

SILVER BIRCH
ANTHOLOGY

WISDOM FROM
THE WORLD BEYOND

Edited by WILLIAM NAYLOR

This copy is the first three chapters.

TO SILVER BIRCH

Though we have never met on earthly plane
He is my friend, my counsellor and guide,
My strength and comfort in the days of pain,
The unseen presence constant by my side -
He understands life's problems and its needs,
(By facing trials does noble status grow!)
He points the way of conduct in all deeds,
Knowing we do but reap the seeds we sow -
In words of simple wisdom he will say
That service is the Spirit's only coin,
The paths of love and kindness lead the way
To the true Source wherein all roads conjoin.

SYLVIA BARBANELL.

INTRODUCTION

Of all those great and famous discarnate beings who have mastered the uncertain art of continuous spirit communication none has been so widely loved and justly honoured as Silver Birch, the unfailingly wise and eloquent yet ever humble spirit guide of Hannen Swaffer's home circle.

It is the purpose of this anthology to select, from the vast recorded store of his memorable utterances, a few of those views, declarations and pronouncements that have permanent significance for a mankind still painfully evolving to a greater realisation of spiritual realities.

I had originally intended taking the six Silver Birch books and selecting passages on a variety of subjects; a kind of Bedside Silver Birch is what I had envisaged.

But he is not quite that easy. I found that like the master artist, dramatist and composer he is either constantly grappling with the major themes of human experience or interpreting abiding universal truths. Ask him a question on a comparatively minor issue and time and time again he will use it as a tributary through which to return to the mainstream of his philosophy.

What I have tried to do then is to dip into this mainstream and show what he has to say about truth, death, fear, love, immortality, the laws of life, the Great White Spirit - his name for God - and a few other relevant subjects.

Of Silver Birch's eloquence there can be no question. In the words of an experienced journalist:

"The teaching of Silver Birch is an example of spirit alchemy, the ability to take the twenty-six letters of the alphabet and transmute them into words of shimmering beauty. As one who spends the whole of his working life in writing, I can appreciate that the faculty of being able to deliver, week after week, words of wisdom full of eloquent simplicity in this spontaneous fashion, is in itself evidence of supernormality.

"Like other journalists who live by their pen, I know that simple English is the most difficult to write. I know how you have to polish and re-polish, alter words, delete others, change sentences, consult the dictionary and the thesaurus, before you are satisfied. Yet, here is a dead man who, without hesitation, can produce perfect prose. Everything he says is full of common sense, inspiring, uplifting and ennobling.

"He reduces religion to the fundamental of service to one another. He reveals a God of natural law not a personal, tribal deity subject to caprice, wrath or vengeance. Silver Birch's words glisten like diamonds. You visualize and evolved being, full of love for all humanity, striving to teach truths that are hidden from worldly wise but revealed to minds which are simple, like those of children. He has the one message of service to offer a bewildered mankind, but he seems to have an infinite number of ways of expressing his gospel.

“As one who has read his teaching for years, I salute a master of English, a great literary craftsman whom I have grown to love and admire.”

In a letter to Hannen Swaffer, after reading a copy of *Teachings of Silver Birch*, the first in the series of this guide’s utterances, no less a Press lord than Lord Beaverbrook wrote, “It contains passages of great beauty and I was struck by the simplicity of the work.”

The *Natal Daily News*, reviewing *More Teachings of Silver Birch*, the second book in the series said, “Rarely has the English language been so gently, so simply and so beautifully used.” Selecting it as “The Book of the Week,” the review commended it, “if as nothing else, as a masterly exposition of the English language.” One passage in the book earned the praise, “That beats the drama of a Churchill.”

A similar tribute, this time to *Wisdom of Silver Birch*, the third in the series, was paid by the *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, which declared, “Many of this guide’s utterances provide almost Churchillian prose in some of their flights.”

A loftier, yet at the same time, less complicated philosophy could not be found outside the teachings of the great religious leaders. Yet even among these Silver Birch is unique, for he teaches and speaks as one who hails from another realm of existence.

