mire. Abstain because it is right to abstain, not that yourself shall be kept clean.

— Mabel Collins
Light on the Path

CHAPTER XII

TRANSMUTATION

The Purificatory Period of the Path of Discipleship

That miracle which the disciple has to accomplish consists of what must be regarded as two acts, transformation and transmutation. The first may be defined as the changing of the heart of the man. While he is transforming himself he is the Arjuna of the Bhagavad Gita. The climax of this effort is reached on an Easter Day when he consciously enters the Chapel of Fire and remains willingly within the flame.

This is experienced in the outer life of the disciple as a release of all his pent-up and repressed desires, hungers, and other forces. Sometimes, when one comes into the subtle and invisible force of a group work which is Egoically animated, the very first thing that he experiences is a release of all his repressions, and he thinks that he has made a terrible mistake and has come under an evil influence. When anything is deeply repressed in one's consciousness he is wholly unconscious of it, because it has been driven into the center of the astral or desire body. When one is conscious of a desire, when it is active in him, it is on the periphery of the astral body. It is far more wholesome to have a tendency on the periphery of the astral body — no matter how intense the condition may be — than to have it so deeply repressed that it cannot be felt at all. Countless people who know nothing of the science of regeneration — of transformation and transmutation — say, "I have never had such feelings. I am wholly unconscious of them. I have never experienced these things that I hear people speak of." But when they come into a movement such as the School of the Sacred Science — because this movement is animated by an Egoic power — they become aware of all kinds of feelings and sensations that they have never experienced before, and their first tendency is to condemn the teacher and the teaching, and to say, "This teaching is making me conscious of things I never felt before."

Be patient, wait! The Force has entered your consciousness, and it is driving the secretly concealed conditions out on the periphery of your consciousness where you can feel them. Remember that the growth which is not planted by the Father, which is not true to the Egoic life, cannot be utilized by the Ego. "There is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed," says the Spirit of man. Everything that is hidden is brought out to the Light — that is, driven out onto the periphery of consciousness where it becomes active, and the consciousness experiences it. Why must it be driven out? For the purpose of expurgation, and one must stand willingly within the flame — not

rebelliously, not making “goats” of teachers and the teaching, because of the activation of things that one hasn't been conscious of for a long time.

I often foresee the consequences of some individual's coming too close to the Creative Force of the Power which animates the movement. I warn him and try to deter him because I can see what he is blissfully ignorant of and wholly unconscious of — that there will be a tremendous awakening in him, and a stirring-up of all of his sleeping and latent forces and repressions. Repressed tendencies are the worst of all to deal with, because when a repression awakens and comes out of its hiding place and its substituted forms of expression, it has redoubled strength. It is like the steam in a boiler that has been backed up and is under great pressure. It has gained force which is going to be converted into energy if it is ever released. I wish there were some way in which those whose natures have been repressed and stultified could come into the purificatory period of the Path and pass through it into Discipleship without having to release repressed force, but I know of no way whereby it can be done without “standing willingly within the flame” until the fires have burned themselves out. It is only through trial, anguish, fire, and all kinds of suffering that one comes at last into liberation and *peace*.

Never shall I forget a blessed old German woman, who was sixty-seven years old at the time she came under my teaching and training. I said to her one day, “You had better wait until another incarnation. There is so much in you that has to be released before you can make any more progress, and if you meditate and associate with this work that I am in, all of your repressions will wake up and you will suffer terribly. It will go hard with you at your age.” She said, “I don't care what wakes up!” She came to me several weeks later and said, “Something is taking place within me, all that you predicted and ten times as much has happened.” I said, “Do you want to stop it?” “No,” she answered, “I wouldn't stop it for anything; I want to go through it. It will save me a lot of misery in another incarnation!” When I next saw her, she was quite transformed — she had stood willingly in the flame and passed through! I have seen many students go through this experience — but not always so wholesomely as did this sturdy soul.

I often compare the purificatory period of the aspirant to Discipleship to the process of making jelly. You know how a most uninviting-looking scum boils to the surface of the fruit juice and has to be skimmed off repeatedly before the juice becomes clear. Similarly we have accumulated many desires and hungers down the incarnations — all normal and natural to the lesser states of development, but no longer of service in the higher state upon which we are about to enter — and they have to be boiled out and

gotten rid of just as the impurities must be removed to produce clear, beautiful jelly.

