

CHAPTER XXII

THE REAL WHITE MAN'S BURDEN

HERE we are, the whites—the saloon passengers on the good ship *Earth*. We have the most roomy quarters. We have the wireless service, the reading-rooms, the music and the daily journals of our flight through space; while there be those of darker skins and darker fate who “sit in darkness” in the steerage.

We have Christianity, in an imperfect and undeveloped form in our lives and still more perfectly in our thoughts. We have the wonderful new bible of science which has gone far to redeem our souls from quibbles and uncandor, and has brought us into the presence of essential honesty for the first time in the history of the race. We have the Christ come again truly in the perfected theory of democracy. These things have come to be current

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coin in the commerce of speech and thought in the upper circles of the passenger list of the good ship *Earth*—among the whites.

They are spreading to the yellows, browns and blacks, to be sure. Human brains are alike, whatever may be the tinge of the skin—and souls have no distinctions of color. But in the main, the great germinal conceptions which make for progress are the possessions of the white race.

Have we a duty toward those “that sit in darkness”? Is there a real “White Man’s Burden” of which Kipling’s barbarous image of jailorship is a shadowing-forth? Does it make any real difference to the white man as to what the fate of the other races turns out to be? Can he do anything for the other races, even if he tries?

He *must* do something for them. The blacks, yellows, reds and browns are contenders with us for the occupancy of the ship. They constitute the yellow peril, the Moham-medan peril, the black peril, the Hindu peril, and to a large extent, the Spanish-Port-

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tuguese peril. The races on the earth are like the cat, the dog and the fox which were sewed in a bag and hung in a tree—they can not ignore one another.

What do the other races lack which we possess? Broadly, they lack the essentials of good safe companionship on this great and mysterious voyage.

They lack that redeeming honesty of thought which science has given our best thought, and without which truth can not be attained.

They lack the understanding and appreciation of democracy, which is the hope of the world in that it makes for the development of every human being, rather than of an upper class standing on the masses' necks. Lacking that they must always be Lascars, Kanakas, beach-combers and pirates of the ship's crew.

They lack knowledge of the truths of Christianity. And lacking that, they lack the spiritual basis of the political redemption through democracy, and the candor and good faith of science. The golden rule is the summation of

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more redemptive politics and redemptive scientific conduct than any other utterance ever given to the world. The Sermon on the Mount is the magnetic pole of ethics to which all compasses of life must point, even when the voyages are frankly otherwheres. These things the white race possesses. It owes to the other races the duty of carrying them to all peoples.

In short, the real white man's burden is not that of conquest, but of evangelization. This must be done, not through soldiers, but through missionaries. The greatest profession of the future among us must be, not arms, but teaching.

And first, we must purge ourselves of our own gross and apparent sins, errors and shortcomings. Our message is that of the redemptive power of the principles of love, knowledge and democracy. Well, then the white nations must cease to kill, to oppress, to threaten. Otherwise they can not preach love. We must cease to suppress truth, even though it may seem destructive or damaging to great interests. Otherwise, we can not teach our knowl-

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edge with authority. We must do away with every obstacle to the exercise of the popular will in our own countries. Otherwise, we can not teach democracy. Love, knowledge and democracy are all stultified while poverty remains among us as our hoariest institution; and while that persists, we can not preach our message successfully in any of its forms.

The missionary efforts of the Christian world have not been more successful, because even savages divine the fact that we do not practise, or really believe our Christianity—and intelligent non-Christians know it. Why should they change one form of belief for another which makes no promise of a better life in this world? It is this world which needs missionary efforts—the future life will be better served than otherwise, I suspect, by properly serving this. We must show the nations of the world that our ideals may be lived up to in city, state, nation and Christendom. We must be able to hold out to the suffering peoples who sit in darkness—white and colored—a redemption from their sufferings in this world.

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We shall need to do greatly, and dare greatly, within our own borders if we are to do that—and such is our first task.

In the meantime, and after, a different sort of missionarying must go on. We must enlist recruits from the great intelligent peoples—the Japanese, Hindu, Chinese—they must help us as their fitness grows with ours. The white man's burden will become the developed man's burden. Our missionarying will reach every nook of the world, white, black, brown and yellow, with demonstration stations of right living—the living of the full, complex, complete, civilized life. It will be backed by millions of money, but not a single weapon. Where their manner of living can not save them, these missionaries will refuse safety. They will reject the protection of the powers, and punitive expeditions will no longer refute the truths of the teachers they are ostensibly sent out to aid. There will be an age of martyrs. The jungles of the tropics will receive many who will never come out. But if the white man's burden is to be carried, the

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knights and ladies of the future must ride by millions into dangers greater than those of Arthurian romance.

They will carry, not swords, lances and armor, but tools, laboratories and libraries. They will seek to inspire, not to control or govern. They will be patient, for they will know that a century is but a moment in this great game into which they are sitting. If they are killed, they will die unresistingly, and others will take their places. They will not ask for protection or retribution. And through this sort of assumption of the white man's burden will the world be redeemed, and the Kingdom of God be set up—not at Jerusalem, but over all the earth. Heaven will take care of itself, when people live these principles.

We passengers on the good ship *Earth* have been kept apart, have quarreled and fought, have ravaged and murdered for thousands of years because we could not agree about God!

This is the strangest of human tragedies. In the oldest of known books, perhaps, the ques-

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tion is asked "Canst thou by searching find out God?" The implied answer is that the thing can not be done. And yet, the breech-clouted savage is willing to bet his life in battle on the wager that he knows all about God. It is one of the first things he thinks he absolutely knows. Very soon after he has mastered it, however, he becomes satisfied that the stars and the moon are simple things which he quite fully comprehends. And the last thing to yield to civilized man's questioning is the soil under his feet—save one—the soul in his own body!

