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**THE RETURN OF THE CHRIST <Pages 591,612>**

**THE RETURN OF THE CHRIST\***

May 1947

**Year after year I have written you (and all who care to listen) a message which has often been prophetic, always related to the fundamental spiritual union of the East and the West, of the Buddha and the Christ, and which has consistently laid emphasis upon the immediate spiritual opportunity.** **Every year I have prepared these messages with great care, and in their synthesis there emerges (if you have read them in order and intelligently) a picture of the spiritual life of the world. It is a picture which involves the knowable past, which concerns the immediate present, and carries forward into a future of spiritual unfoldment, transcending in [Page 592] expression all that has hitherto been known, because it has ever been based on the reality, on the fact of God Immanent.**

**God Transcendent, greater, vaster and more inclusive than His created world, is universally recognised and has been generally emphasised; all faiths can say with Shri Krishna (speaking as God, the Creator) that "having pervaded the whole universe with a fragment of Myself, I remain." This God Transcendent has dominated the religious thinking of millions of simple and spiritually-minded people down the centuries which have elapsed since humanity began to press forward towards divinity.**

**Slowly, there is dawning upon the awakening consciousness of humanity, the great paralleling truth of God Immanent—divinely "pervading" all forms, conditioning from within all kingdoms in nature, expressing innate divinity through human beings and—two thousand years ago—portraying the nature of that divine Immanence in the Person of the Christ. Today, as an outcome of this unfolding divine Presence, there is entering into the minds of men everywhere a new concept: that of Christ in us, the hope of Glory. There is a growing and developing belief that Christ is in us, as He was in the Master Jesus, and this belief will alter world affairs and mankind's entire attitude to life.**

**The wonder of that Life lived two thousand years ago is still with us and has lost none of its freshness; it is an eternal inspiration, hope, encouragement and example.** **The love He demonstrated still holds the thinking world in thrall, even though relatively few have really attempted to demonstrate the same quality of love as He did—a love that leads unerringly to world service, to complete self-forgetfulness and to radiant, magnetic living.** **The words He spoke were few and simple, and all men can understand them, but their significance has largely been lost in the intricate legalities and discussions of St. Paul, and the lengthy disputations of theological commentators since He lived and left us—or apparently left us.**

**Yet—today Christ is nearer to humanity than at any other time in human history; He is closer than the most [Page 593] aspiring and hopeful disciple knows, and can draw closer still if what I here propose to write is understood and brought to the attention of men everywhere. For Christ belongs to humanity, to the world of men, and not only to the churches and faiths throughout the world.**

**Around Him—in that High Place on Earth where He has His abiding place—are gathered today all His great Disciples, the Masters of the Wisdom, and all Those liberated Sons of God Who, down the ages, have passed from darkness to Light, from the unreal to the Real, and from death to Immortality; They stand ready to carry out His bidding and to obey the Master of all the Masters and the Teacher alike of Angels and of men.** **The Exponents and the Representatives of all the world faiths are there waiting—under His guidance—to reveal to all those who today struggle in the maelstrom of world affairs, and who seek to solve the world crisis, that they are not alone. God Transcendent is working through the Christ and the Spiritual Hierarchy to bring relief; God Immanent in all men is standing on the verge of certain stupendous Recognitions.**

**The great Apostolic Succession of the Knowers of God is poised today for renewed activity—a Succession of Those Who have lived on earth, accepted the fact of God Transcendent, discovered the reality of God Immanent, portrayed in Their Own lives the divine characteristics of the Christ life and (because They lived on earth as He did and does) have "entered for us within the veil, leaving us an example that we too should follow His steps," and Theirs. We too belong eventually in that great Succession.**

**You may wonder why, at this hour of the Festival of the Buddha, I am writing to you anent His great Brother, the Christ. I am doing it with deliberation because the eyes of all spiritual Knowers are fixed upon Him, because the Buddha Himself is standing behind Him in humble recognition of the divine task which He is on the verge of consummating, and because of the imminence of that spiritual accomplishment.** **I write thus because not only are all those who are functioning consciously in the Kingdom of God [Page 594] aware of His plans, but because those great spiritual Beings Who live and dwell in the "Father's House," in the "centre where the Will of God is known," are also mobilised and organised to assist His work. The spiritual line of succession from the throne of the Ancient of Days down to the humblest disciple (gathered with others at the feet of the Christ) is today focussed on the task of helping humanity.**

