

Fearlessness, sincerity, assiduity in devotion, generosity, self-restraint, piety, and almsgivings, study, mortification, and rectitude; harmlessness, veracity, and freedom from anger, resignation, equanimity, and not speaking of the faults of others, universal compassion, modesty, and mildness; patience, power, fortitude, and purity, discretion, dignity, unvengefulness, and freedom from conceit—these are the marks of him whose virtues are of a godlike character, O son of Bharata.

BHAGAVAD-GITA. Ch. xvi.

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CHRIST.

ON the twenty-first day of December, the sun, whose days have been getting shorter since the twenty-first day of June, begins the winter solstice, in the sign capricorn, the tenth sign of the zodiac. The three days following were devoted by the ancients to religious rites. At midnight of the twenty-fourth, which is the beginning of the twenty-fifth, as the constellation known as the Celestial Virgin or Virgo, the sixth sign of the zodiac, arose above the horizon, they chanted songs of praise and it was then announced that the God of Day was born; that he would be the Saviour of the world from darkness, misery and death. On the twenty-fifth of December, the Romans held a festival of joy—their solar festival—in honor of the birth of the God of Day, and the games at the circus began amid great rejoicing.

This God of Day, the Saviour of the world, was the child of whom the virgin Isis called herself the mother in that inscription on the Temple of Saïs which said—"The fruit which I have begotten is the Sun." This season (Christmas-tide) was celebrated not only by the Romans, but by the ancients of all times, when the immaculate Virgin Nature—Isis—Maya—Mare—Mary was said to have given birth to the Sun of Righteousness, the God of Day, the Saviour of the world.

The birthplace is described differently by different peoples. The Egyptians speak of it as a cave or casket, the Persians said it was a grotto, the Christians claim it was a manger. In all the mysteries, however, the idea of each was preserved, for it was from the sanctuary or sacred cave that the Initiate, the Twice-Born, the Glorified, was born, and it was his duty to go out into the world to preach and to teach and by the light of the truth which was in him to comfort the sorrowing and distressed; to heal

the diseased and lame, and to save the people from the darkness of ignorance–death.

Steeped in commercialism, scholasticism, and the materialism of theology the world makes light of these ancient beliefs.

The sun is a symbol of the Christ, the central, spiritual and Invisible Sun, whose presence in the body is to save it from dissolution and death. The planets are the principles which call into existence the appearance of the visible body as the physical universe, and while this physical body or universe shall last the Spiritual Sun will make its presence felt. The solar phenomena were, therefore, indicative of the times and seasons when this Christ principle could best manifest itself to the consciousness of man; and the Christmas season was one of the important times when the sacred rites were performed in the Mysteries.

No one who has given the subject any thought can fail to see the fact that the story of the nativity of either Jesus, Zoroaster, Buddha, Krishna, Horus, Hercules, or any of the Saviours of the world, is the characteristic and descriptive story of the journey of the sun through the twelve signs of the zodiac. As in the journey of the sun, so it is with every Saviour: he is born, persecuted, preaches the gospel of salvation, increases in might and power, comforts, heals, enlivens and enlightens the world, is crucified, dies and is buried, to be reborn and resurrected in his might and power and glory. To deny this fact is to proclaim our own ignorance or to declare ourselves intolerant and bigoted.

“But,” complains the sectarian nervously and fearfully, “should I admit this to be a fact it will do away with my hope and promise of redemption and salvation.” “Admit this,” says the exultant follower of materialism failing to see into the heart of the one whom he considers to be his opponent, and not thinking of the pain which he is giving and the hope which he is removing from that believer, “admit this and you pronounce the doom of all sects and religions. They will crumble away and disappear as will a snow-field beneath the scorching sun.”

To both, sectarian and materialist, we reply: It is more noble to admit the truth even though it should cause the fetishes and idols which we have built up between the light and us to be removed and leave us bare, than to continue to believe in a world of darkness peopled by invisible monsters. But some phase of the truth is stated by the religionist and by the follower of materialism. Each is, however, an extremist; each thinks it his bounden duty to convince the other of his error and to convert him to his own belief. There is a mutual ground for them. If each will put himself in the other’s place, he will find that that which he lacks to complete his faith, the other has.

The christian need not fear that he will lose his religion should he accept facts. The materialist need not fear that he will lose his facts if he accepts religion. Nothing that is worth the keeping can be lost by one who really seeks the truth. And if the truth really is the object of the search of the man of religion and the man of facts what then can either take away from the other?