Pantheistic, in the highest sense of the word, permeated with altruism, simplicity and wisdom, his lucid teachings, never cease to stress the supreme importance of the spiritual life and the necessity for compassion in our dealings with our fellow-men. And always he advocates a life of service to what he calls the “Great White Spirit.”

In Silver Birch is to be found the same supreme dedication to suffering humanity and reverence for all life that is the hall-mark of that greatest saint of modern times, Albert Schweitzer. Here, too, is the purity of vision and acknowledgment of one spirit in all things that radiates through the inspired poetry of Shelley. But unlike these two supremely gifted men, whose philosophical speculations, if not their works and deeds, are sometimes above the comprehension of the masses Silver Birch is no intellectual. He has but one theme, repeatedly and unequivocally stressed, adherence to the Law.

What is this Law? Let Silver Birch answer that for himself.

CHAPTER ONE

THE INFALLIBLE LAW

The Great Spirit is infinite, and you are parts of the Great Spirit. If you have perfect faith and live your lives right, then you are able to participate in the bounty of the Great Spirit. If every person in your world had perfect faith, then he would receive. If a person were hungry and yet had perfect faith, then he would receive the answer.

“That is how the Law operates. If you learn to attune yourself to the Law, the results must come. If the results do not come, that only proves that you are not in tune with the Law. Your history books tell you that there have been those from the lowest of the low, the poorest of the poor, who have tried the Law and it has not failed them. You must not point to those who do not try it and ask why it does not work.

“Sometimes the spirit gets crushed and cannot rise above the surrounding circumstances, but if you had perfect faith you could rise above all the troubles of your world. You would turn your faces to the sun, which is but an emblem of the Great Spirit, and say: ‘I am a part of the Great Spirit. I am indestructible. I am eternal. I am infinite. That which is finite and part of the world of matter cannot touch me.’ If you did that, you would not be touched.

“Many people start with fear in their hearts. They are afraid they will not get results, and the element of fear disturbs the vibration. Perfect love casteth out fear. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

“That was taught to you many years ago by one who knew the Law. He showed that when he put it into operation the results were always forthcoming. If you allow the Law to function, then the results must come.

“I will tell you another Law. There is nothing you can have in the world of matter without you pay the price. The price of mediumship is increased sensitiveness. You cannot accumulate wealth without paying the price, because if you do that, and forget the duties of your own spirit, then you may be rich in the goods of your world, but you will be very poor in my world.

“You have the greatest riches within yourselves. You are part of the Great Spirit. There are no riches or fortunes in your world that can be compared with that. We seek to teach you to explore your own gold mines, to reveal the diamonds of the spirit that are within the clay of your own natures.

May you all learn to respond to vibrations of the highest planes of Spirit. May you all realise that you are never alone but always encompassed around and about by a host of those who love you, who seek to guard and guide you and to help and inspire you. And may you, as you unfold your own spirits, realise that you are being drawn closer to the greatest Spirit of all, becoming more in unison with His Law.

“You serve Him by serving the children of matter. When you do that, you are within

reach of His infinite arms; you are surrounded by His love, which will bring you to perfect peace.

“Faith, that is faith alone, sometimes fails when the winds of bitter experience blow. But the faith that is born of knowledge provides a foundation which is so strong that no wind of circumstance can disturb it.

“Blessed are those who believe and have not yet seen, but thrice blessed are they who know and, because they know, place their faith in that which is not yet revealed to them, because they know that the laws of the universe are operated by a power which is love and wisdom.

“You should all have perfect faith, because it is a faith born of knowledge. You have had the proof of the power of the spirit. Now you should have the faith that all things work wisely and well and that, if you put yourselves in tune with the laws of the Great Spirit, then you must reap the operation of those laws.

“You can all banish from your minds the thought that anything that is unenlightened - or, as you would say, evil - can ever touch you. You live and move under the protection of the Great Spirit and His laws.

“If there is no evil in your hearts, then only good can reach you, for only good can dwell where goodness reigns. None but the servants of the Great Spirit come into your presence from my world. You need have no fears. The power which envelops you, the power which supports and seeks to guide you and inspire you is the power that emanates from the Great Spirit of all.

