

A D D R E S S    B Y    M. J.

14th July, 1952.

GROUP WORK.

Most of you have already heard me speak quite often of the importance of working in groups. You will see in the letter you have just been given that the idea of group working has grown up very much since M.F. and I joined the Order nearly 50 years ago. In those days at home in England the members of the Order were scattered about and they had been left very much to the idea of individual work. Those of you who are familiar with the working of the churches of almost any denomination will realise that even today the church teaches that the important thing is the salvation of the individual soul. They couple with that the importance of service. The great missionary churches develop that to a much further extent, and especially - I don't want to be invidious but I should say especially the Roman church and the Presbyterians, who have coupled medical work with religious teaching almost from the beginning of their service as missionaries. But as a whole you find that religious teaching is "Save your soul." I do not think that that is the teaching of our Lord. I do not remember that He ever says that it is important. On the contrary He says "He that loses his soul for My sake" (the ordinary translation is "He that loses his life or giveth his life," but the Greek word is "soul") He that loseth his soul for My sake. And following on from that you come to the thought that much more important than the individual soul is humanity as a whole.

Bound together in the bonds of brotherhood. We may fight and struggle one nation against the other but we cannot get away from the fact that all men are brothers, and if we are brothers then we must learn to work as a family works - in a group. The family is the unit, and from that you go on to the greater family, which is the formation of groups by mutual interests. Now in forming a group you have to try to reflect the great natural laws. The whole of the Order is based on this realisation of the Cosmic laws and the example with which we are most familiar is the working of the constellations and the planets. We know that both constellations and planets circle round a common centre. The ancients, by which I mean the Egyptians and further back, knew that the Sun was a centre of the planetary system, but in later days, in what we call the Middle Ages, this was forgotten and man was taught that the earth itself was the centre; and for ordinary practical purposes, in astrology for instance, we still regard the earth as a centre just as each one of us regards ourselves as the centre of our own circle. There must always be a centre of the circle revolving round it. So we see the earth as a centre with the signs of the Zodiac circling round in the great wheel. But because we are not really in the centre, and because the earth is tilted on her axis, therefore the signs appear to open and shut as a fan does. There are signs of long ascension and signs of short ascension, depending upon what part of the earth we happen to occupy.

Therefore as a model of the group you have the earth and the signs of the Zodiac, the planets and the luminaries, and when you begin to study these with the idea of forming groups you realise that you have groups within the Zodiacal signs. There are the groups of the four elements, earth, air, fire, water. There are also groups of the triplicities, say, three signs belonging to one element; and there is another triad formed by the decanates, that is to say, each sign is divided into groups of 10 degrees. Each

decanate has its own characteristics and its own ruling planet. And we have the luminaries; so that gives us the smallest possible group of two. But the signs of the Zodiac also fall into groups of two, which we call the day and the night signs, positive and negative, donative and receptive, masculine and feminine. Studying all these things you find your foundation for forming a working group.

Any kind of occult work must be based on the cosmic laws, so, taking two to begin with you have man and woman - perhaps husband and wife, perhaps friend, but in either case they should balance each other, complement each other. A good group should always be made up of differing elements, so that the triplicity is not such a good group practically as the three decanates, which gives the three aspects of one sign. When you form a triangle, a group, it should be modelled on the idea of one particular sign with its decanates, with the three planets which dominate those decanates. Or, if you have a group of four, then you take the four elements, all of them differing from the others and two definitely complementary. Taken from this point of view, you do not regard fire and water as antagonistic but each as supplementing the work of the other. Those of you who are gardeners know very well that your plants will not flourish if they are given all sun and no water, neither will they thrive if they are given all water and no sun. The two must balance. And to make the perfect group you must also have the earth and the air. For that reason it is a good plan to learn as much as you can about your own astrological formula.

A great many people do not know what time they were born and therefore they cannot cast an accurate horoscope. But practically everybody does know on what day and what month they were born in and knowing that they know also what sign the sun was in at that time. From studying the position of the sign of the sun and the time of year, you can work out a fairly good idea of what sign the moon is in. You know, for instance, that the new moon is in conjunction with the sun, that the full moon is in opposition, and from that you can calculate fairly well the relative positions of sun and moon. So if you take the larger group of twelve, it should, as far as is possible, be formed from those whose sun is in the twelve different signs. And if you take the trouble to work it out you can also reckon the aspect (roughly) of the moon; and if you study the ephemeris carefully you will find out what signs the different planets are occupying; and when you know all that you can begin to fit your various horoscopes in with each other. If you do know exactly the time you were born and therefore can set up your horoscope correctly, and if you have a kind friend who will give the time and energy to do you a progressed horoscope, you can learn a good deal more. But even with the rougher map you can find an extremely interesting result in comparing the maps of the other members of your group with your own. I speak from experience because I did that quite a lot at one time with very notable results. Still, you do not all want to go to all that time and trouble, but you can all find the sign occupied by your sun and begin to consider the relative values of other members with whom you work as a group.