**The great moment for which He has so patiently waited has almost arrived; the "end of the age" to which He referred when speaking to His small group of disciples—"Lo! I am with you all the days even unto the end of the age"—has come and today He stands and waits, knowing that the hour has come when He will "see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied." May I repeat: Right through the spiritual succession of the Sons of God there is naught to be seen and felt but expectancy and preparation.**

**From the Father's House (the Shamballa of the esotericist) the fiat has gone forth: "The hour has come." From the kingdom of God where reigns the Christ, the answer has been flung back: "Father, Thy will be done"; down in our struggling, bewildered, unhappy world of men, the cry is ceaselessly rising: "May Christ return to Earth." Thus in the three great spiritual centres—the Father's House, the Kingdom of God, and awakening Humanity—there is but one Purpose, one idea and one united expectancy....**

**I write here in no fanatical or adventist spirit; I speak not as a speculative theologian or an exponent of one phase of religious wishful thinking. I speak because the time is ripe and because the appeal of simple faithful hearts has penetrated to the highest spiritual sphere and set in motion energies and forces which cannot now be stopped; I speak because the invocative cry of distressed humanity is today of such a volume and sound that—united to the wisdom and the knowledge of the spiritual Hierarchy—it has given rise to certain activities in the Father's House. These will result in the glory of God, in the transformation of the divine will-to-good into human goodwill and resultant peace on Earth.**

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**A new chapter in the great book of spiritual living is about to be written; a new expansion of consciousness is an imminent happening; a fresh recognition of divine attentiveness is now possible to humanity, and a revealing expectancy will prove the accuracy of the Biblical statement, "every eye shall see Him."** **The religious livingness or spiritual history of mankind can be summarised for us by a series of recognitions—recognition of Those Who, down the ages, have constituted the Apostolic Succession, culminating for us in the great religious leaders who have come out among us since 700 B.C. and founded the great modern world faiths, and—above all else—in the Christ Himself Who embodied the perfection of God Immanent, plus awareness of God Transcendent; recognition of those major spiritual concepts of love, life and relationship which have hovered ever in the background of man's thinking and which are now on the verge of right expression; recognition of the true brotherhood of man, based on the one divine life, working through the one soul and expressing itself through the one humanity; recognition, therefore, of relationship both to the divine life throughout the world and to mankind itself. It is this developing spiritual attitude which will lead to right human relations and eventual world peace.**

**Today another recognition is becoming possible. It is the recognition everywhere of the imminent return of Christ (if such a phrase can be true of One Who has never left us) and of the new spiritual opportunities which this event will make possible.**

**The basis for this recognition lies in the deep-seated conviction, innate in the human consciousness, that some great Teacher, some Saviour, Revealer, Lawgiver or divine Representative must come forth from the world of spiritual realities, because of human need and human demand.** **Always, down the centuries, at the hour of man's greatest need and in response to his voiced demand, a divine Son of God has come forth and under many different names.** **Then the Christ came and apparently left us, with His work unfinished and His vision for mankind not yet consummated. For two [Page 596] thousand years it has seemed as if all His work had been blocked, frustrated, and of no avail—for the growth of the churches during the centuries is no guarantee of the spiritual success at which He aimed. It needed more than theological interpretations and the numerical growth of the world religions (including Christianity and Buddhism) to prove His world mission successfully carried forward. It all seemed impossible, necessitating three conditions; in these a test of His work could be attempted; today these three conditions are proven facts.**

**First: a general planetary situation which has (unfortunately owing to man's selfishness) proved to be so catastrophic in nature that humanity has been forced to recognise the cause and source of the disaster;** **secondly, a spiritual awakening which would have its impulse in the deepest depths of man's consciousness, and such is the case today as a result of the world war (1914-1945);** **thirdly, a steadily mounting invocative cry, prayer or demand, directed toward high spiritual sources, no matter by what names such sources may be called.**

**Today, all these three conditions have been fulfilled and humanity faces renewed opportunity.** **The disaster which has overtaken mankind is universal and widespread; no one has escaped, and all men are involved in some way or another—physically, economically and socially. The spiritual awakening of men everywhere (within or without the world faiths, and largely outside of them) is general and complete, and a turning to God is to be seen on every hand.** **Finally, these two causes have aroused—as never before—the invocative cry of humanity; it is clearer, purer and more selfless than at any other time in human history, because it is based on clearer thinking and common distress.** **True religion is again emerging in the hearts of men in every land; this recognition of a divine hope and background may possibly take people back into the churches and world faiths, but it will most certainly take them back to God.**