“That power can sustain you in all your trials and difficulties. That power can change your storms into sunshine, and bring you out of the darkness of despair into the light of knowledge. Your feet are set on pathways of progress. There is no need for fear.

“Perfect love casteth out fear. Knowledge dispels fear, for fear is born of ignorance. Where there is love and trust and knowledge, there fear cannot reign. An evolved spirit cannot be afraid at any time, because he knows there is no experience that can come to him in any phase of life that he cannot master, for he is the Great Spirit.

“Fear creates its own prison for the soul. You must learn to rise above fear and not to allow its vibrations to hinder you, to have perfect faith and confidence and trust, to know that you can stand on your feet and say: ‘I am the Great Spirit and the wind of circumstances cannot shake me I will rise triumphant over every difficulty because of the infinite power which is within my soul.’ You have power over every circumstance. Would you limit the power of the infinite soul?

The Great Spirit rules over that which is material and that which is spiritual. There are no divisions in His universal kingdom. Do not attempt to divide the life of matter from the life of spirit. They are not distinct and separate. They are parts of one indivisible life, for the things of matter react on the things of spirit and the things of

spirit react on the things of matter.

“You have yet to learn that there are no difficulties which beset those blessed with the power of the spirit that they will not surmount, as long as they in return serve the Great White Spirit wherever they go.

“There are no obstacles in your world we cannot remove, if it is the law that they shall be removed. If, sometimes, the cross you have seems very hard to bear, remember that, although I would give up all my progress to take it away from you, it is better for you to carry it and to learn the lesson it brings. You must consider not only this life, but the whole of eternity.

“If you children of matter would remember that not only are you human but also divine, how much easier would it be for you to live your lives.

Your troubles would melt away; your obstacles would be swept on one side. But you have little faith in the power that is within you. What you call human belongs to the world of matter. That which is divine belongs to the Great Spirit.

“Many years ago you were told to be *in* the world but not *of* the world. Because the people of your world have not the faith, then the law cannot be put into operation. You say one has more money and less worry than another. You do not know how their worries compare. The laws of the Great Spirit cannot be cheated.

“You are on earth to build your character. It is the way you face your problems that makes your character. But there is no trouble in your world of matter which is greater than the power you have within you for overcoming it, because the troubles are of the earth, material, and you are part of the Great Spirit, divine.

“There is only one peace - the peace which comes to those who are at one with the Great Spirit, whose hearts beat as one with His great heart, whose wills are at one with His great will, who are at one in soul, mind and heart with the Great Spirit. Then there is peace, because they are in harmony with His laws. There is no other peace.

“I can only teach you the laws. You were told many years ago that the kingdom of heaven is within. It is not without. It is not to be found in the rush of the world of matter. It is to be found within the soul.

“So finely balanced and so perfect is the law that there can be no cheating. Not one person escapes his punishment, and not one loses his reward. Do not judge eternity with the eyes of matter. Do not judge the smaller when you have not seen the greater.

“Do not confuse the transient joys of earth with the enduring things of the spirit. They are tawdry and flimsy. You think in terms of the earth, while I see with the eyes of the spirit. I cannot alter the law to please you.

“If you ask all those who return to you from my side, you will find that they all say the law is perfect. They ever want to return to the world of matter. You seek to find

peace without. I try to show you the eternal peace within. The greatest riches are the riches of the spirit.

“Some people will always worry. Even in the world of spirit they will worry. They will worry because they will realise they could be more perfect, because they are not perfect instruments for the Great Spirit, because only through toil and stress will they outwork the imperfections of their natures and allow the divine to shine through.

“Do you think we are happy when we realise the work that has yet to be done? Do you think we do not worry when we see the children of matter denied that which is necessary for their sustenance, or when we hear the false teaching that is poured out in the name of the Great Spirit?

“Do you think we do not worry when we see darkness where there should be light, when men are imprisoned by desire when they could be free, when we see the chaos that has been caused in your world?

