

Aspects of the Christ by Annie Besant

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I HAVE chosen for our thought tonight a subject which appears to me to be one of profound interest, and one also of great practical importance. For no subject in the western world touches more nearly the hearts of men than the subject of the Christ. Round that name are entwined all sacred memories, all loftiest aspirations, the ideal of a perfect manhood, the manifestation of God Himself. On the other hand there are many intellectual questions concerned with it, and it is impossible to escape from those questions in the modern world of historical discussions as to the date at which He lived; critical discussions as to the authenticity of the records in which His life is inscribed; dogmatic controversies as to His nature, whether He be God and man, God or man, or only man; whether His rightful place is that of a great Teacher or of a supreme Object of worship; how He lived and how he died; all these are questions which grow up around His name; these are questions that the intellect must decide.

Now when you come to the atmosphere of the intellect, you inevitably come into that which is and must be critical, calm, balanced, more or less cold. Whereas on the other side the deepest, the most passionate emotions of human nature are concerned - emotions of reverence to God, emotions of passionate admiration of man, emotions of aspiration towards the spiritual life, aspirations the holiest and the deepest. And hence we find that round the intellectual discussions have raged the floods of emotional feelings, to the injury of both. Everywhere the emotions come in, the intellect becomes biased and cannot judge aright. Where the intellect is concerned emotions are a danger, not a help. But on the other hand the emotions concerned being those which are the most inspiring, the most elevating, the most spiritualising, it is necessary that they should have their place, that they should enjoy full liberty of expression, that they should go out to the Object of worship, that they should purify the heart as well as inspire the life. We cannot do either without the intellect or without the emotions. Both have their place, both have their value ; but in order that each may have its full value it must have its rightful place assigned to it in this great central subject of religious thought. The intellect must be given its full, free play, the emotions their undisturbed expansion. And we shall only be able, I think, effectively to do that if we regard the whole subject in that light of the Divine Wisdom which includes the intellect and the emotions, but which also recognises the place and the supremacy of the Spirit. And I want if I can tonight to help you to a view which it seems to me - if it commends itself to you, and if you study it - may help you to understand, as you should understand by the intellect, but may leave to you untouched, nay, untouchable and invulnerable, that Christ of the human heart to whom the Spirit raises himself in his moments of highest realisation, far away from every wind of controversy, from every storm of discussion, in that pure unclouded air of the very heaven itself, where intuition sees and reason bows down in silence, where, the Spirit speaks and all lesser voices are dumb.

Let us take first the intellectual view and glance at this historically, of the life itself, and then, from the standpoint, still intellectual, of comparative religion. Let us then glance at the dogmatic side, round which so much of controversy has raged and still may rage. Then let us see how the Christ appears as the Ideal of the soul, and how He rises above all the controversies of history and of doctrine in that mighty, all-compelling form which has been called the "Logos of the soul". If thus perchance we can study some

of the many aspects we may be able to keep the inspiration of the ideal untouched, and may walk calmly, thoughtfully, in study careful and accurate, amid all the intellectual difficulties that have surrounded the subject in the past, that inevitably still surround it today. And let me say, ere beginning this intellectual part of our study, that if there is one subject more than another which should be a subject to unite and not to divide, it is that of the thought of the Lord of Love, of Him who is to be the Buddha of Love, as the Lord Gautama was the Buddha of Wisdom. Round that sacred name the battles of the churches long have raged. The name which should unite according to the prayer "that they all may be one, as I, Father, am in Thee, that they also may be one in us," that prayer has fallen, as it were, unregarded to the earth, has brought down no answer, has found no acceptance; for Christians have quarrelled over Christ more bitterly than perhaps over anything else. And sad indeed and terrible would it be if we, who preach the brotherhood of religions, should copy that worst side which makes the holiest subjects, subjects of controversy, and raises the storm of human passion within what should be the Holy of Holies of the Sanctuary.