The purificatory period brings out and accentuates many things in physical and emotional life, in the form of sexual passion, skin disorders, nausea, etc., in the physical; in pride, egotism, impatience, irritation, vexation, discouragement, disgust, anger, envy, jealousy, intolerance, hatred, revenge, etc., in the emotional life. The menagerie that has been held in leash for so long a time breaks out and makes itself seen and heard and felt when the searchlight of the Spirit is turned into the dark places of human consciousness.

Hitherto he has been fighting upon the battlefield of his nature, conquering evil desires and destroying evil passions. . . .

This doesn't mean that one is to actually fight these forces of personal desire, but it means that one has been fighting his way out of them, because they are the enemies that have been holding him down and out of his Egoic birthright. Don't become confused with this — conquering and destroying evil desires and passions is not superimposing the mental strength or the personal human will of the mental body upon the desires of the astral body. The superimposition of the mental, human will of the mental body upon the desires of the astral body will only crush them and repress them again — that is not conquering them. Indiscriminate license does not conquer them either. They must be released; the inner and higher spiritual force must be built up, and the mind must be reoriented to the spiritual entities, powers, beings, forces, and precepts, and held there. The force of the spiritual nature must be intensified; you must continue to stand willingly in the flame until it ceases. When there is no longer any fuel, there will be no more fire — nothing to burn up, in other words. The flame will continue as long as there is anything personal and petty left in your nature to be burned. When the fires of regeneration have burned out, you will begin to know what freedom means; for then you will breathe the free air, and you won't run from anything or avoid anything. The prince of this world will come and will find nothing in you. You can no longer be vibrated by anything. That is the freedom for which you are seeking, and when you find it, your heart will sing the joy-song of Being!

This attitude of fighting, or killing out ambition, desire of life, desire of comfort, the sense of separateness, the desire for sensation, the hunger for growth, is that which effects the transformation of man's own heart. But it has to be followed by the second part of the miracle, transmutation, the divine alchemy. . . .

To “kill out” is not to repress any emotion, or to use the human will or the mental body to dominate the desires of the astral body. To repress any emotion or desire is merely to put off the evil day when it will come out to the light. We fight with spiritual weapons, we increase our spiritual power, and keep right on rooting out all personal tendencies.

Work as those work who are ambitious. Respect life as those do who desire it. Be happy as those are who live for happiness. Not only has the heart of man to be transformed so that he kills out ambition, and the thirst for life and comfort, but he must utilize the forces in his nature which cause these passions, and transmute them so that he can use them for the great end and object of being, for the service of the Supreme. It is for this that he endures the burning in the crucible of life. . . . The disciple must enter with resolution upon the task of personal development during the period of full foliage and the flowering of Nature. The harvest will soon come, that yearly reckoning; the tree will be known by its fruit. It is now that the disciple must fully test his own nature, and cling to the highest standard of conduct that he can perceive, hoping to reach a yet higher standard when the birth month (December) is again reached in the yearly drama. . . . The Western world is more deeply plunged in the slough of materialism; ambition has been necessary to draw it forth from the abyss. When ambition is destroyed, the objects of ambition must be destroyed with it; the love of personal life and personal comfort are the motives of the ambitious man. . . .

Ambition is a subtle weed in the garden of the personality that must be killed out. What is ambition? It is the desire to excel others, to “show off” before others, to get ahead of others. The disciple must become absolutely ambitionless. His dharma must take the place of his ambition. He must work hard to fulfill his dharma, but he cannot work for the purpose of realizing any ambition. His motive for whatever he does must be his inner urge or the dharma of his Being. He no longer works for results or emoluments or rewards. Ambition belongs to exclusiveness and isolation from the spiritual side of individual being, and to a separateness from the unity of all life, the feeling of the oneness of life. He must cultivate that strength of the spirit which swings into the current of life — not aside from it.

He must kill out the desire for sensation — the longing to do things and have things for the “kick” that can be gotten out of them. There can be no peace or rest or tranquility or equanimity of being until all desire for sensation is gone.

But there is something that is even harder to kill out — the hunger for growth, which is personal stature. It is the personality that wants to “shine” in one’s own estimation, for instance. Sri Ramakrishna Parahansan says that

the greatest evil which can befall a disciple of Truth is to become entrapped by spiritual egotism. It is most difficult for one to escape from spiritual egotism and find his basic point. Spiritual egotism is the most difficult thing to deal with in another. The more ignorant the soul, the greater is his tendency to spiritual egotism. Often a megalomania or extreme personal sense of importance is developed in such a one which he mistakes for Egoic power and development. He becomes so blinded by it that he cannot perceive his own egotism. And all this has to be surmounted and boiled out before the transformation of the heart can take place.