The Order itself forms a greater group which you might compare, as far as we are concerned, with the 36 decanates; and one very valuable conclusion is that each member contributes something which no other member can give. It is not a question of personal likes or dislikes but of realising the value, the mutual value, of working with people of different temperaments who therefore see things from a different angle from your own. If you have mixed much with members of what we call the Arts, - music, painting, sculpture, architecture, literature - you will know that anyone who has devoted the greater part of their lives to one central subject

develops a quite different way of looking at the world from other people. It is a very ordinary example to say that if three or four people of different professions go for a walk together, each will come back with a different impression of the country they have gone through. The painter will bring back the memory of all the wonderful colours he has seen - the lights and shadows. The sculptor may hardly notice the colour but he will have been impressed by the shapes of things; and the musician may have been so absorbed in listening to the sounds of the birds, the wind in the trees, the ripple of water, and all the thousands of sounds which you lucky people with ears must hear whenever you go out. But if they all compare notes and put them together, then they get a real picture of what they have seen and experienced; it is in the round instead of in the flat. And it is the same, much much more it is the same when you pass beyond material experience and begin to work on what we call the higher planes.

Those who are clairvoyant should be particularly anxious to work in groups and to compare notes of what the different members of the group get. Even with our physical eyes it is extremely difficult to get a really accurate memory picture. If you recall something you have seen or perhaps a book you have read, you think you remember it perfectly clearly. But if you re-read the book, or if you go back a few years later and see the same place again, you find how very much you have forgotten and how very often you have seen quite wrongly. You have missed out bits and perhaps you have put in bits that were not really there. And if that is the case on the material plane it is much, much more so when we go on to the Astral. Remember that you are warned quite early in your Order studies that the Astral is the plane of illusion. You see things because you have preconceived ideas. You hear things because you want to hear them. And it is only by checking up again and again, over and over again, that you can arrive at anything approaching accuracy. But if several people are working together, the very fact that each one is almost certain to make different mistakes from the others gives them a value as checks - controls, as the scientists call it. But there is more than that. It is not only that the group has value in building up within itself; but also, if you form a group like the Triangles of the Great Invocation, then you increase the creative power not threefold but multi-fold. Three working together can form a tremendous centre of force and, agreeing upon their objective, they can send that force out to accomplish a definite purpose. If that is the case with a Triangle, we must believe that it is far more when the larger group such as the Order works together in harmony. Remember the difference between harmony and unison. It is not unison we seek but the harmony of different colours which make a picture, the different notes which make music. You know the difference in power between one person singing to themselves or one person picking out a tune on the piano, and a great orchestra playing, each one contributing his own particular part in the music of the whole. That is harmony. And what the orchestra does in music the Order ought to be doing in the spiritual plane. But we can only accomplish that if we learn to recognise the value of the others, if we learn to work harmoniously with loving kindness and brotherhood. You know there are some of the great symphonies and concertos which use not only strings, wind instruments, piano - they also use the drums and xylophone. And because those instruments have their own peculiar character, therefore they give something to the whole symphony which even the finest violin or the purest note of flute or oboe cannot contribute. I remember a story of one of the great conductors when I was young who had to take his orchestra from one great city to another - London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Manchester, and, I think, Birmingham. One night when they had arrived at the end of the journey and they were just about to go into the concert hall a man came up to the conductor in great distress and said, "Oh Sir, I have lost my xylophone - I have not

got one!" "Oh well," said Henschell, "take the leg of the chair and strike that. Xylophone only means wood." The man took the leg of a chair and struck it and it had a perfectly good effect. The moral is that even the leg of a chair may be made to contribute to the music of the whole orchestra, and even those who seem to be giving very little to the whole are contributing their quota - that which nobody else can give. We are not all clairvoyant; we are not all clairaudient, but each of us has some special capacity, some quality, that nobody else has, and in forming the group you have to realise and accept the value of those who seem to be giving least. That does not mean that any of us is to be content with giving less than the greatest of which we are capable. Nobody should rest content and say "Oh I cannot do any more." We can always do a little bit more; and it is often the little bit more which is given at great cost to ourselves which is most valuable in the whole result.