To avoid this let us look at the intellectual side quietly and calmly as befits students. First the historical. On that Occultism speaks clearly and distinctly, as we have learned from the Masters of the White Lodge, from the messenger whom They sent to us, H. P. B., confirmed by the study of later workers. And this view is supported by much in the story of the past and by one or two teachings that are worthy of consideration in the record of the New Testament itself. It is the story of a Hebrew youth, born about a century before the beginning of the Christian era, trained partly in Egypt, partly in the monasteries of the Essenes, coming forth at about the age of thirty to be a teacher among his people, recognised by them as known in the days of his youth. On him descended the Spirit of the Holiest, and, descending, on him it abode, and in that moment of descent was the coming of the Christ to occupy the chosen body which He had selected for His stay on earth. Then a brief life of three years among men, a life of uttermost beneficence, a life of many wondrous healings as well as of exquisite teaching. The gathering together round Him of a few to whom He taught the deeper doctrines some of which they later were to spread abroad; "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to others in parables." Sometimes the enthusiastic love of the crowd, sometimes the passionate hatred, attempting life; finally in the city of Jerusalem, in the very court of the Temple itself, a riot breaking out, a terrible stoning, the passing back of the Christ to His own place, the murder of the body in which He had dwelt, the taking up of the body, the hanging of it in mockery on a tree by those who had slain Him. Such is the ancient story, the story of the records of the past, confirmed by traditions which have passed downward through the Hebrew people, who tell us of this young Teacher in the days of Queen Salome, who preached and taught, who was slain and hanged on a tree. And it is confirmed by those words spoken by S. Peter, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, when, speaking reproachfully to the Hebrews of his day, he spoke of "Jesus whom ye slew and hanged upon a tree". Then, still following the record, how the Christ for forty years and more continued to come to His disciples, teaching, guiding, instructing, inspiring them for the great work that was to be done; how gradually they dispersed over the nations, gathering disciples and carrying on the work, until in the later days that great recruit was won to whom the Christ Himself appeared sending him forth on his great mission, he who laid the foundations of the Church as Church, the great Apostle Paul, who declared that he knew naught among them save Christ Jesus and Him crucified. And then the spread as known to you, the spread of the doctrines of the great Teacher; and side by side with the outer preaching, the Mysteries of Jesus. The teachings in those, as I said, were begun by the Christ Himself and carried on for some forty years or more. Forty years is the time given by one of the great Bishops of the early Church. We should be inclined to make it somewhat longer than that, but the date has not been very carefully measured. Then the birth of Apollonius of Tyana, he who was sometimes called the Pagan Christ, the disciple Jesus reborn in the year 1 of the Christian era, taking up the work, travelling far and wide, Messenger of the great White Lodge, making in various

places in Europe centres of occult force to be used long, long afterwards when again a great Teacher should appear, passing away out of the body and taking up the work of the Mysteries of Jesus, becoming the great Teacher of the Mysteries, instructing, guiding, helping during the following centuries. One writer among the early Fathers of those Mysteries, one great Bishop who underwent martyrdom, tells us how he was taught in the Mysteries, and how the angels came to teach; gives us some of the things that they were taught, the great graded hierarchy of angels, and the mysteries of the heavenly world. And then others speak of these same Mysteries. S. Clement of Alexandria tells us much, tells us much that he says will not be readily understood by all, but they will understand, he says, who have been touched with the thyrsus - the rod of Initiation, the cone-crowned rod, with which every candidate in the Mysteries was touched, by which the sacred fire was set free, so that the eyes were opened and the secrets of the unseen world revealed. Those who have been thus touched, says S. Clement, will understand the allusions that he makes. And much more is told us by Origen - he has not the prefix of Saint, though he well deserved it, because on some points his doctrine was too liberal for the party which became the dominant party of the Church. He tells us much about the teachings, how they were given by the Christ Himself, how they were given in the secrecy of the house after the crowd had gone, to His disciples in the house, quoting the words of the Gospel. How these teachings were handed down from one to another, never written but always 'from mouth to ear' as the phrase has it, and told only to those who were 'perfect'. The word 'perfect' was used for the Initiated. (Some of you may recall that it is used in Modern Masonry, the tradition still alive.) We read also in Origen some of the formulae used, and we learn from him that they who were thus initiated were the Gnostics, the knowers. They *knew*, they not only believed. And he says that no Church could last unless it had the Gnostics as its pillars. It was true that the Church had medicine for the sinner, but it had also knowledge for the wise, and only 'those who knew' could keep the Church safe from attack, and its doctrines safe from degradation. Read, when you have leisure, his wonderful description of the Gnostic and his life. Then you will realise something of the power in the early Church where such Gnostics were the teachers, and where none might pass to the highest grades of the priesthood unless they had passed through the Mysteries and had learned in the presence of others the secrets of the faith, confided to the circle of the perfected. And so we find, looking thus at it from the historical point of view, a succession of stages of teaching. The Christ himself in the body of the disciple, able to stay but for a short time and then slain; the disciple reborn to carry on the work; and, until his re-birth, the great Master himself the Teacher in the sacred circle of His Initiates. Then the travelling far and wide of the great Messenger, the making of occult centres, the preparation for a future then far from the birth, but which we are finding now as the near future. For those secret centres, existing as they do in Europe, are the centres whence the light shall spread, the centres where the Masters shall stand, where disciples shall be gathered, whence the teaching shall go forth.

