

# Cosmic Light

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*Ernest Holmes*



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## **Cosmic Light written by Ernest Holmes**

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The mystics, or those who were illumined, have all had an experience in common: They have seen the Cosmic Light. That is why it is said that they were illumined. They have all had much the same experience, whether it was Moses coming down from the mountain; whether it was Jesus after the resurrection; whether it was Saul on the return to Damascus; whether it was Plotinus, who, according to his pupils, had seven distinct periods of illumination.

Emerson, walking across the Common at Concord, suddenly became conscious of this light; Whitman refers to it as that which stuck its forked tongue into his being as he lay on the grass; Edward Carpenter, after leaving Whitman, walked across the bridge, and looking up, thought all of New York City was afire; and there are recorded many lesser degrees of illumination.

The mystics have all sensed this light, and we all do at times. In varying degrees we do enter into this mystical sense, this illumination. I feel that if a spiritual mind treatment could be seen, it would be seen as a pathway of light. All spiritually minded metaphysical practitioners, when they are treating, often experience a light about everything and feel that they are immersed in light.

We should never try to visualize this light or make it appear. Jesus said: "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation . . . for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." All forms of concentration that I have ever heard of do not lead to the mystical sense. They are psychological stunts. We must be very careful not to confuse these subjective phenomena with spiritual Reality. They may or may not be spiritual.

The mystics, having seen the light, have never been the same afterward, but they have been perfectly normal human beings. There was an added something, an atmosphere about them, that everyone felt. It is that atmosphere that we sense about people who are evolved spiritually, they have a sense of calm and certainty, a contact with Reality which all people arrive at to some degree. It has been the vitality of every religion, no matter what the dogmatism of its theology may have been.

So we find that people who spend a great deal of time in prayer, meditation, or communion with the Spirit gradually take on a new atmosphere, a new sweetness, a light which all people sense. As Plotinus said, this is a gift which all men have

but which few men use.

The Old Testament often refers to a light always shining over the altar in the temple. This light, of course, is a symbol of the Life that is never extinguished. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord . . ."; "Ye are the light of the world . . ."; "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

We find many references to light in the sacred scriptures of the world. Numerous Catholic saints make mention of it. St. Teresa said that the light was so strong that it was complete darkness, implying that the light was so bright that all else was dark in comparison. When Moses came down from the mountain, which is probably a symbol, there was a light around him so bright the people could not look at him, so he used a veil. There was also a light around Jesus. The light of Jesus has been sensed by artists so completely that they have depicted it as an aura, an atmosphere of light. It also appears around the heads of saints in paintings.

Now this light is real. There is such a light at the center of everything. During the ordinary course of affairs, without attempting to, you might see this light. Some day you may look up and there it is, the Substance Eternal falling so fine that you think it will drift across the sands of time and enclose all objects, only to discover that it falls through them. Infinite, lighter than light and brighter than bright, you can look right through it like you can look through a pane of glass. This is the Divine Stuff of which we are made. You might see it everywhere and in all things.

Symbolically, we must think a lot about light. I do not know exactly how to put it in words, but everything must become light. There is nothing outside this light, everything exists in it. Even though it may not appear to exist, it is there just the same.

There is a light at the center of everyone. This light is never obliterated, but it does seem that it is often obscured by various reasons. Jesus said never to put your light under a bushel, but to let it shine. On occasion you might be looking at someone and suddenly see him enveloped in light. At least this is the way it would appear to you. But he is always in the light; it is only that you have not seen it before.

Some people have the ability to see a person's aura, a light enveloping their body. It is said that it varies in color and in shape according to the habitual physical and emotional state. This light that encompasses everything can to a certain extent be photographed around the human body. The picture is often murky due to the fact we are covering it up with a bushel; however, there is a deeper light that if let come through will clear up any adverse condition.

So there is a light over the altar. We should consider ourselves as the altar and that there is light within ourselves as well as everything. Just as Moses saw the bush give light, so may you. This was not an illusion of his but a reality. At the center of everything there is fire, celestial fire, caught from heaven. Every bush

would blaze if we unified with that central spark which is the cause of all evolution, all advancement, everything we know, everything we shall ever attain.

It seems that in all forms of healing all that can be done is to let an inner light flow to restore us to our original pattern of perfection. All that any human ingenuity can do is to help restore us to that pattern, a pattern which we did not make.