So it is that the lower man may be in development, the more impossible it is for him to comprehend the idea of a universal religion, or to assent to its desirability. To the savage, God is a being belonging in fee simple to his tribe. The next tribe has a god of its own, freely conceded to be a god, though a stranger. It takes a mighty march of mind to enable man to conceive of a universal religion, reached by diverse ways, through developments of many faiths.

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And yet, either by right or wrong methods, we are coming into view of such a development. A learned man was recently asked to write for a New York publishing house a series of books on the founders of the great world's religions—Jesus, Buddha, Confucius, Zoroaster, Moses, Mohammed. In discussing the matter he expressed the view that we have now for the first time in the history of man reached a point where such a series may be impartially written. "For the first time," said he, "such a series may be given the world in the light of a universal philosophy of religion."

To the Christian no less than to other religionists, the idea is difficult. Most people on the earth at this time have passed the stage of believing in a god belonging in fee simple to the tribe, the state or the empire. The conception has mastered the world that God is God—universal, omnipotent, omnipresent. This is a wonderful advance toward a universal religion—and yet there is something in it that stands in the way of religious accord. For

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each religion claims, to be based on some peculiarly correct and authoritative revelation of God. The believer therefore is filled with the faith that his religion is the only true world religion, and that the universal religion can come by no means save the complete triumph of *his* faith. The Mohammedan believes this no less devoutly than the Christian—and this belief is stored with perils to the world.

But let us look back to the childhood of many of us when our parents and grandparents were perfectly sure that their Christian sect or church was the only one capable of saving souls from hell. The heathen themselves were no worse off than the communicants of the little church which held aloft its wooden spire or cross on the other side of the street. These creeds are substantially the same as then, but the old idea of God as the property in fee simple of one denomination has vanished with the concept of God as the property in fee simple of the tribe. Christians have come to think less of dogma, and more of love. They have

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drawn nearer to one another by rising to a common plane.

May not the same thing take place with the the great world's faiths? There came to this country in 1892 to the World's Congress of Religions—which may take its place in history as the first definite step toward world-wide religious peace—many of the more tolerant spirits of the non-Christian faiths. Among them was B. Nagarkar, a Hindu, who looked like a prophet and talked like Saint Paul. He was then, and for aught I know still is, the head of the Brahmo-Somaj, a reform religious body of India. He did not believe in caste, nor inherited uncleanness or damnation. He did not believe in child marriage. He was working for universal education and perfect democracy. He wanted for the Hindus all the benefits of science, invention and progress. He was a real progressive. His church uses a ritual in which are collected as inspired writings, the choicest gems of the holy books of India, our Old and New Testaments, the Koran, the Zoroastrian and Confucian scrip-

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tures. The Brahma-Somaj is a religion of the Golden Rule and the Sermon on the Mount, of progress and enlightenment.

Nagarkar's creed and personality would have made him an acceptable pastor for almost any Unitarian church, and he was not much at odds with, and would no doubt have been admitted to, membership in some denominations regarded as orthodox. He was a deeply religious person—but the background of his faith was Hindu, not Christian. Out of this background he had emerged, and his church with him, to a field of almost common ground with the great mass of Christian thought.

Are there not, then, uplands of the soul, on which we passengers on the good ship *Earth* may all meet and commune with the saints of all faiths? May it not be that God is moving through such faiths as the Brahma-Somaj in the Hindu world, and the Babists, or Bahaists in Islam to abolish caste, intolerance and poverty? Bahaim is the religion of a Mohammedan sect not more than seventy-five years

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old which seeks to establish "Humanity bound together by sympathy and unselfishness; a world in which there is neither intolerance nor war; a universal religion in which there shall be but two essentials—love for man and love for God; a universal language, and a universal educational system." Here is an outgrowth of Mohammedanism which is Christian in everything but the acknowledgment of the Godhead in Christ. Its acceptance by the Mohammedan world would be a thing of such magnificent promise to all of us as to be beyond description, and almost beyond imagination.

We may then look forward to the end of religious enmities. We may believe in a good time coming when Mohammedan, Parsee, Hindu, Shintoist, Confucian and Christian will feel no more hatred toward one another than Methodist and Congregationalist now do. There seems to be a pole toward which all spiritual compasses tend to point—the Pole of Divine Truth. We started far, far away from it, back in the long ago, when the huge

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air-ship *Earth* first generated the insect Man from her decks, and the compasses were deflected from the pole by all sorts of disturbances, but we have been struggling up nearer and nearer this pole, millions and millions of us. And not from the Christian nations alone do these spiritual explorers come, but from every earthly land where there is a soul which in love seeks light. Every such case develops its spiritual Peary.

And as we win nearer to truth, we draw together. We see one another more clearly. We find less to quarrel about. We find more in which we can share. After the exploring souls press the rest of mankind. We dare not believe that any jungle holds a people incapable of redemption by this quest for the Holy Grail.

I do not know how this may affect the welfare in the next world of those who win to the plane of tolerance and sympathy universal. That is a thing of which I profess to know nothing. But what a difference it will make in this world!

Suppose that at the time when Alva the

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Catholic carried fire and sword through Holland because the Dutch did not believe in the Pope, or that later time when Maurice of Nassau, the Protestant, butchered forty thousand Dutch because they did not believe in infant baptism, the religious people of Europe had been as good Christians as Nagarkar the Hindu, or Abd-ul-Baha the Mohammedan—what a difference it would have made!

There has been progress. Even Christianity is not what it used to be.