“We worry because our hearts are filled with pity, because we seek to enable the love of the Great Spirit to flow through us and you into your world of matter, where so many are denied the things that are their heritage. The Great Spirit has given them all things in abundance, but they are denied them. You cannot be a great soul when others starve and you are filled with plenty.

“The hardest part of our task is when we have to stand by, sometimes, and see you suffer. We know we must not help because it is a battle of your own spirit. If you win your battle, then we have won, too. If you lose, then we have lost. It is our battle all the time, but we must not lift a finger to help.

“Sometimes I have wept tears because I have seen suffering, and knew I must not help. That is the law. It has hurt me more than it has hurt the sufferer.

“If you do what you know is right, then you cannot do any more. If that means that sometimes you must deny yourself, then you must do it. One day a balance is struck.

“I cannot solve your problems for you. If I tell you what to do, that interferes with your free will. Once I start to tell my medium what he must do and what he must not do, that is the end of his free will. Then his progress begins to suffer.

“It is the way you settle your problems that develops what is within you. You do not develop the spirit when everything is easy and smooth, but when you have difficulties. But there are times when we feel justified in interfering with your judgment.

“I would interfere if a very vital principle were involved. If it meant that my work through any medium would be interrupted, then I would interfere so that the channel would still be free. But where the problems only affect my medium's own evolution, then they are his responsibility and he must work them out for himself.”

Silver Birch once contributed to a discussion on gardening by members of his circle

with these words:

“Sowing and reaping are part of the natural law, which I wish was accepted by more people. It is in the cultivation of the fruits of the earth that you learn how inexorable are the laws of the Great Spirit. He who lives close to the soil and sees the operation of nature’s law begins to appreciate the divine handiwork and to realise something of the Mind which has planned all in its orderly sequence.

“That which is garnered is that which has been sown. The seed is always true to its type. You cannot sow the seed of a potato and expect that a lettuce will grow. Always what has been sown will follow unswervingly the dictate of the natural law. And what is true in that realm of nature is equally true in the realm of human life and activity.

“He who lives selfishly must reap the results of selfishness. He who sins must reap the result of his sin. He who is intolerant, bigoted or selfish will reap the results of intolerance, bigotry and selfishness. The law is inexorable; the law is immutable. There is no religious exercise, there is no hymn, no prayer, no sacred book that can interpose and alter the sequence of cause and effect.

“The effect follows cause with methodical and mechanical certainty, and no one has the power, be he called priest or layman, to interfere with that natural process. He who desires the growth of the spirit must live that kind of life which alone can assure spiritual growth.

“The spirit grows through kindness, toleration, sympathy, love, service and doing of good works. Character evolves only when you allow the divine spirit to be made manifest in your daily lives. If you harbour unkind thoughts, thoughts of hatred, of malice, of vengeance, of selfishness, you yourself will be the victim and you yourself must pay the price in a warped, distorted and thwarted character.

“All law is a part of one vast law. All works in harmony because all is part of the divine plan. The lesson of it is that men and women throughout the whole world of matter must seek their salvation by working it out in their daily lives, and abandon all the false theology which teaches that it is possible to cast on to others the results and responsibilities of your own actions.

“Man is the gardener of his own soul. The Great Spirit has provided him with all that is necessary for it to grow in wisdom, grace and beauty. The implements are there, he has but to use them wisely and well.”

On another occasion he declared: “The law is perfect in its operation. Effect always follows cause with mathematical precision. No individual has the power to alter by one hairbreadth the sequence of cause and effect. That which is reaped must be that which is sown, and the soul of every individual registers indelibly all the results of earthly life. He who has sinned against the law bears on his own soul the results of his earthly action, and there will be no progress until reparation has been made for every sinful deed.”

To Silver Birch the law is God and God is the law. He states: “There is no personal God apart from the one that human beings have created; there is no personal Devil apart from the one that human beings have created. There is no golden heaven, no fiery hell. These are the imaginings of those whose views are limited. The Great Spirit is the Law. Know that, and you have learned life’s greatest secret, for once you realise the world is governed by unchangeable, unbreakable, immutable, omnipotent law, you know that justice is done and none can be forgotten in the great scheme of creation.

