

8. Christ and the Coming New-Age

As we come to an end of our consideration of the world today and its dominating rays, working through the nations and conditioning the people, there is a final point which I would like to make; it lies in the realm of religion and concerns the significance of Christmas. From the very night of time, as well you know, the period wherein the sun moves northward again has been regarded as a festival season; for thousands of years it has been associated with the coming of the Sun-God to save the world, to bring light and fruitfulness to the Earth and through the work of the Son of God to bring hope to humanity. The Christmas season is regarded by those who do not know any better as uniquely the Festival of the Christ, and this the Christian churches have emphasized and to this all churchmen testify. This is both true and false. The Founder of the Christian Church - God in the flesh - availed Himself of this period and came to us in the dark of the year and initiated a new era in which *light* was to be the distinguishing note. This has been true from several angles, even from the purely physical, for today we have a lighted world; everywhere lights are to be seen and the pitch dark nights of olden times are fast disappearing. Light has also descended on the earth in the form of the "light of knowledge." Today, education whose objective is to lead all men on to a "lighted way," is the keynote of our civilization and is a major preoccupation in all countries. The removal of illiteracy, the development of a true culture and the ascertaining of truth in all fields of thought and of research are of paramount importance in all lands.

Thus, when Christ proclaimed (as He assuredly did), along with all world Saviors and Sun-Gods, that He was [148] the Light of the worlds, He inaugurated a marvelous period in which humanity has been widely and universally enlightened. This period dates from Christmas Day, two thousand years ago, in Palestine. That was the greatest of all Christmas Days and its emanating influence was more potent than was any previous arrival of a Bearer of Light, because humanity was more ready for the light. Christ came in the sign of Pisces, the Fishes - the sign of the divine Intermediary in the highest sense, or of the medium in the lower; it is the sign of many of the world Saviors and of those Revealers of divinity Who establish world relationships. I would have you note that phrase. The major impulse driving the Christ towards special work was the desire to establish right human relations; it is also the desire - realized or unrealized - of humanity, and we know that some day the Desire of all nations will come, that right human relations will be found everywhere and that goodwill will implement that fulfilment, leading to peace in all lands and among all peoples.

Down through the ages, Christmas Day has been recognized and kept as a season of new beginnings, of better human contacts and of happier relations among families and communities. Yet just as the churches have descended into a profoundly materialistic presentation of Christianity, so the simple Christmas Day which would have pleased the heart of Christ has degenerated into an orgy of spending, of acquiring good things, and is regarded as a period which is "good for trade." We need, therefore, to remember that when any phase of life-inspired religion is interpreted entirely materially, when any civilization and culture loses its sense of spiritual values and responds mainly to the material values, then it has served its usefulness and must [149] pass away, and this in the interests of life itself and progress.

The message of the birth of Christ rings ever new but is not today understood. The emphasis during the Aquarian Age, the age into which we are fast entering, will shift away from Bethlehem to Jerusalem, and from the infant Savior to the Risen Christ. Pisces has seen, during two thousand years, the spreading light; Aquarius will see the Rising Light, and of both of these the Christ is the eternal symbol.

The ancient story of the Birth will become universalized and be seen as the story of every disciple and initiate who takes the first initiation and in his time and place becomes a server and a light-bearer. In the Aquarian Age two momentous developments will take place:

1. The Birth Initiation will condition human thinking and aspiration everywhere.
2. The religion of the Risen Christ, and not of the newly born Christ or of the crucified Christ, will be the distinctive keynote.

It is seldom realized that hundreds of thousands of people in every land have taken, or are preparing to take, this first initiation, called the Birth at Bethlehem, the House of Bread. Humanity, the world disciple, is now ready for this. Indications of the accuracy of the above statement can be seen in the reorientation of people everywhere to things spiritual, their interest in human good and human welfare, the perseverance they show in their search for light and their longing and desire for a true peace, based on right human relations, implemented by goodwill. This "mind as it is in Christ" can be seen in their revolt against materialistic religion and in the widespread effort to be [150] seen in Europe and elsewhere to return the land (Mother-Earth, the true Virgin Mary) to the people. It can be seen in the constant movement of people throughout the world from place to place, symbolized in the Gospel story by the journey of Mary with the infant Jesus into Egypt.

Then followed, as we are told in the New Testament, a cycle of thirty years wherein all we know is that the infant Jesus grew to manhood and could then take the second initiation, the Baptism in Jordan, and begin His public service. Today the many who in this life have taken the first initiation are entering the long silence of that symbolic thirty years

wherein they too will grow to manhood and take the second initiation. This initiation demonstrates the complete control of the emotional nature and of all Piscean characteristics. The thirty years can be looked upon as a period of spiritual unfoldment during the three divisions into which Aquarius (and consequently the New Age now upon us) will be divided. I refer to what is technically known as the three decans of each sign. In this sign the waters of the Piscean age will, symbolically speaking, be absorbed into the water-pot carried on the shoulder of Aquarius in the symbol which is distinctive of this sign, for Aquarius is the water-carrier, bringing the water of life to the people - life more abundantly.

In the Aquarian Age, the Risen Christ is Himself the Water-Carrier; He will not this time demonstrate the perfected life of a Son of God, which was His main mission before; He will appear as the supreme Head of the Spiritual Hierarchy, meeting the need of the thirsty nations of the world - thirsty for truth, for right human relations and for loving understanding. He will be recognized this time by all and in His Own Person will testify [151] to the *fact* of the resurrection, and hence demonstrate the paralleling fact of the immortality of the soul, of the spiritual man. The emphasis during the past two thousand years has been *on death*; it has colored all the teaching of the orthodox churches; only one day in the year has been dedicated to the thought of the resurrection. The emphasis in the Aquarian Age will be on life and freedom from the tomb of matter, and this is the note which will distinguish the new world religion from all that have preceded it.

The Festival of Easter and the Feast of Pentecost will be the two outstanding days of the religious year. Pentecost is, as you must well know, the symbol of right human relations in which all men and nations will understand each other and - though speaking in many and diverse languages - will know only one spiritual speech.

It is significant that two important episodes are related in the final part of the Gospel story - one preceding and one following immediately after the apparent death of Christ. They are:

1. The story of the upper chamber to which the man carrying the water pot and typifying Aquarius led the disciples, and in which the first communion service was held, participated in by all and foretelling that great relationship which will distinguish humanity in the coming age, after the tests of the Piscean Age. Such a communion service has never yet been held, but the New Age will see it take place.

2. The story of the upper chamber in which the disciples met and arrived at a true recognition of the Risen Christ and at a perfect and complete understanding of [152] each other in spite of the symbolic diversity of tongues. They had a touch of prevision, of prophetic insight, and foresaw a little of the wonder of the Aquarian Age.

The vision in men's minds today is that of the Aquarian Age, even if they recognize it not. The future will see right relationships, true communion, a sharing of all things (wine, the blood, the life and bread, economic satisfaction) and goodwill; we have also a picture of the future of humanity when all nations are united in complete understanding and the diversity of languages - symbolic of differing traditions, cultures, civilizations and points of view - will provide no barrier to right human relations. At the center of each of these pictures is to be found the Christ. Thus the expressed aims and efforts of the United Nations will be eventually brought to fruition and a new church of God, gathered out of all religions and spiritual groups, will untidily bring to an end the great heresy of separateness. Love, unity, and the Risen Christ will be present, and He will demonstrate to us the *perfect life*.