And so looking, we come on to the time when in the Mysteries the teaching still was given which made the Gnostics of the early Church. Then a great change comes over Christendom. Christianity and the State embrace, the State wanting to use the religion in order to win wider power for itself, and so making treaty, as it were, with the Church. And then the gradual passing away of the Mysteries, slowly, through the centuries; the gradual withdrawal for want of pupils, and the passing on of the memory of the Mysteries to little scattered bodies of people who, under various titles, carried on the scientific studies which had formed part of the learning of the Mysteries; now and again publishing under mysterious names some of the results of their labour, publishing those strange things called the rosaries, 'under the sign of the rose' the secret sign, giving alchemical and medical mysteries, daring not to speak aloud and plainly, because of the danger.

And so gradually the occult knowledge was veiled more and more deeply, for the blood of the Christ did

not fall only on those who shed it nor on the people to whom they belonged. It has fallen as a shadow over the whole of Christendom, hiding the Mysteries; making invisible the occult side of truth. For the persecuting mind awoke, and the prison gaped for those who knew the hidden things of the Spirit, and the lips were silenced and the tongues were rendered dumb, and the outer knowledge was thrown into the form of dogma, and the inner knowledge was proscribed as Gnosticism and heresy. It never died. It was handed on from group to group; the torch of the Wisdom was never wholly extinguished but none dared to speak openly; and so we have come down to our own days where still the veil is thrown over the Mysteries - a veil now to be gradually withdrawn, because once more the feet of the coming Christ are heard, and the world must be prepared for the coming, the thought of the Mysteries must again be a reality. And as during the last thirty years the doctrines that lead to knowledge have been spread far and wide, so now the outcome of those doctrines must be gradually rendered familiar to the minds of men - the great facts of Initiation, not only in books as words, but in life; the fact that Initiation is as possible now as in the far-off past, that men and women pass the portals now as they passed them long ago. And in the coming years you will find gradually more and more will be spoken, more and more will be declared, in order that some of the arrows of scepticism may break on our breasts and be blunted, ere He, the Master of Masters, shall come to face the unbelief of the world. And so you will find gradually we shall talk more and more of these things, and shall talk more and more openly. Let the world mock as it mocked before. Facts do not change because of ridicule. Far better they should mock the servants than the Master. Far better they should ridicule and scoff at the disciples than at their Lord.

Thus you have that historical side reviewed. You should study it, as far as you can. Be willing to reason about it, to discuss it, and do not mix up your feelings with that part of the study.

Next you come to the critical side, the side of the doctrines. There you should try to gain some knowledge, for such knowledge is valuable. How the experiences were written ; who wrote them; why they are all written not as the gospel of so-and-so but as the gospel *according* to so-and-so, pointing out the existence of different schools of tradition in the early Church. There was one school of tradition that bore the name of Matthew, others those of Mark, of Luke, and of John, each writer giving the tradition according to a school, named after its head in the eastern way. I think that all now practically admit that the Fourth Gospel - that according to S. John - belongs to the great Neo-platonic and Alexandrian school, that it is less the record of a life than the record of a heart and mind. This Gospel is very different in tone from the others, and is quite irreconcilable with them as regards the outline of facts, but it is pregnant with the deepest lessons, full of the most inspiring thought. And just as that Neo-platonic and Alexandrian gospel is said to be ' according to S. John' , because in him was more of the mind and heart of the Christ than in any other of the apostles, so the others also are marked as to their origin, and give us the varying traditions which have come down, the story of that wondrous life. Learn something of their value as historical documents. You ought to know something of that as students. And you can study it quietly, indifferent to many points that may be raised, because they do not touch the real Christ but only the authenticity of the particular documents. The proof of the Christ is not in the writings but in His Church, and in the devotion of the ever growing millions of human hearts, generation after generation, round His feet. Read all criticism fearlessly; it cannot touch aught that is of value.

