

# BROTHERHOOD OF THE NEW LIFE

ITS FACT, LAW, METHOD AND PURPOSE.

The rapid march of events and the call for more frequent and varied utterances make it necessary to modify our plan of Quarterly Publication. To fight our ship well, its broadside must never be deferred when the enemy comes within good striking distance.

Comrades may expect that our writings will be issued from the Fountaingrove Press and elsewhere, as rapidly as emergencies require. The effort will be to fashion words in the divine spirit, and for the social-humane purpose of the hour.

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# BROTHERHOOD OF THE NEW LIFE:

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LETTER FROM

THOMAS LAKE HARRIS.

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FOUNTAINGROVE, SANTA ROSA.

June 23, 1891.

HON. THOMAS L. THOMPSON,

"Sonoma Democrat."

DEAR SIR:

Permit me to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your cordial and timely favor of yesterday, and to make such hasty and partial reply to the main point of your inquiry as the pressure of my many duties will allow. As to what "the Papers " say of myself or of my friends, it has been our uniform rule to take no notice.

For nearly half a century I have been dreaming a lovely dream of the New Harmonic Civilisation; of the ending of all feuds, the vanishment of all diseases, the abolishment of all antagonisms, the removal of all squalors and poverities, in a fulfilled Christian era; a new golden age of universal peace; as one

"Who rowing hard against the stream  
Sees distant gates of Eden gleam,  
And knows the dream is not a dream."

The Ideal always precedes, yet prophesies its fulfilment in the realised human actual. The solidest and most enduring of organisations first float before the world's thought as pictured imaginations. It was this prevision of a new Confederation of Humanity, in a new and noble People of a new continent, heir to the royalties of all the ages, that shone as a winged and constellated Hope before the eyes of the Pilgrim Fathers, the Revolutionary heroes and sages, and so on to the young eyelids of our own ascending and evolutionary time. I have sought to fold the genius of Christianity, to fathom its divine import, and to embody its principle in the spirit and body of our own America.

There are two chief currents of vital force that operate through the human mind and its organism for the evolutionary advance. The first and minor stream flows through scientific invention, for the conquest and reclamation of Nature, and for the adaptation of its immense productive forces to the human service. Discoveries in this line of mechanical invention have added the working power of a thousand millions of men to the industrial forces of each day of the world's toil. Each new discovery, to the last achievement of our Edison, is greater than its predecessor, and each in turn opens avenues to mightier and unforeseen results. Miracle has entered science, and advances through it as with the front and aspect of the God.

But there is in evolution a correlated current, which is dominant and supreme. Pythagoras apprehended its existence and defined it as operating by laws of rhythmic harmony in the universe, and in the constitution of man. It is implied, though but hinted at, in the remains of literature surviving from the great and creative epochs of Asian, Hebrew, and Grecian history. It is a force that comes forth in the close of each act of the World-Drama and that, by

its differentiation to mightier tendencies and results in man, inaugurates the new act.

“Westward the star of Empire takes its way,  
The first four acts already past,  
The fifth shall close the drama with the day,  
Time's noblest Empire is its last.”

Men of exceptional endowments: men, so to say, structured and sensitive to the movements of this rhythmic force; men capable of its study by the logic of pure reason and of obedience to its immense demands, are drawn into the whirl of its operation and must live henceforth—if they live at all—as servants of the Hour, as ministrants to its destiny.

The alleged mystery of my life, when understood, is as simple as that of George Fox or of Thomas Edison. I discovered in early manhood the key to the harmonic law of Pythagoras: I discerned it to be one in essence and effect with the law expressed by other and diviner phrases in the sayings of the Christ. The dogma of that law is religiously expressed in the Apostles' creed; its ethic is intimated in the Sermon on the Mount; its operation involves man's natural system in the system of the supernatural. It reinstates the law of miracle in the law of nature. It leads on by its effect to the redemption of the flesh of man from the gross passions and cupidities that are incidental to his lowly natural origin. It quickens and reedifies the mind of man, to become the chaste temple of the breathing Infinite. In a word it opens for the race a New Life, in which all men shall be unified as one social body in God from the greatest to the least, and all shall know God, filially, personally, absolutely, from the least to the greatest.