In Genesis we find the reference to the generation of the time when the plant was in the seed before the seed was in the ground.

We need to discover another language to use, a language beyond the words we now use, or else we can never enlarge our capacities. We need to break down every precedent, for beyond all our human mental states, beyond all our human experiences there is a light that we must follow. Otherwise we shall merely be going round and round in a vicious circle, caught in a beautiful cage, trapped in a beautiful trap, living still pretty much under a law of illusion or delusion, whichever it may be. Remember, this was the genius of Moses and Jesus: they did not break the law, but transcended it. This is what we have to do. We need to break out of our shell of monotony and discover within the light that lights every man's life.

We need to break through our habitual thought patterns which repeat themselves with monotonous regularity. We could not do this if there were not a transcendent pattern for us, if there were not a light beyond our darkness. This light is not a figment of fanciful imagination. There is such a transcendence in every living thing. If there were not the seed could not burst its encasement and send down roots and send up shoots. If there were not the birds would not nest, the child would not play, the butterfly would not come out of its chrysalis and spread its wings in flight.

Never be afraid to let your imagination soar, so long as you know it is lucid and not confused. There is a big difference. Spiritual genius is normal, but we must not mistake psychic hallucination for spiritual genius, or take a hunch for an intuition, or a word we hear for Divine guidance. This is where we have to be very careful.

There are those who have been absolutely clear thinkers. Jesus in what he did was the only normal man who ever lived. Shakespeare's imagination was the only normal imagination, or more nearly normal, than anybody else's. The deductions of Einstein were the only normal things in that category that the world has ever known.

There is a Divine imagination, a light that lighteth every man's path. Every great creator has found it, and every great composer has found it, or it has found them. Emerson said that sometimes the muse, too strong for the bard, sits astride his neck and writes through his hand. This is the only great writing there is. All great writing, great poetry, great music, great acting, and great everything is done under the inspiration of that Thing which is the only final writer, the only thinker, and the only doer there is.

This does not mean that you are a puppet, a pawn on a checkerboard. But you

would be if you accepted the old theology and philosophy of life. However, you want to discover that light which most of the world knows nothing about, you want to be aware of it, but do not try to force the idea on others.

When a singer sings it is God singing through him. It is not an imitation of God and individuality is never obliterated. Individuality only accentuates the song; it is the only thing that permits the song. This is why Emerson said that imitation is suicide, and there is a place in every man's life where the reins run out full length, for spiritual genius is hidden in the commonplace.

God is omnipresent, hence there is a Divine creative urge pressing against everything. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." There is a Universal Artist seeking to devote His or Its whole time to what one is undertaking as though there were nothing else for It to do. But as Emerson said, we have to get our bloated nothingness out of the way.

To surrender to this Genius within is not conceited, for if we were conceited we could not surrender to It. There has to be in everyone a light, there has to be in everyone a Divinity that shapes his ends, rough hew them though he may. There has to be behind everyone an urge and a push, and in front a pull that is irresistible, immutable, and absolute. There has to be a state of Consciousness that exercises Its authority at the level of our perception of It.

Do not be afraid to seek this Consciousness, to experiment with It. Do not feel you are silly if you believe in It. It is not hallucinatory, It is real, It is a light, I have seen It many times. This is the Mount of Transfiguration; this is the secret place of the most High. This is the light of illumination - the thing Jesus and Moses saw until a halo was visible around their heads and an aura of light around their bodies.

All at once there it is! You do not know where it came from, you cannot say it came, you hardly know what it is, but it is a light that is ineffable in its beauty and apparently flows in and around and through all things in a softness that dims the light of the sun. There is nothing hard about it. It does not cloud the vision and it seems as though you are part of it. I can well understand at least something of the meaning of Jesus when he said: "I am the light of the world."

Jesus was one who walked fully in the light. There is a light that permeates the world but we have not sensed it. We need, in the silence of our own contemplation, to take time to feel that light and to see it. We have to hitch our earthly wagon to a spiritual star because if we do not we are going to hitch it to a make-believe life, something that has no light at all. The only light there is is the Light Eternal.

Very frequently I sit down all alone for two hours and listen to the silence and it speaks, and look into the darkness and it turns light - it is there and there is no question about it. God is warmth, Spirit is colorful, the Universe is filled with light. A voice speaks from everything - running brooks, stones and trees, animals and

moon and stars, deserts and stillness. And you can listen to the stillness until it speaks to you.