“That is why all is known. That is why nothing can be omitted. That is why every facet of life finds its place in the universal scheme. That is why nothing can be overlooked, for the law embraces every aspect of life, no matter how tiny, no matter how large, for all is law. Nothing exists except the Law which makes its existence possible. The law reigns supreme. Man’s free will creates confusion and obscures the working of the law in his mind, but the Law exists just the same and must operate. I know that theology have been a great curse to your world, but its day is practically done.”

CHAPTER TWO

REASON FOR SUFFERING

So deep is his conviction, so succinct his interpretation of the law, that at times Silver Birch seems almost indifferent.

“We point to a law that is a law,” he declares, “a law that has always operated; a law that will always operate because the Eternal Mind is responsible for its being. Live with the law and you have harmony and peace within and without: live contrary to the law and you impose discord and chaos within and without. You are spiritual beings. One day you will have to face this fact. Better do so now and save yourselves years of needless difficulty.”

Such unequivocalty could be misconstrued as callousness, especially when an undeveloped soul, or one blinded by the tears of grief, listens to the guide tell of the necessity for suffering and sorrow. But as Silver Birch has explained: “The Great Spirit is infinite love and nothing happens in the whole universe without His knowledge. All suffering automatically brings its own reward because it touches the soul and, in doing so, gives it a greater awareness of the higher, deeper and more profound aspects of the universe.”

He told the circle on one occasion: “Your world does not understand the function of pain and suffering and difficulty and hardship, but all these play an important part in the evolution of the human spirit. Look back in your own lives and see that often the greatest crises, the most difficult problems, the darkest hours, were the stepping stones that led to greater understanding. You would not evolve if forever you dwelt in the sunshine, lived free from care, anxiety and worry, where every approaching

difficulty was automatically smoothed out so that it never touched you, where there were no rough stones in your pathway, where there was nothing for you to conquer. It is in the facing of, and rising supreme over, trouble that you grow.”

“Every experience is part of the pattern of your life,” he told another gathering of the circle. “You try to judge eternity by temporal happenings. You see in matter apparent confusion, but you do not realise that a divine thread runs throughout all your lives.

“In the great universe where harmony is the law, each one of you contributes to the plan. The events in your lives, sometimes of bitterness and despair, of pain and misery, all play their part in preparing the soul gradually for the path that is being trodden.

“The darkness and the light, the shadow and the sunshine, are all but reflections of one whole. Without shadow there could be no light and without light there could be no shadow. The difficulties of life are steps which enable the soul to rise.

“Difficulties, obstacles, handicaps - these are the trials of the soul. And when it conquers them all, it rises stronger, more purified, deepened in intensity and more highly evolved.

“Do you think that the latent powers of the soul, infinite in their possibilities of expression, could realise themselves without difficulty and pain, without shadow, without sorrow, and without suffering and misery? Of course not.

“The joy and the laughter can only be enjoyed to the full when once you have drained the cup of sorrow to the dregs, for as low as you can fall in the scale of life so correspondingly you can rise. The more you have tasted and experienced that which seems the shadow of earthly life, the more you will appreciate, because of it, the greater joys of the sunshine.

“Your experiences are all part of your evolution. One day, freed from the trammels of flesh, with eyes not clouded by matter, you will look back in retrospect and view the life you have lived on earth. And out of the jigsaw of all the events, you will see how every piece fits into its allotted place, how every experience was a lesson to quicken the soul and to enable it to have greater understanding of its possibilities.

“There is no experience that comes to the human soul, which, rightly understood and rightly faced, does not leave you better for it. Can you contemplate a world of matter where there were no difficulties, no trials, no troubles, no pain, no suffering? There would be no evolution. There would be nothing to surmount, you would decay.”

CHAPTER THREE

LOVE'S SUPREME POWER

“There is a great power in the universe which has never been subject to the analytical scrutiny of laboratories, which cannot be resolved by chemicals or by scalpels, yet it is so real that it transcends all other forces which have been measured and weighed and dissected.”

