

R. CROSBIE THE FOUNDATION OF RELIGION

To most people the word "religion" signifies something separate from human existence, and presents the idea of preparation for some unknown future existence. Some religions are based upon the knowledge of an individual who laid the foundation for them; others are believed to be the revelations of a Supreme Being at the time of the creation of the world. Each people has a God of its own; so many peoples, so many Supreme Beings corresponding to the mental ideas of the people. And so with individuals—as the ideas of men differ widely—so many individuals, so many Gods. All these Gods or Supreme Beings are the creations of men, and not facts in themselves. But back of all those ideas does lie a Reality. The very power that resides in man to create images and endow them with virtues which he does not possess points to something greater than the things created. The creatures cannot be greater than the creators. That which in man creates ideas is greater than any idea he may at any time have held or now holds. We have, then, to get back of all ideas to find the true ‘ true religion.

True religion must give us a basis for thinking, and consequently, a basis for acting; it must give us an understanding of nature, of ourselves and of other beings. Religion is a *bond* uniting men together—not a particular set of dogmas or beliefs— binding not only all Men, but also all Beings and all *things* in the entire Universe, into one grand whole. Just that basis and that bond are presented in the three fundamental propositions of *The Secret Doctrine*.

Behind everything that exists is the Sustainer of all that exists, of all that ever was, is, or shall be. Nothing exists without It. It is omnipresent, and It is infinite. But, if we take that idea and endeavor to confine it to the form of any Being whatever, we shall find we have attempted the impossible. We cannot hold the idea of being with that which is omnipresent and infinite. No being can exist outside of Space which itself is, whether there is void or fulness, whether there are planets, gods or men, or none; which itself is not altered in any way by objects occupying it; which is illimitable—without beginning and without end. A Being must exist in Space, and so must be less than Space. We can then call the Highest Power any name we choose—the Supreme, the Self—so long as we do not limit It, or give It attributes. We may not say It is pleased, nor angry, nor rewards, nor punishes; doing so, we limit It. If Space itself cannot be measured or limited, how can we limit the Supreme? The Highest Power cannot be less than Space. Even to name It is to limit It; yet It must be the One Reality, the One Sustainer, the One Cause of all existences, the One Knower, the One Experiencer, in all directions and in every thing. This proposition drives us back to the very basis of all thought—the power

We cannot understand nature, other beings and ourselves, by going outside to any conceivable being. The growth of knowledge must be within the perceiver, the thinker himself. All his observation and experience bring him knowledge which he relates to himself in connection with others. Each stands in the vast assemblage of beings, seeing them all, understanding what he may of them all, but himself the only one who sees; all the rest are seen. All others are the same as he is in their essential nature; all are endowed with the same qualities, the same perfections and imperfections; all are copies of every other, differing only in the predominance of one or another quality. But the thinker is the Self—the only Self, so far as he is concerned—the One Life, the One Consciousness, the One Power. As action proceeds from that basis, the greater the powers which flow from that spiritual quality, the greater the increase of knowledge.

The Kingly Mystery

The “kingly mystery” is Life itself. We all have Life. We all are Life. Every being everywhere is Life—expresses Life. To know what is Life itself is to know the mystery. But there is a condition precedent to this mysterious knowledge, stated by Krishna, in the opening of the Ninth Chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*: “Unto thee who findeth no fault I will now make known this most mysterious knowledge, coupled with a realization of it, which having known thou shalt be delivered from evil.” When the one who desires to learn is not in a critical attitude, when he has sensed in one way or another that truth lies in a certain direction and gives all his attention to it without quarreling with terms or the ideas put forward, his is the attitude of the true student. The one who desires to know must set aside for the time being all preconceptions, pride, and prejudices which he may have held, and then he is ready to begin his studies—to take the first step in the right direction.

The world is full of false ideas, false religions, false philosophies which must be thrown away. We of the Western peoples have been taught that we were poor miserable sinners who could do nothing of ourselves. We have assumed that we are poor miserable sinners and have acted as such. Our whole civilization is colored and steeped through with this falsity. Our theologies, our sciences, our commercial, social and political conditions are all based on this false idea, which in its turn rests upon another equally false—that man is here on earth for once only. Hence, that his entrance on this physical scene was through the act of others, and we believe that whatever of merit or demerit is his was handed on to him by his forebears. As a consequence, man constantly shifts his responsibility, and acts as an irresponsible being. The whole falsity of our existence is centered there, for we are responsible for every ill that exists among us; every kind of suffering on every hand has been brought about through a false idea, and the false action which followed. What are sin, disease, sorrow and suffering but the result of our own thoughts and actions?

Again, we say “we cannot know;” or, “this life is all there is.” Therefore, the whole force of our consciousness is directed in the line of that one false idea and inhibited in the expression of any other; whereas all directions lie absolutely open to us, if only we understand our own natures. Man circumscribes his own conditions by the false ideas he holds in regard to life. No one holds him back. He holds himself back. Yet, even with his narrowing, limiting ideas and conceptions, he is able to accomplish wonderful things. Whatever he sets out to do on the purely physical, material plane of life, he accomplishes in a shorter or greater length of time. If his ideas of religion are all concerned with the physical aspect of life, however, how can he know more? All the conquests that he can make will be physical conquests. What could it avail him in the direction of real knowledge, if he continued similar conquests from civilization to civilization, age to age, planet to planet, solar system to solar system? He could gain nothing but a small sum of possible combinations and correlations, and in all that search and effort would not have gained the first fundamental of true knowledge, of true thought and action.

The kingly mystery of Life can not mean physical existence, which is merely one aspect of the Great Life. We have to go deeper into our own natures, and into the natures of all beings, in order to grasp what that great mystery is. Then the lives of all beings become clear Unto us; we understand what all phases of existence mean; we see the causes for all the difficulties that surround us; we know how to bring about better results, and we perceive from the very first that the power lies in us, and in us alone, to bring about all future changes for ourselves. Looking at all existence from a universal point of view, we become able to exercise the power which lies in the essential spiritual basis of every being, high or low. The One Self appears only to be divided among the creatures; in reality, It is not divided at all. Each being is That in his essential nature. In It is

the foundation of all power; in It lies the power of unfolding, of evolution, which makes possible for each being—representing one ray of that One Life—the attainment of a full knowledge of Life in his own true nature.

Each one of us stands in the midst of a great and silent evolution. Each one of us sees many expressions of different beings— those of the same grade as ourselves and beings of grades below us. We find relations with other elements, the power of which we do not see, the source of which we do not grasp, yet the effects of which we feel. On every hand we are getting effects from different beings of different grades, each one receiving those effects differently. The beings below us in forms of the mineral, vegetable, and animal world are all working, just as we are working, toward a greater and greater realization of the whole. Sparks of the One Spirit, of the One Consciousness, they have begun their little lives in forms, or bodies, by which they may contact others. As they have need for better and better instruments, need for further and further contact, they evolve, from within, a better instrument. Such is the whole course of evolution, always from within outwards, and always with the tendency to an increasing individuality. From the one ocean of Life there finally tends to arise—Divinity.