Back of us the Infinite searches, finding manifestation through us, as us, and all that we are. It is what we are and we should never deny It. When we surrender to It we are not surrendering to a foreign agent, but are acquiescing consciously to a Divine host, a celestial visitor, a universal individualization.

When that day arrived in prehistoric times when the evolutionary drive and push had done all that could be done by compulsion, it left only the automatic reactions of the physical body to keep it going to the place of self-discovery. That quality which is intuition in a man is instinct in an animal. Instinct brought to the point of real personality, where there is the possibility of reflecting upon one's own state of consciousness, becomes pure intuition. But it is the same thing, just a step up. The instinct in an animal, and intuition or illumination in a man, are the same thing working on different levels. It is God in man and God in the animal.

Everything is an individuation of God but no thing in itself is an individual separate from God. It is basic to our belief that the Divine, hid within us as Presence, is revealed through the person like a flaming sword landing in the mundane clod and impregnating it with that spark which Browning said a man may desecrate but never quite lose - a Divine spark ignited at the altar of a Cosmic Fire, a flame in the process of its own unfoldment that innumerable, limitless, infinite variations of the One Self shall return to the One Self, having established the right relationship within the One Self, separate without being separated.

At first there will be only the conscious cooperation between what appears to be the one and the Other. Then gradually there will be recognition of the Other as the one, and finally there will be only One. And we are not in It, or of It, or with It - we are It.

Our future evolution will be only as we perceive that light in the darkness, until the darkness is no longer there. Only as we accept our Divine individualization can we discover that within us which is already perfect and complete. This is where the soul makes its great claim on God. This is where the Spirit discovers Itself in Its creation. This is where the Prodigal returns to the Father's house. This is where we unite with that Light which lighteth everything.

Everything we go in search for we overlook, looking at we do not see, or, seeing somewhat, interpret only in the light of that which we reflect into it from the glory which is ours.

Let us then believe in that Light and Life. Let us seek to see It everywhere - feel It, announce It, and pronounce It. The greatness which we recognize in Moses, Buddha, Jesus, and Emerson is wonderful if they have awakened us to a higher level of perception within ourselves. We may know that perception now if they have awakened us to the knowledge that there are no prophets but the wise, that there is no God higher than truth, and that there is no Universe that we can escape from.

If they have awakened us to all that, they have merely awakened us to a self-perception of something which already existed within us.

This is why Emerson said that when we go to hear a great man talk it is we who give him that greatness. We are all great, not in a sense of conceit, but because we cannot announce our greatness without including the greatness of everything that lives. Something forevermore blinds our eyes to the perception of the self unless it interprets itself elsewhere. We cannot claim anything for ourselves with any validity unless we see it is in others.

In this respect we should regain in our consciousness that spontaneity which we had as a child. The child who was in us, before we learned to be so sophisticated, is not dead, is not asleep. We have crowded so much experience, so much negation into our lives that not he, but we, have forgotten that celestial palace whence we came.

Each of us should seek that beam of light within and follow it to the great Light - the Light that is in everything. We must acquiesce to It, and surrender all that has made us unhappy, all that has isolated us from It. Only then can God fully pronounce Himself through us and in us, and personalize Himself as us.

We must awaken ourselves and rediscover the lost paradise; find within us that child who was not afraid of the universe in which he lived, who did not deny himself or his God, and who had not listened to the dull monotonous tune of condemnation.

There is a place on the side of the mountain we are all ascending where, having gone beyond the peaks that obstructed the Light for us our ascent reaches an apex where no longer any shadows are cast. This is the Light that is spoken of, that lighteth every man's path, and as you believe that you live, believe that you are that Light. As you believe in the possibility of your own soul, believe it is God. As you believe in God, believe in yourself.

But what am I?

An infant crying in the night:

An infant crying for the light:

And with no language but a cry.

- Tennyson, In Memoriam

Climax! talk given by Ernest Holmes

Editor's Note: What appears here is probably one of the most unique events in the history of man.

Much has been written about those who have experienced cosmic consciousness or illumination. Then there are those who have had such experiences and later written about them.

However, here is the transcript of a recording that was made while a person was having such an experience.