Silver Birch is referring to the power of love. “That love,” he goes on, “is deathless because it is part of the Great Spirit, the creative spirit of all life, part of the power which has fashioned life; it is indeed the very breath and the very essence of life. And wherever love exists, sooner or later those who are united by its willing bonds will find one another again despite all the handicaps and obstacles and impediments that may be in the way.

On one occasion, Silver Birch was asked: “You say, ‘The only bond between those who have passed over is love.’ What is the position when A truly loves B, but A’s love is not reciprocated by B, and they have both passed over? Is A separated from B because of this, or is he burdened, so to speak, by the nearness of A because of this rather one-sided, but sincere, attachment?”

“That,” said the guide, “is a very good question, but the word ‘love’ is one of the most misused ones in your world. I hear them sometimes say: ‘Oh, give my love to so and so,’ whom they intensely loathe, many others, perhaps carried away by infatuation, and let me be quite honest, by physical passion, think that the attraction is one of love.

“First let us be clear: the real love is the love of selflessness; the love that seeks nothing for itself, and in its highest form embraces the whole of humanity. You are not an evolved soul until you can say, because you believe it, ‘I love all mankind.’

“That is an ideal, and your world is a long way from it. But there is the love, the undeniable love, between man and woman who are complementary to one another, that is, they are two in form, but one in purpose - they harmonise, they are indeed, as your poet has expressed it, ‘Two hearts that beat as one.’ Now, where that love has found itself, there is never any separation. Those whom the natural law has joined by love can never be sundered in your world or in mine.

“Where there is that love, and here I am afraid I am going to be controversial, it is always reciprocated. There are aspects of affection, devotion, the desire to serve, maternal instincts, which are believed to be love, but the real love, that only comes once to each man or woman, whether on earth or in the world of spirit, is always reciprocal. The problem does not arise, for in our world, in the fullness of time each finds the half of its own being.”

A member of the circle asked: “Are both people aware at the same time that it is a love that is reciprocated?”

“Not necessarily on earth, but they are in the world of spirit,” was the reply.

“One of the two may know about it before the other,” it was suggested to Silver Birch.

He replied: “But the two halves instinctively, because they are two halves, must recognise one another. That does not happen in your world always because your vision, regarding things of the spirit, is often blind.”

“Physical things could stop it,” said somebody.

“Yes, physical circumstances,” agreed Silver Birch, “but real love is so magnetic, is so overwhelming in its attraction, that it must find itself and claim itself, when once you have got rid of the imperfections of the earth which were the deterrents to recognition.

“Love takes many forms, ranging from friendship founded on sympathetic attraction and mutual interest, to the supreme heights where, without thought of self, it seeks to serve wherever it can,” said Silver Birch, in his reply to someone who asked for his definition of love. “Love is a word which is misused in your world,” the guide went on. “Very often those who use it do not mean love at all. It is mistaken for the activities of the senses when there is only the desire for gratification of certain instincts. But love as I understand it is a part of the spirit stirring within, seeking expression when it realises its kinship with its divine creator.

“The greatest love is the love that has no trace of selfishness; that does not seek in any way to perform any action because it will bring some satisfaction to the individual. That is human love in its greatest aspect. It is the spirit that has enthused all who desire to uplift mankind, to help the needy, to sustain the weak, to fight the vested interests that prevent the unfortunate from extracting the beauty that life could offer them.

“All who, in their own land and in foreign lands, have sought with altruistic motive to raise the standard of mankind, to make it aware of its infinite potentialities, are exhibiting love in its finest form. There are degrees - when the same spirit animates a man or woman to serve the object of his or her affection. That need not be selfish; it can be unselfish.

“And there is the lowest kind of love, the love that is restricted, that desires to protect and help only the ones to whom it feels an attraction and feels no pity, no mercy, no sympathy and no compassion for strangers. Divine love covers the universe. It is love that has shaped its course, it is love that has regulated its evolution, it is love which is part of the divine beneficence, it is love which actuates all those advanced spiritual beings who, forfeiting all that they have gained by their attainment, return to your cold, grey, unattractive world to give service to those who need it.”

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