**Religion is the name, surely, which we give to the invocative appeal of humanity which leads to the evocative response [Page 597] of the Spirit of God.** **This Spirit works in every human heart and in all groups. It works through the spiritual Hierarchy of the planet; it impels the Head of the Hierarchy, the Christ, to take action, and the action which He is taking will lead to His return, with His disciples.**

**I wonder if you appreciate the import of what I have just said? The idea of the return of Christ is a most familiar one, and the concept of a returning Son of God in response to human need has its place in the teaching of the majority of the world faiths. Ever since He apparently departed to the sphere where the faithful have put Him, little groups of these people have reasoned themselves into the belief that on such and such a date He will come back, and ever their prophecies and expectancies have been doomed to failure. He has not come. Such people have been laughed at by the crowd and rebuked by the intelligent. Their eyes have not seen Him and there has been no tangible indication of His Presence. Today, I tell you that He will come; that plans for His coming are already set on foot, but I set no date or hour. The time is known only to the two or three, but "in such an hour as ye think not, He will come." (Matt. XXIV. 44)**

**I tell you, first of all, a truth hard for the orthodox thinker of any faith to accept: He cannot return because He has always been here upon our Earth, watching over the spiritual destiny of humanity; He has never left us, but in physical body and securely concealed (though not hidden), He has guided the affairs of the spiritual Hierarchy, of His disciples and workers who are unitedly pledged with Him to Earth Service. He can only reappear. It is a spiritual fact that those who have passed from the cave of the tomb into the fullness of the resurrection life can be seen, and at the same time evade the vision of the believer; seeing and recognition are two very different things, and one of the great recognitions of mankind in the near future is the recognition that always He has been with us and shared with us the familiar usefulness and peculiar characteristics of our civilisation and its many gifts to man**.

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**The early signs of His approach with His disciples can already be discerned by those who note and rightly interpret the signs of the times.** **There is (among these signs) the coming together spiritually of those who love their fellowmen. This is in reality the organising of the outer physical army of the Lord—an army which has no weapons but those of love, of right speech and right human relations. This unknown organisation has proceeded with phenomenal speed during the aftermath of war, because humanity is sick of hate and of controversy.**

**The general staff of the Christ is already active in the form of the New Group of World Servers; they are as potent a body of forerunners as has ever preceded a great world Figure into the arena of mankind's living. Their work and influence is already seen and felt in every land, and nothing can destroy that which they have accomplished. The spiritual and organising effect of sound in the form of expressed and voiced invocation has been also attempted since 1935, and the energy of the invocative cry of humanity has been directed into those channels which reach from Earth to that High Place where dwells the Christ. From there, it has been transmitted on to those still higher spheres where the attention of the Lord of the World, the Ancient of Days, the Father of all, plus the Creative Energies and Living Beings Who dwell there with Him, can be focussed on humanity and those steps can be taken which will embody more rapidly the Purposes of God.**

**For the first time in human history, the demand of the people of the Earth is so potent and so in line with divine direction in time and space that the end is inevitably sure; the looked-for spiritual Representative must come forth, and this time He will not come alone but will be accompanied by Those Whose lives and words will evoke recognition in every department of human thinking.** **The symbolic prophecies found in all the world Scriptures anent this imminent event will prove their veracity; their symbolism will nevertheless elicit re-interpretation, and circumstances and happenings will not necessarily be exactly as the Scriptures [Page 599] would appear to indicate. For instance, He will come indeed "in the clouds of the air" as the Christian Scriptures say (Matt. XXIV. 30), but of what great interest is that when millions come and go in the clouds each hour of the day and of the night? I mention this as one of the outstanding prophecies and one of the most familiar; it is, however, one which means little in our modern civilisation. The fact that is of importance is that He will come.**

The Wesak Festival has been held, down the centuries, in the well-known valley in the Himalayas (if the faithful would only believe it) in order:

1. To substantiate the fact of Christ's physical existence among us ever since His so-called departure.

2. To prove (on the physical plane) the factual solidarity of the Eastern and Western approaches to God. Both the Christ and the Buddha are then present.