That person was Ernest Holmes.

The setting was the dedication of Christ Church of Religious Science, Whittier, California, February 12, 1959.

Quite often in giving talks, toward the end Dr. Holmes would seem particularly inspired. His voice would take on a different caliber. To the listener he would almost seem to be a different person. This occurred during his address as the principal speaker at the dedication. Shortly after this happened he had the illuminating experience, probably the greatest in his lifetime, and abruptly ended his talk. Witnesses at the time said he appeared radiant. However, when he took his seat he seemed physically exhausted, and emotionally distraught.

That night he spoke of the experience to a friend, but never made public mention of it.

We are indebted to the Reverend William M. Hart for sharing the recording with us. At the time he was President of the Board of Trustees of this Church and was present on this occasion. He is now Minister of the Church.

Earlier portions of Dr. Holmes' talk have been deleted because they were not pertinent to this event.)

Our movement grows and expands very rapidly, as rapidly, I think as is possible because we would not wish to mistake its end and purpose, which is not the building of churches, it is not the dedicating of churches; it is what happens in them after they are built and after they are dedicated. It is what happens whenever a group of people in our conviction meet together for the only two purposes for which we exist: teaching and practice.

We are a teaching and a practicing order in the Christian faith that believes in two great fundamental realities. The Divine Presence, personal to every living soul and uniquely personal to each and every one of us that is the first great cornerstone. The next is a Power for Good and a Law of Mind in the universe greater than we are that we can use for definite and specific purposes. The first one everyone believes in; the second proposition probably twenty million people in this country now believe in, somewhat. And perhaps two hundred thousand of them really know what it is that they believe. But I doubt it.

It is our endeavor, through our educational system, to teach people what this Principle is and how to use It. It is not our endeavor to convert anybody to our faith. It is to prove something, first of all to ourselves, then to the world. And we have no authority before the world and ask for none and will have none ever, I

hope, other than the authority of the work that follows the word.

How fortunate we are! How lucky you and I are that we are here tonight. We are indeed favored among all people on Earth of all ages, for we have taken the banner that Jesus resigned when he said to the thief beside him: Do not be afraid, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." It is quite a banner! It is with this banner that we go forward "obeying the Almighty effort, and advancing on chaos and the dark."

We are a teaching order, not a preaching order. We are a practicing order, not a proselyting order. The world has waited long for something to happen. Now the healing power of the unseen magic of the Spirit can be made evident. This is the basis of our cornerstone.

We have not yet done what I believe we should do with our membership. We are here tonight to dedicate a church, a physical building. I think it is beautiful, I think it is wonderful, I think it is a miracle, but I know why it is here. It is here because you are here and because the consciousnesses of all of you wonderful people have moved together. And what happened? Power! Like the weaving of a rope where one strand will hold no weight but many strands united will hold terrific weight. We have yet to see what the multiple consciousness of a church body can do if the members are properly trained, if they permit someone to exercise authority over them - not over their theology, not over their private lives, but over one thing only, their spiritual concepts: There is a Law of Good; there is a Power in the universe greater than we are and we can use It. And It will multiply Its effects a thousand times through the united consciousness of a group.

I have had so much inward conviction about this the last year. There are so many wonderful religions in the world. We are not better than the others. We are not more spiritual, we are not more evolved, we are not anything other than this one thing - (Change of voice) We have co-joined our consciousness with the eternal guarantee of the Universe that the everlasting and eternal Father of all life and the Mother of all creation, forever begetting the only begotten, is begetting him in us, right now. And that the word of our mouth is a word of Truth in such degree as it emulates and embodies the Truth which sanctifies the word to its unique service of healing, not only the sick, but the poor in heart.

We are dedicated to the concept that the pure in heart shall see God, here; that the meek will inherit the earth, now; that one with Truth is a majority; that everyone of us in the secret place of the most High, in the center of his own consciousness, has the secret with the Eternal, the Everlasting, the Almighty, and the Ineffable. God and I are One. And I see uniting in one great inner praise, one great union of effort, one crescendo of song, and one enveloping light of consciousness . . .

(12-second pause) I see it! [A hushed but dynamic voice]

(10-second pause) O God!

(5-second pause) The veil is thin between.

(Pause) We do mingle with the hosts of heaven.

(Pause) I see it!

And I shall speak no more.