Friedrich Nietzsche expresses this in a most unique way in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. He says that there are three metamorphoses of the Spirit. It is first a camel, then a lion, and at last it becomes a little child. This personal ambition or hunger for growth and ambition for leadership is found even in Truth circles. Often one wants to take everybody's burden, and he is like the camel. But in time the camel's back breaks, and he goes down under the foolish attempt to trying to do everybody's work instead of teaching others how to get under their burdens themselves. In time he begins to roar for his freedom, and he becomes like the lion. The lion stage is necessary in one's ongoing; he has to roar for what he needs and wants. He will get his freedom from every bondage and every burden if he demands it, and then he will become like a little child who is natural and spontaneous in everything he does.

A child lives in spontaneity from day to day. He never wonders if there will be bread tomorrow, and the true spirit that has become childlike never questions about the manna for next week or next month or next year. His method is incomprehensible to prudent ones who save up for a "rainy day." If you keep saving up for a rainy day, you will surely have one. A little child doesn't question the law of supply, but is prodigal with everything, just as nature is prodigal with her supplies. The little child is utterly without guile, and the Truth seeker must become in all things like a child, who is candid and trusting and honest. "Except ye become as little children ye cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven." Study children — they are our greatest teachers. It is the sophisticated minds of the parents and elders that contaminate the minds of children and destroy their naturalness and spontaneity. We should cultivate the naiveté of the child, but instead we punish him and teach him deceit, and make a hypocrite of him.

It takes courage to become childlike again. We adults are so full of fear; we think we shall lose all our friends if we change our habits and customs and try to be ourselves, but anyone we can lose that way is a good riddance! For then we shall be able to live alone with our transformed and regenerated selves, and with those who can share in our beautiful creed.

This is the first part of the divine alchemy, the transmutation of his lower self into the higher being which shall be worthy of immortality, upon which the disciple enters so soon as his Spiritual Intelligence emerges from the Tomb.

Transmutation is the divine alchemy of transforming base substance into a higher and finer one. The method of doing this is given in our telestic work. A force or power that would be passion and desire is transformed into a divine healing current and flows forth for the healing of the nations. A creative impulse of a destructive nature can be lifted and transformed into an energy for grasping the hidden and abstract ideas of eternal life. Ambition is transmuted into perceptive power and force.

Therefore he respects his own life as though he desired it; therefore he respects the life of all other beings equally. The mere possession of this gift, which can only be obtained from the Supreme, is sufficient to show that the creature possessing it has the great opportunity of passing on the upward way. . . . The disciple, in entering upon this transmutation, must recognize his duty towards the outer world, of which he is an inalienable part, at every step. . . . He who eats the meat is the one for whom the butchery is committed, and is therefore the chief culprit and breaker of the divine law. . . . Those who are attempting the path of Yoga in the midst of modern civilization undertake a very severe task. This very first step is one which places them altogether apart from ordinary men. . . . In the midst of cities full of butchery, of countrysides made hideous by it, of nations possessed by the passion of sport and devoted to the cult of war, he has to "respect life." And that force within him which enabled him to be born, which was desire of life, has, with his change of heart, to be destroyed in its first shape, seized and transmuted into the divine 'respect for life.' His task is no easy one, and will pursue him, partially fulfilled, from year to year, from life to life. . . .

Respect life as those do who desire it — who desire it for self-preservation, the so-called first law of nature. That desire has to be transmuted into the respect for life because life is divine, it is God. To me, many things are far worse than death. Failure in my mission would be terrible to me — infinitely worse than a thousand deaths. Death would be nothing compared to losing one's highest ideals, one's spiritual realization, one's hope and faith, one's confidence. I would rather pass out of this body than loose my faith, trust, loyalty, devotion, consecration, my high ideals; and yet we must respect life as those who desire it, and we must fulfill its divine purpose.