**3. To form a rallying-point and a meeting-place for those who annually—in synthesis and symbolically—link up and represent the Father's House, the Kingdom of God, and Humanity.**

**4. To demonstrate the nature of the work of Christ as the great and chosen Intermediary, standing as the Representative of the spiritual Hierarchy and as the Leader of the New Group of World Servers, and in His Person voicing their demand for the recognition of the factual existence of the Kingdom of God here and now.**

**Perhaps one of the major messages I have for all of you who read my words is this great truth and fact of the physical Presence on Earth at this time of the Christ, of His group of Disciples and Executives, of Their representative activities on behalf of mankind and of Their close relationship. This relationship comes out at certain of the great spiritual Festivals where relationship includes not only the Kingdom of God but also the Father and the Father's Home.** **There is the Festival of Easter; the Festival of the Buddha [Page 600] Who, in physical Presence, expresses the spiritual solidarity of our planet; and the Festival in June, peculiarly the Festival of the Christ, when He—as Leader of the New Group of World Servers—employs the new Invocation on behalf of all men of goodwill in all lands; at the same time, He gathers up the inchoate and unexpressed demands of those masses who seek a new and better way of life. They want love in daily living, right human relations, and an understanding of the underlying Plan.**

**It is these physical happenings which are of moment, and not the vague hopes and promises of the theological faiths. It is the physical Presence upon our planet of such recognised spiritual Figures as the Lord of the World, the Ancient of Days; the seven Spirits Who are before the throne of God; of the Buddha, the spiritual leader of the East, and the Christ, the spiritual leader of the West, which I bring at this climaxing time to your attention.** **To you I say that the vague belief in Their existence, the dreamy speculations as to Their work and Their interest in human welfare, and the unconvinced, yet hopeful, wishful thinking of believers (and also unbelievers), will soon give place to certain knowledge, to visual recognition, to provable signs of executive work, and to the reorganisation (by men of unusual potency) of the political, religious, economic and social life of the planet.**

**All this will not come as the result of some proclamation or some stupendous planetary event which will force human beings everywhere to say: Lo! He is there! Lo! Here are the signs of His divinity! for that would evoke only antagonism and laughter, resistance or fanatical credulity. It will come as a recognition of potency in leadership, through dynamic but logical changes in world affairs, and through action taken by the masses of the people from the depths of their own consciousness.**

**Many years ago I indicated that the Christ would come in three ways, or rather, that the fact of His Presence could be proved in three distinctive phases.**

**I said then that the first move which the Hierarchy [Page 601] would make would be the stimulation of the spiritual consciousness in man, the evocation of humanity's spiritual demands on a large scale, and the nurturing—on a worldwide scale—of the Christ consciousness in the human heart. This has already been done, and with most effective results. Of the factual nature of this process the vociferous demands of men of goodwill, of welfare workers and of those pledged to international cooperation, to the relief of world distress and to the establishment of right human relations are the undeniable expression. That phase of the preparatory work which is indicative of His coming has now reached a stage where nothing can arrest its progress or slow down its momentum. In spite of appearances, this uprising of the Christ-consciousness has been successful, and what may appear as reverse activity is of no importance in the long run, and only of a temporary nature.**

**The second move of the Hierarchy, I told you, would be the impressing of the minds of enlightened men everywhere by spiritual ideas embodying the new truths, by the "descent" (if I may so call it) of the new concepts which will govern human living, and by the over-shadowing of all world disciples and the New Group of World Servers by the Christ Himself.** **You will recall how, in the Bible story, Christ symbolically evoked the recognition of John the Baptist and imparted the things of the Kingdom of God to the disciples who walked to Emmaus, though they recognised not their Companion. This planned move of the Hierarchy is also progressing well; men and women everywhere and in every department of life are enunciating those new truths which should in the future guide human living; they are building those new organisations, movements and groups—large or small—which will familiarise the mass of men with the reality of the need and the mode of meeting it. This they are doing because they are driven thereto by the warmth of their hearts and their loving response to human distress; without formulating it thus to themselves, they are nevertheless working to bring into visibility the Kingdom of God on earth. No denial of these facts is possible, [Page 602] in view of the multiplicity of this type of organisations, books and speeches.**

**Thirdly, I told you that Christ might come in person and walk among men as He did before. This has not yet taken place, but plans are being laid which will enable Him to do so. Those plans do not involve the birth of some nice child in some nice home on earth; they will not produce the wild claims and the credulous recognition of the well-meaning and the unintelligent, as is so frequently the case today, nor will someone appear and say: This is the Christ. He is here or He is there. I would point out to you, however, that the widespread appearance of such tales and claims, though undesirable, misleading and wrong, nevertheless demonstrates human expectancy of the imminence of His coming. Belief in His coming is basic in the human consciousness. How He will come, in what manner, I may not and should not say. The exact moment has not yet arrived, nor has the method of His appearance been determined. The factual nature of the two earlier and preparatory moves, already made by the Hierarchy under His direction, are the guarantee that He will come and that—when He does—mankind will be ready.**

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