Butterworth Sp@ oks E s s a y

THE UNITY PRINCIPLE

The Unity principle is the principle of wholeness. Though life and the world in which we live may seem incomplete and imperfect, yet there is a perfect whole, and we are impelled, by a hidden instinct, toward a reunion with the parts of the larger heart of the universe.

Edmund Sinnott, the renowned biologist, senses the Unity principle in which the same forces that are present in nature are in man, and all are the activity of the whole within the part, influencing the development toward the whole. He writes, "Somehow there must be present within the plant's living stuff, imminent in all its parts, something that represents the natural configuration of the whole, as a norm to which its growth conforms, a 'goal' toward which development is invariably directed. This insistent fact confronts us everywhere in biology."

In fact, all life has a distinct relationship with a transcendent influence, and plants are but the first step of our discovering the relationship in a tangible way. Through the use of the polygraph, it is shown that plants register emotions and feelings in response to the feelings and emotions of people. Your love for your plant and your tender care can cause it to flourish, while your resentment and hostility can cause it to wither. On the human level it should be also remembered: one cannot suffer without all suffering.

In the Unity principle there is a basic oneness with all mankind. I am not my brother's keeper, I am my brother's brother. More than this, as Emerson says, "I am my brother and my brother is me." For this reason, it is always error to affix blame. Wars, sickness, race relations, and economic problems are our problems, and we must work them out as individuals.

In the same way, one cannot pray in the consciousness of love except that all experience that sense of love in some way. Thus peace can begin with me, and one person can do something positive and powerful about the consciousness of the world.

Love is the active principle of unity. Everything loves, and everything responds to love. We glibly say, "What the world needs is love", but this is like telling partners in a marital dispute that all they need is love. They would agree, but say that they simply don't love each other anymore.

Love is not something that happens to you, but something that flows through you. It is the energy that comes from the transcendence within man. No matter how people may be separated by differences, there is a level where communication is not only possible, but it is constant. When you experience love, you are simply sensing your basic unity with a person or with people in general.

Conflicts and human differences come because of the loss of the dimension of depth. If we can just step through the looking glass, we will find unity, love, and understanding. This transcendence within us is always there. It may be frustrated, but never lost.

I like to reduce the Unity principle down to the relationship that exists between the sub-atomic particle and the energy field that influences it. When we discovered the make-up of the atom and isolated the various sub-atomic particles involved, we turned our attention to the force fields that hold them in place and cause the various groupings that make up substances like calcium or iron. At this point, science had to become metaphysical in asking, "Why do the forces act as they do?" The principle developed that the particle is not simply held in place by a force, but actually is the force acting as a particle which has no existence outside of the force. This is the key to the unity of the entire universe. It explains man's relationship with God, or the Infinite Source.

You may believe that there is a Cosmic force that acts upon you, that guides you and heals you. But in the principle of unity, you are not simply the creation of God, molded and shaped and set out on the path of life "down here". You are
the force or presence of God expressing Himself (or Itself) as you. And you have no existence outside of that force or presence.

This is the key that opens the whole phenomenon of Jesus, His life and teachings and miracle works. Jesus demonstrated the unity of all life. He proved that all men can achieve what He did, not through any special dispensation, but by the power that results from the awareness of unity: "I and the Father are one."

All the evils that beset the world today—lack, sickness, inharmony and war—have their root in the belief of separation. When one gets angry, tense, fearful, or negative in any way, he uncouples himself. The cure is to "arise and go unto the Father", which simply means to "step through the looking glass" and see the whole. The purpose of all religion should be to help people to find this cosmic awareness of unity with God and with one another.

Beneath the diversity of form and expression, beyond the apparent division and difference, there is a deep, essential unity. Consider the prism, which accepts sunlight on one side and projects the spectrum of colors from the other. In back of the differences of color there is but one light, not many.

The infinite must be a unity. You cannot split the infinite into fractions. Just as the light in the red and the light in the blue are one, the spirit in me and the spirit in you are also one. Unity can neither be multiplied nor divided, for either operation destroys the unity. Thus if we would penetrate below the outward nature of the individual to that innermost principle of his being from which his individuality takes rise, we can do so only by passing beyond the concept of individual existence into that of the unity of universal being.

The one great fact about unity is that because it is a single unity, whatever it is at all the whole of it must be. If we talk about one part of the unity here and another there, we lose the idea of unity. Because it is infinite and limitless, it is everywhere, and the whole of spirit must be present at every point in space at the same moment. Spirit is omnipresent in its entirety, and it is accordingly logically correct that at every moment of time all spirit is concentrated at any point in space that we may choose to fix our thought upon. There is no spot where God is not.

Many who have studied this principle have wondered what the world would be like if our children could grasp this concept early in life. But usually the urge to pass it on expresses itself in theological indoctrination, normally dealing with outwardisms without the dimension of depth.

One battle that has raged is over the ban on prayer in the schools. To me this has seemed somewhat ridiculous. For one thing, the way prayers are presented in schools are likely to turn off more children than otherwise. We do not need to teach children about God in schools. We need to teach the ideal of transcendent wholes, the Unity principle, which is absolutely scientific.

Religion as an exercise or as a subject is not the answer. The need is for dealing with the whole process of education in an integrated way, with the principle of unity having a prominent place. Friedrich Froebel, the German educator, puts it in this way: "The educator should make the individual and particular general; the general particular and individual, and elucidate both in life. He should make the eternal internal and indicate the necessary unity of both...He should see and perceive the divine essence in whatever is human, trace the nature of man to God, and seek to exhibit both within one another in life."

It is my feeling that the time must come when colleges and universities will recognize the concept of UNITIVITY as the higher corollary of relativity, and thus build their program on the complete integration of knowledge with the knower.

The student must never lose sight of the thread of spiritual unity, whether he is in the laboratory, the observatory, on the athletic field or in the chapel.