Then we come to a typo of criticism which does not so much criticise the different documents, though it grows out of that, as challenges the whole conception of this historical Christ. That I think is growing, on the whole, weaker now than it was some thirty years ago, when it was very strong, when Strauss' Life came out, when the idea of the Sun-myth dominated, enormously strengthened by many of the

archaeological and antiquarian researches, by the discovery of similar stories round the lives of many Saviours, of identical symbols - like the symbol of the cross, everywhere to be discovered in the ancient world, but rarely in the catacombs where Christians were buried, where it was less frequent as a symbol than others which later dropped out of sight. The crucifix, you will remember, did not appear till about the sixth century after Christ. But the cross existed in the world tens of thousands of years before the birth of the Lord Maitreya as the Christ. On the real meaning of the cross, however, I shall have a word or two to say presently. You have then the idea put forward that the whole so-called history of the Christ grows out of the Sun-myth stories. A mistaken idea, but a profoundly interesting one, because, while the story of the living man did not grow out of the Sun-myth, much of the Sun-myth gathered round the living man and clothed Him in garments that in His own physical life He did not wear. And there lies the interest. A very large amount of the story of the Christ - of the Christ sometimes spoken of as the cosmic Christ or the Second LOGOS - belongs to the great religion of the Sun.

You all know that myth is much more important than history. History is the record - I was going to say of facts, but very often not oven of facts - and it is only that. And a fact, you know, is a very poor little thing when you come to look at it. It is only the fourth or fifth reflexion of the great truths in the world of Ideas. When a great Idea is in the heavens, it is thrown downwards into grosser and grosser matter, and each grosser sphere cuts off one aspect of the Idea, and when you have got most of the aspects cut off and the Idea comes down to the physical, you call the fragment a fact. That is what facts are. And you think so much of them. Now the myth is the expression of the Idea as it exists in the heavenly world, and that is always true. It comes down then in the pictorial form, and the picture contains much more than the word, the dogma. The picture of a thing tells you much more than a few words describing it. Put a thought into music, and it tells you more of its beauty than if you only described it. Taint it on canvas, carve it in marble, and more of the Idea comes through than in the mere description. And so with myth. The great myth is the truth that the Second LOGOS, pouring-out His life into the world - He whose body is the Sun - sends that light and life into the world, supporting, maintaining and vivifying. The Sun-worship of the elder days was not only a collection of stories; it was the very life of the Sun, of the God in the Sun, poured down on the worshippers upon earth. It is the oldest and the mightiest of all religions, the religion of our far-off ancestors in Atlantis even; still more beautiful was it in the great City of the Bridge, the inheritance of the Aryan Race, as given by Vyasa. And that religion taught how the life of God interpenetrates His world, so that every fragment of the world is vitalised by the Divine Life. That it lives by Him, moves in Him, exists in Him, and if He could cease to think it, would pass away like a shadow of a dream.

And then the Elders taught the people how the Sun as symbol passed through the stages, year by year, which marked out the ideal human life. Born into the weakness of childhood, rising into the strength of manhood, giving life for the benefit of humanity, ascending into heaven to pour down blessing upon earth - the story of the Sun-God, They called it. And that you find in every nation; that you find traced fully or partially in the great scriptures of the world. And much of that great story wound itself round the picture of the Christ as the human lineaments faded and the divine shone out from within, until the adoration and the love of His followers could not distinguish between the glory of the Godhead and the glory of the manhood through which it shone, and they called him God, who truly is God manifested in the flesh, not apart from us, but "the first-born among many brethren". For in each of us lives the same Divinity, in germ in us, unfolded splendidly in Him.

So that all that is *true*. And I want you to see it as intellectually true, so that you may not have a difficulty

when you hear Him spoken of as the Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, the cosmic Christ, the Life of the world. Such Life there is, and such Life is embodied in every Son of Man. Fear not, then, when stress is laid upon that aspect, for it inspires man to effort. And as the light of the sun warms the physical body, so does the light of that divine Sun warm the human heart.

And thus you find a view made into an attack, where it ought to be made as an explanation and an increase of glory. And you find there the first explanation of the Cross. Plato spoke of the WORD, the LOGOS, as marked out on the universe as a Cross. But think a moment of what that Cross is. The universe from the Platonic standpoint was a sphere, and a cross marked upon it was the cross of equal arms, sometimes called the Greek Cross. And the manifestation of the Spirit descending into matter, crucified in matter, is the Cross, the equal-armed Cross, the Cross of the Spirit, first marked on, then submerged, then triumphant, in matter.