Now mankind, as the Church continuously affirms, is involved, by its heredity, in an odious obsequiousness to

Nature. Once, whilst in the integrity of his creation, upright and dominant over the animal; since then, "made subject to vanity" or illusion, the animal world by its notional or phantasmal images overclouds his reason, whilst his senses are loaded, depraved and contaminated by its appetences, exaggerated and perverted to cupidities and lusts. The primitive or tygal man stood humanly upright, respiring in the rhythms of a divine circulation, from the hour when "God breathed into him the breath of life and he became a living soul." The estrayed and carnally subjected mankind breathes bodily away from God, the Source and Center of existence. It breathes continuously into the gross, and often deadly, natural ether. That atmosphere, loaded with spores, bacteria, breeding and spawning forms generated from the disease, decay and death, the strife, greed and lust of the world, flows into him with each motion of the lungs; in turn to re-beget and reproduce, till each nerve-tissue of his frame is infested and led captive in the coilage of the universal evil.

Now the first of the discoveries that came to me was the key to all that follows. Great in itself, it has opened on from year to year to others, in themselves immense, incredible, overwhelming; but pregnant with results of vast and durable beneficence to mankind that can hardly be expressed in words. Conscious human life begins and ends with the fact and consciousness of breath: all men are aware of the fact that they breathe from and breathe into nature. Immersed by the continuous act of respiration in this beautiful and bounteous natural world; they living in it; it living in them; their faculties open to the knowledge of Nature and their senses are thrillingly fed and solaced by its joys. With me the breath is twofold: besides the usual breathing from and into Nature, is an organic action of



breathing from and into the Adorable Fount and Spirit of existence. First realised as by a new birth of the breathing system; a breath of new intellectual and moral infancy, this carefully held, reverently and sacredly cherished as a gift of God, has advanced till at present each organ of the frame respire in breathing rhythms, making of the body one conscious form of unified intellectual and physical harmony: the spirit, the real or higher self, is absorbing the lowly naturehood, yet meanwhile nourishing it with the rich and vital elements of a loftier realm of being. This gift that I hold is the coming inheritance of all.

Mankind awaits its New Humanity  
As Earth once waited for the first-born rose.

Every act of my respiration for the last forty years has partaken of this complex character. "He breathed upon them and said, receive ye the Holy Ghost." [spiritus; breath.] He breathes into me so that I receive the holy breath continually. In my lowly, creature emptiness and nothingness, I yet realise the organic presence of the Christ. I witness, in this age of unbelief, to the fulfilment of the Master's promise.

During the years that ensued when the new respiration had been confirmed and established in me, I made this the central topic in the discourses of several years, preached in New York and in various cities of Great Britain; the reports of which fill two or three volumes.

In grim earnest I have grappled with the fierce Problem of Human Life, that by the cultured mind of our age, as to that of all previous eras, has been given up as insolvable. From that first discovery of a new respiration, "the breath of God in man," I have advanced, in the logical sequences of an inductive that is correlated with its own deductive

philosophy ; working out and verifying in actual experience the laws of the universal mental, moral, physical and social renewal of mankind. My writings for the last thirty years have been mainly withheld from the Public, as I was unwilling to present crude or partial statements, or those not capable of complete demonstration.

To re-unify man, individually and hence socially with God, is obviously to organise evolution in his corporate system. Spake the Christ, "Greater works than these shall ye do." The final chord of the rhythmic law, that operates for the renaissance of the human system and its senses from age to youth, was not touched till the early days of the last autumn, and not until my own bodily structures were reduced to an appearance of frail, emaciated and perishing age. Within a week after finding the touch of the last rhythmic chord that leads the harmonic vibrations into bodily renewal, the bent form stood upright; flesh grew upon the bones; the dim eyes found their sparkle; every bodily sense awoke re-invigorated; the fountains of the blood seemed to flow as by a vortical motion, rounding in each recuperative organ to one grand consciousness of bodily grandeur, freedom, and, in a sense, of corporate immortality.

Thus it will be perceived, that my endeavor has not been to construct a new philosophy, much less to found a sect in religion, much less to organise a petty social community. I have but taken hold of the clue that every noble and virtuous young man dreams of and aspires to find in the brilliant hours of his ardent and heroic prime, and I have followed that clue till the life-path rounds again into the morning. Human life, in the pursuit of this path, shall no more be a disappointment: shall no more be a failure. No more, as the New Life becomes known and realised, shall hearts be crucified, and minds perverted, and man-

hood crippled, and womanhood outraged, and truth enchained, and its sages assassinated.