Now, with the green leaves of nature, the bursting forth of the earth's life, comes the time when the disciple must see to it that the green leaves of his own higher nature unfold truly. . . . He cannot be separated from that in which he exists, he must purify the air he breathes and all with which he comes into contact, as he himself is purified. Thus is the world to be redeemed. In the course of this supreme effort the risen spirit lifts all that surrounds it, by spiritual power, so that the very ground on which the man treads has new life within it where his footsteps pass. . . . To the man who is becoming a disciple, and compelling his own nature to obey dictates from above, life is like a long fever, full of struggle, illuminated by visions, sometimes darkened by delirium. . . . The month of May is recognized as the time for the risen spirit to manifest its power and character. . . . The sanctity of the springtide is truly traced to a solar origin, and the vivifying power of the life now poured upon the earth is recognized and used to the uttermost in spiritual experience. . . . Ecstasy is the state to be attained by the risen spirit, one of the early states of consciousness open to the adepts. Beyond it lie mystic conditions which cannot be described in printed words.

Those who live for happiness alone haven't learned the rudiments of real happiness, because they think that the stimulation of the senses is happiness. But the only real happiness comes from the joy-song of the soul that fills one with radiant life and love and peace — that breaks out in bliss and ecstasy, the ananda of the Spirit. All of the so-called happiness of the personality is but dross and counterfeit, compared with that ecstasy or bliss of the higher states of consciousness. The ordinary life of sensation is a literal groping in the dark; it is like shooting with bow and arrow at a target in the dark.

As each initiation is passed, a curtain is drawn aside for the spiritual intelligence of the disciple to hold back, or to let fall at his own will. Now, in the time of the full spring tide, the consummation of the resurrection, the spirit holds these curtains in his hands, and looks back down the vista to his first step on the path. He can enter now into the higher mystic consciousness if he has no step to retrace, no fault to amend, no debt to pay.

Man must utilize the forces in his nature and transmute them for the great end and object of being. He must concentrate on a study of the seven centers and the creative forces which motivate and activate these centers. He must lift these forces from the lower centers to the higher ones until they are all sublimated.

How to do these things is the question. Statements regarding regeneration and sublimation are scattered through all kinds of psychological

and metaphysical works. Teachers admonish and adjure students to transmute passions and desires to higher forms of expression. Students are told to take this great force that causes passion and turn it into the channel which makes for constructive, creative work on higher planes, but they are not taught how to do it.

I have devoted the major portion of my ministry in Truth to teaching my students the method of regeneration, step by step. I have gone into detail and made a science of the telestic work.

Beyond that, no spiritual teacher can go, however. The student must have the creative energy and interest in his own ongoing, and he must have the ability to work out for himself the ways and means. If the student doesn't want the Truth, no teacher can put the desire for it into him. I often liken it to a chef who prepares a fine banquet and invites everyone to sit up and eat, but they say, "Oh, we are not hungry, and we don't care to eat." We Truth teachers often go out of our way, trying to make our students hungry, and we even try sometimes to hypodermic spiritual food into them, if they don't want to take it the natural way. But we make a grave mistake every time we do that. Those who are thirsty will of their own accord come to the river to drink!

In Tibet the anniversary of Buddha's Nirvana is kept on the first of June. This closes the six sacred months. The task of the risen spirit is now to press steadily onwards and upwards to a higher birth in the coming birth month (December). The inconceivable increase of individual consciousness to be attained by becoming united with the Logos may be dimly perceived on reflecting that this union opens the way into the consciousness of the other Logoi.

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Look for the flower to bloom in the silence that follows the storm; not till then.

It will grow, it will shoot up, it will make branches and leaves and form buds, while the storm continues, while the battle lasts. But not until the whole personality of the man is dissolved and melted — not until it is held by the divine fragment which has created it, as a mere subject for grave experiment and experience — not until the whole nature has yielded, and become subject unto its Higher Self, can the bloom open. Then will come a calm such as comes in a tropical country after a heavy rain, when Nature works so swiftly that one may see her action. Such calm will come to the harassed spirit. And in the deep silence the mysterious event will occur which will prove that the way has been found. Call it by what name you will, it is a voice that speaks, . . . it is a messenger that comes, a messenger without form or substance, or it is the flower of the soul that has opened. It cannot be described by any metaphor. But it can be felt after, looked for, and

desired, even amid the raging of the storm. The silence may last a moment of time, or it may last a thousand years. But it will end. Yet you will carry its strength with you. Again and again the battle must be fought and won. It is only for an interval that Nature can be still.

— Mabel Collins
Light on the Path