As this thought spread, the Sun-God and the Cross became identified. And the life of the Spirit outpoured upon the world had as its symbol this equal-armed Cross. Then, coming downwards, that is represented in the Mysteries. And inasmuch as it had to be represented pictorially, after the power to make living forms had passed because of ignorance, the Mysteries became a drama which was acted, and then the Sun-God no longer appeared triumphant on the sphere in space, but outstretched on the cross of matter, crucified in matter, and you have no longer the equal-armed cross but the Latin cross, one arm lengthened that the body of the man crucified may be thereon represented. And so the mystic teaching grew up, and all still gathered round the splendid figure of the Christ. And out of that mystic teaching, the teaching of the Mysteries, in which the body was crucified that the Spirit might triumph, the lower self sacrificed to the higher that the higher might reign triumphant over the matter that was thereby redeemed - because of that, this double cross came into Christendom from-the far-off past, the Cross of the Passion and the Cross of the Spirit triumphant.

And that in the truest sense is myth, the great spiritual truth, higher than all fact, and over represented in the history of the human Spirit. And Christ crucified is that magnificent ideal in which man arises triumphant, having crucified the lower self on the cross of matter; the body is dead and buried, and then the Christ arises triumphant from the sepulchre, bearing on His banner the equal-armed Cross of the Spirit that has triumphed, that has made matter the servant of the Spirit, and has redeemed the body by making it the subject of the Spirit - that wondrous, ever-true myth of Christ, to be re-lived by you and by me, if over we would attain to the place of the Spirit triumphant.

And then, studying, we learn to understand, and we realise, as is generally the case, that there is a truth embodied in each conception, and that what we want is the power to link the truths together and see them in their full, all-round perfection, instead of in their fragmentary aspects. And so we learn that the historical story of the man Christ Jesus is true, and that such a Mighty One indeed has lived and taught upon our earth; and that the story of the Sun-god is true, and that a far higher, even the eternal Christ, comes ever down and lives in men, in order that the whole world of men may be redeemed and spiritualised; and that the story of the Mysteries is true, in which every human Spirit re-treads the path and re-lives the story, and in his turn becomes a Christ, first crucified, and then triumphant. So that instead of quarrelling with any, we stretch out hands of welcome towards all, for all bring us a fragment of the truth, and all the truths join together into the perfect picture of the Christ that is the Object of worship.

On the dogmatic Christ I have not much time to dwell. But I will remind you that in the controversies which rent the early Church there were two especially: one which disputed - as though anyone could know anything about it - whether the Christ was of one substance with God or of like substance, whether in the eternal relation of that triple LOGOS one poor human word was more accurate than another in the efforts to describe. Over that the Church split, with the satisfaction of feeling that the severed parts could never come together again, because the question could never be decided. None save God Himself can know the mysteries of His own nature. And who are we to curse our brethren, because they see those mysteries at an angle a little different from our own ? And then there came the great controversy which cast the Gnostics out of the Church, and made it neither Catholic nor Gnostic, neither universal nor knowing, because the Catholic cannot exclude, and the non-Gnostic cannot know. The part of the Church left had no right to the name of Catholic, having cast out the other.

The Gnostics taught, as we teach today, that the body of the disciple was used for the indwelling Spirit of the Christ. There is nothing new and mysterious about that. I was told the other day in a letter that this was one of the secrets of the inner teaching, but that some of the outer people knew it. I answered that it would be very odd if they did not, seeing that the Gnostics taught it in the early centuries of the Church. Do not make mysteries where there are none. This duality, Jesus and Christ, is a very, very old idea. The Manichaeans hold it, among many others. It is quite common and well-known to every scholar. And it happens to be true. And so today we have to say it over again. And because it has been long forgotten, it startles people. Lecturing once to an audience of the clergy, I found that they almost all knew about it. It was a heresy they said - which I admitted - but a heresy is only the belief of the minority. But in any case it is only an intellectual question and not of vital importance, certainly not worth quarrelling about.