In Appleton's *Encyclopedia* I am designated as a Reformer. In entire modesty I accept the term, yet with an enlarged significance. In these discoveries I proffer to mankind its own re-formed, renewed and ever renewing structure; the body of its infirm and prostrate naturehood uplifted to the promise and fruition of the creative idea; potentially unified with and reedified in the body of its inward and indestructible humanity, by the perpetual operations of the Divine inbreathing and outbreathing spirit. I proffer that which an inspired Apostle declared to be the final outbirth of the agony and travail of the ages; "the redemption of the body;" the fulfilment in material substance of the old, now almost forgotten, Christian hope. Yet I proffer this purely as in the lines of an orderly and supreme evolution.

The seal to the truth of our Divine Savior's ministry was set in the resurrection of His corporate fleshly image from the grave; a psychic body that was also full structured in the intense material. The attestation to the truth of the New Life follows in this law and line of evidence. Logically I believe, that in the advance of the New Life we shall soon begin to see our noblest, most heroic, most humane men and women, without respect to their previous religious or social cultures, lifting up, breathing forth; corporeally in a firstness of resurrection; their bodies in gradual transposition to that glorious image of the divine-human Lord. Civilisation is verging to a crisis; tending to the supreme agony. Now, as always, "man's extremity is God's opportunity."

But this mortal mind and flesh, this action and passion of the frame, can not be translated from naturehood into humanhood by any process but that of the acceptance and



adoption, by each individual, of the whole corporate interest of mankind as his interest; to be embraced and served in the full denial of any superior self-interest, or family or churchly or class interest. With the discovery that he begins to breathe in God, comes to the man the discovery that God lives in the common and lowly people of the world.

Here then is found the present cross of Christ. The aristocrat must be crucified to aristocracy; the plebeian to plebeianism; the luxurist to luxury; the ascetic to asceticism; the exclusive to exclusionism. It is a strict, honest give up and come out from spoilage, pretence and illusion. For this God is a jealous God: he proffers to man the wealth of a consummate and indestructable manhood, to be realised in each filial and fraternal personality; but man, to receive the gift, must first accept the common burden and sorrow and service of mankind.

Here and there, in Asia, in Europe, in Australia and America, men and women of heart, of thought, of humane principle, realise this new breath, and draw by vital and organic sympathies into the relations of communion in the New Life. They know, by their own mental advance, that a social crisis is at the doors: they are seeking to endure to the end, and to become fitted for service in the exigences of the extreme hour.

Our unique experience and attitude forces upon us liabilities to great misapprehension. The first thought of the vulgar is, that secrecy and mystery, isolation and home-keeping, imply depravity. Wherever in any country our little families exist, our industrious, peaceful, harmless and non-aggressive ways always, however, command respect. This is notwithstanding the attacks in the Sensational Press now and then upon the one of our number, whose name is most publicly identified with "the Life," and upon

the nearer of his associates. We have received and gratefully acknowledge great obligations both to members of the learned professions, to the Public Journalists and to the business and industrial community for hearty kindnesses and recognitions. Nothing stands but Character in the long run: we can not talk down misrepresentations, but we can live them down.

To adapt a figure from Bulwer's romance;—if a brilliant, aristocratic but fast-living Glyndon forces himself upon the retirement of Zanonì, is healed of his mortal malady by means of infusions of the "vrillic essence," fed with supreme knowledges and given years of affluent vigór; yet afterward, against all warnings, plunges into a career of ruinous hallucinations and perishes by its inevitable consequences, it does not follow that the remains of the dead exhale a perfume of sanctity, or that the modest Sage was a charlatan or an impostor. So,—without making personal applications,—this may well be conceived:—that, if there are men who grasp the grand law of the New Life and who thereby handle forces that are potential for mental and bodily sanitation and renewal, among the many who seek and who profit by their ministrations there may be some who first pervert the gifts to their own purposes, and who thence may abuse the kindness that would still shield and succor them, till the shadows fall.

It may be not inappropriate to make the passing remark, that representatives of the New Life, gentlemen and ladies of position, culture and material competence, who repudiate class distinctions, and who esteem it both an honor and a duty to devote all they are and all that they possess to the wellbeing of Society, shrinking from no toil and fearless of all misapprehension, are at least entitled to the common re-

spect which law and custom offer to the most destitute and the most obscure. If it is a law of their conduct, "when smitten on one cheek to turn the other also," this affords no proof that they are without final and resistless powers of assertion as well as defense.