If the religionist will acknowledge the cold hard facts of the materialist, they will destroy his heaven with its pearly gates around the idols which he has there enshrined, dispel the ever-gathering cloud-like fancies of his overheated passions, and calm the troubled spirits in a hell, the fires of

which are burning up those enemies who would not accept his faith and follow the doctrines which he believed. Having removed the unrealities, he will find that after the burning up of the idols and rubbish, there is left a living presence which cannot be described by music chisel or brush.

If the materialist will put himself in the place of the sincere religionist, he will find that there springs up within him a power, a light, a fire, which enables him to assume responsibilities, to perform his duties, to ensoul the machinery of nature and to comprehend the principles on which this machinery runs, to burn up the prejudices and pride of his cold, hard facts, and to transform them into the vestures manifestations and witnesses of the truth of the ever-living spirit.

To admit that the life of Christ is a duplicate of the journey of the sun, does not mean that the christian need be a mere astronomer, forswear his Christ and become an apostate. Nor has the christian—or the believer in any other religion—any right to corner the market on the salvation of souls, form a trust and monopoly of his religious scheme and try to dole out salvation to a hungry world by compelling it to buy his wares.

Break down the barriers! Away with all trusts that would shut out the universal light! All earth bathes in the light of one sun, and her children partake of as much of its light as they can. No race or people can monopolize this light. All recognize that the sun is the same for all. But the sun is seen through the physical eyes only. It warms the physical body and infuses life into all animate things.

There is another, an Invisible Sun, of which our sun is but the symbol. No man can look on the Invisible Sun and remain mortal. By this light the consciousness of the material is transmuted into the consciousness of the spiritual. This is the Christ who saves from ignorance and death, him who primarily accepts and finally realizes the Light.

People are now sufficiently enlightened in the science of astronomy to know that the sun performs its offices not by any sacrifices and prayers which a degenerate or ignorant race might offer, but in obedience to cosmic law. According to this law all other bodies in space are working harmoniously. The teachers who appear from time to time in the world are simply the servants of this law which is beyond the comprehension of a finite mind.

The mere fact that we are born in a family of the Christian faith does not give us the right to call ourselves christians. Nor do we have a monopoly or any special right or privilege in Christ. We have the right to speak of ourselves as christians only when the spirit of Christ, which is the principle of Christ, declares itself through us in thought and speech and action. It announces itself, it is not announced. We know it is not of the senses, yet we see it, hear it and touch it, for it penetrates, permeates and sustains all things. It is as near as it is distant. It supports and elevates and when we are in the depths it is there to lift us up. It cannot be described yet it appears in every good thought and deed. It is the faith of the strong, the love of the compassionate, and the silence of the wise. It is the spirit of forgiveness, the prompter in all acts of unselfishness, mercy and justice, and in all beings it is the intelligent, unifying Principle.

As all things in the universe are working harmoniously and according to a common law, so the very lives we lead are shaping to a given end. When

we lose sight of the underlying principle, things on the surface seem to all appearances to be in confusion. But on returning to the principle we understand the effects.

We are not, as we fancy, living in a world of reality. We are asleep in a world of shadows. Our slumber is now and then excited or disturbed by some dream or nightmare caused by changing shadows. But the soul cannot always sleep. There must be an awakening in the land of shadows. At times some messenger comes, and with a potent touch, bids us awake and engage in our real life work. The soul thus roused may arise and perform its duties or, enchanted by the spell of the dreams, it may return to the land of shadows and slumber on. It slumbers on and dreams. Yet its dreams will be disturbed by the memory of its awakening until the shadows will themselves conspire to force it into its own realm, and then, with pain and trembling it will begin its work. Duty drudgingly performed is a work of labor and blinds the soul to the lessons which duties teach. Duty willingly performed is a work of love and reveals to the performer the truth of the lesson which it brings.

Every human being is a messenger, a son of the Invisible Sun, a Saviour of the world through whom the Christ principle is shining, to the extent that he understands and realizes the ever-living consciousness within. From one who is conscious of this Consciousness we may have the true Christmas gift if this is what we seek. The Christmas Presence is the entrance leading to the undying eternal life. This Presence may come while we are still in shadow-land. It will awaken the sleeper from his dreams and enable him to be unafraid of the surrounding shadows. Knowing the shadows to be shadows he is not afraid when they would seem to enfold and overwhelm him.



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