Now what is of importance ? First the Ideal - the ideal of a perfect humanity irradiated with Divinity, so irradiated that you cannot say which is God and which is man, the seed of Divinity having flowered into perfection, the spark of Divinity having blazed out into a dazzling fire. That matters. That is the Ideal : the perfect man become the manifestation of the perfect God. As said the Christ: " Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect." And to realise that that has been done, to know that that has been achieved, that such splendour of manhood has arisen that we cannot tell it from Godhead, that is the Ideal of the Christ. And that is all important. You name that Ideal Christ. In the East they give him other names. But the names do not matter. It is the thought that counts. Call him Christ, or Buddha, or what you will, but do not quarrel over the name, lest the dust raised by the quarrel should cloud the sunlight of the Ideal.

I speak of Him here as the Christ, because that name represents to you that perfect Example who lived in Judea and is the centre of the Christian Church. But speaking to the Hindu I use the Hindu name, to the Buddhist, the Buddhist name ; for I would not by a name blind the eyes, and as it were lock with a name the door of the heart which should open to the coming of the Lord. The names matter not; He answers to them all. And there is only One who bears all these names, the Supreme Teacher of the world. He is One. And it is to Him we look, no matter by what name we call Him. Our prayers reach Him, no matter how we address the outside envelope of the prayer. That is the Ideal that I would pray you to keep.

But you will lose it, if you quarrel about it. You cannot see it, if you dispute over it. It is too sacred for dispute; it is the vision of the intuition, not the result of reasoning. And reason must be silent when intuition speaks, for intuition sees where reason only argues. And that is the Ideal on which you should

daily think, because thought is creative and transforms the thinker into the likeness of that on which he thinks; after that, then turn your will and your heart to reproducing in yourself some fragment of that life. Take it as an inspiration, as a thing to brood over, rather than to talk about. For much strength of the Spirit goes out in the spoken words, and those who speak too much have often little strength remaining wherewith to live and to act. Emotions are wasted in too much expression, and you need to learn to restrain them, so that they may be a mighty force to be used in the service of the Highest when He needs them for His work. And if to you the Christ be the great Ideal, the constant inspiration, then you will feel the truth of that phrase I have often used : " The LOGOS of the soul is one." There, there is no division. There, no doubt arises. There, all that is strong and beautiful and splendid unites in one perfect image - the image of Christ the Lord.

And how beautiful to think that when the Hindu thinks along these lines, he sees the One he calls the Jagat Guru, the World-Teacher, and sees Him as you see Him, and feels to Him as you feel to Him, and has been taught to say that "whatever form a man worships, I give the faith that worships that form". And, " If anyone offers a flower, a drop of water with faith, he worships Me." Thus is the Hindu taught to see the many aspects of the Divine. And when the Buddhist thinks, he thinks the same, loves the same, and worships the same, although he gives again a different name. And so the world's love goes up in one voice supreme, beginning as many and uniting in one great chord, to the Supreme Teacher, the Receiver of all love and the Giver of all help.

And that thought in what I call the Holy of Holies, where no voice of controversy should be heard. That is why I ask you to give to the intellect the things of the intellect, but to offer the things of the Spirit in the heart of the Spirit. Let us study all views about the Christ. Something will be learned from all of them, for He is too mighty for one man's mouth to express Him, for one pen to write the fulness of His manifold perfection. Study them all, and learn something from each. But when you turn to the Christ Himself, let controversies die, and rise to the height of the Ideal. We have an eastern fashion that, when we go into the house of a man, much more into the Temple of the God, we put off outside the door the shoes that are covered with the dust of the road along which we have walked, and entering with pure feet, without soil of dust, we greet the friend, or worship the God. Let us do thus with the ideal Christ. Put off the shoes of controversy when you approach Him, for the place on which you stand is holy ground. Let the dust of earth remain on the cast-off shoes, and enter with pure feet and heart aflame with love into the presence of the Holiest, who is the Eternal Peace and Love. So shall the Christ remain to you the holiest name on earth; so shall you cling to all the sacred memories which from your babyhood have entwined themselves round that holiest of names ; and you shall meet your Hindu brother, your Buddhist brother, your Hebrew brother, your Parsi brother, and find that you all worship the same Teacher, and can talk heart to heart and Spirit with Spirit, knowing that the Lord is One.

And so I would leave you with my message for the coming year, to be repeated whenever controversy arises, or when any would attack your thought or assert his own. Take as the year a watchword that phrase I have so often quoted, place it in the mouth of the Supreme Teacher: "On whatsoever road a man approaches Me, on that road do I welcome him, for all roads are Mine."