Christ, arraigned before Pilate, answered not a word, save in his reply, "thou sayest it." It is the final test of the man of sane and balanced character, conscious of the rectitude of his purpose and the honor of his career, that he pursues the even tenor of his duties, holding no malice, shrinking from no criticism, but making no rejoinders, however powerful the weapons that are at his command.

All reflective and well-informed men are aware that the edifice of Civilisation, both in our own land and abroad, is menaced by rapidly encroaching perils that will test its endurance to the uttermost. We think that when the Hours of Peril shall have come, our long training and thorough knowledge and mastery of the vital problems involved in the social situation, will serve for a good stead. Our cult, thus briefly hinted at, is not Socialism as that is commonly understood. It is far more: it is properly THEO-SOCIALISM; the realisation of the Social Infinite, the christian's Lord and Savior, in the transformed and beatified fraternity of a New Life; a socialised mankind.

Withdrawing from a public literary and oratorical service, for the last thirty years my effort has been concentrated to survive; to serve the providential ends of my calling: to strengthen the brave men and women scattered throughout the world who were coming into the same organic fact and consciousness. This is all that there is of mystery in the "Brotherhood of the New Life." The tie that unites us is not credal, not communistic, not in any sense hostile to existing religions or social systems, whilst they still con-

tinue to exist. To live in Christ, to grow in Christ, to share with each other as utility requires both the fruits of industrial and ethical labors, to maintain the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," and so to prepare ourselves for a coming public service in the primary hours of an era of transposed respiration and perishing environments, that we think to be just at the doors :—this has been, is, and will be, the purpose that unites us all.

We are often obliged, if we would preserve life, to maintain among ourselves a strict seclusion. Whilst cultivating an intense interest both in the individual and public welfare, the maintenance of the breath is our first duty. We realise the fact of organic interdependence so actually, that if one of our number is under bodily or mental oppression in Great Britain those of us who are in America feel his burdens in our own mind and flesh. We share, however remote in space, the respirations and vitalities of a common life. This is the germ, as we think, of an actual organic and social Christianity.

Eminent divines of the Church of England and of the orthodox and liberal denominations, authors and professional men of well-known distinction, learned oriental scholars ;—a body, in fine, distinguished at once by high character and unobtrusive philanthropy, scattered over three continents, have for these many years been co-laborers and co-discoverers with me in these fields of vital research. They have however agreed in the unanimous conclusion, that the hour had not quite arrived when publicity should be given to their ripe conclusions. We have been waiting till certain final demonstrations might be at hand ; waiting also till the state of growing anxiety in the public and social mind, in view of the dangers to society from the industrial situation, should require to be met.

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With reference to the recent memoirs of Mr. Laurence Oliphant, and to the hostile criticisms indulged in by a certain class of Newspapers, growing out of its misrepresentations, it is a Foreign publication, and those misrepresentations have been answered already in Great Britain where it appeared. There the real facts have been long privately known, and there a gentleman of known probity and character, the intimate and confidential friend of the deceased during the long period of his relations with myself, and familiar with the nature of all those transactions, financial or otherwise, from first to last, has published such statements as should satisfy all unbiased persons that both myself and friends have been greatly wronged, and that in no particular have I or they been the wrong-doers.

Men do not bandy words with carrion. For the function of the respectable Publicist no person has an higher esteem. For the nasal purveyors of the Sensational Press, who prowl about the kitchen middens, and who from the smell of the waste-pipes presume to sit in judgment on the aromas of the *salon*, I hold no more than a kindly contempt. It seems one of the strange anomalies of the hour, that this sagacious American People should permit any region of their great domain of the Press to have become the haunt and spoil-ground of banditti. It seems singular that truculent and specious adventurers, who in private circles have no recognised standing among men of honor, should be given a weight in the printed effusions of their hirelings, which no one would think of giving to their spoken affirmations.

My position and that of the gentlemen whose names are identified with mine, is that of peaceful travelers in the Public Coach, who have refused to yield "backsheesh" to the Black Barts of Journalism. It is they who must stand trial before a jury of the honorable American People.



It is not my humble personality that is on the defensive, nor is it the world-wide though hitherto private association that is known as the "Brotherhood of the New Life."

For the last two or three years I have been secluded, most of the time, in my mountain retreat, working on to the final solution of the problems that opened in my discoveries of forty years ago. The final problem that faced me during these years was briefly this: By what process shall the man who, by consequence of respiration opened into God and the resultant life of service rendered to mankind, has fitted himself mentally and socially for a continuation of that service, with powers amplified from an hundred to a thousand-fold, overcome the universal racial tendency to physical deterioration and decease, and renew the outer structures of his person, and lead on a renaissance of the vitalities and vigors of the prime. How, in a word, without passing through physical decease, shall man practically embody and realise the resurrection?

As it is, Earth's greatest-best, who have grown up to immense human proportions through the three score and ten seasons of a self-devoted and heroic labor, perish from earth and are lost to mankind, just when, in the ampler sense, they were beginning to live. I had elaborated theoretically the science of the process. I now applied that process to a final test in my own organisation. I had determined never to publish another word respecting my discoveries unless I should pass safely through this final ordeal. In fact, the long-continued and intense concentration of the faculties in the persistence of my labors, had so told upon the surface body that literary or any other effort would have been impossible. The alternative was, success or dissolution. Success came, as suddenly, as pleasantly, as when a deep-laden, storm-tossed ship glides over the harbor-bar from

the raging out-side sea, and swings at ease in a land-locked haven.

For more than fifty years, in hours of extreme toil and peril, a voice had always spoken to me that seemed to have been wrought into the sensitive structures and seats of life: "Persist, pursue: you will pass through December and emerge into May." I have passed through December, I am in the May-time; conscious that I hold in quickened mind and flesh the final secret and method and law and power for the resuscitation, the re-habilitation, the organic restoration of the nobler multitudes of Earth's aged and almost exhausted race. No more an old man of nigh seventy, but now renewed in more than the physical and mental prowess of the early prime, my retirement is at an end. The first work of my new service—rather a play and exercise of faculties than serious toil—occupying a scant four weeks, was the volume of Lyrics which is now passing into type under the title, "Battle Bells: verse-studies in Social Humanity." This American People, whom I love, and to whose best interests my life is pledged and consecrated, will now hear from me and find me, as events move on, not as in the arena of private controversy, but as an annunciator and demonstrator of supreme vital laws, and of verified facts, of largest value when applied either to the individual or the public good.

For myself, as before stated, I leave the disposition of my honor to the slow but finally just unveilings of coming time. Each hour of my days must be devoted to labors of necessity and beneficence. An American by choice; a Californian by long residence and cherished associations; I have no fear that I shall ever cease to be regarded as a loyal and honorable son and servant of a great and glorious People. I shall feel myself at liberty to make a fur-

ther use of this rapid sketch, as an appropriate preface to a new volume, dealing with topics of the hour, which is now passing into type.

Like the ancient Spartans I move on to the battle of the future to the soothing and enchanting music of the lyre and flute. And so it shall be! "Every battle of the Warrior is with confused noise and garments rolled in blood, but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire." Europe is a camp of arms: America menaced by the fierce proletariat and the more belligerent plutocracy, glaring on each other, held but by feeble restraints of fast dissolving law from agonised, convulsive struggle. "The war-drums beat around the world," but only till the drums are broken.

To their New Life shall wake the joyful Nations,  
 "War's echoing sounds grow fainter and then cease,  
 And like a bell with solemn, sweet vibrations,  
 I hear once more the voice of Christ say, "Peace."  
 Peace! and no longer from its brazen portals  
 The blast of War's great organ shakes the skies,  
 But beautiful as songs of the immortals,  
 The holy melodies of Love arise."

So remaining, Dear Mr. Thompson,

Believe me,

Gratefully and faithfully yours,

THOMAS LAKE HARRIS.

## AUTHOR'S NOTICE.

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During the last thirty years the writings that bear my name have been privately printed, and gratuitously distributed to applicants, pending the hour when the march of public events should make appropriate their publication and general diffusion. Such works, old and new, as seem adapted to a service in coming necessities, will therefore now be issued as fast as is thought desirable, and they will be charged for at prices that will defray their mechanical cost.

THOMAS LAKE HARRIS.

FOUNTAINCROVE, SANTA ROSA, CAL.

July 1. 1891.

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