

# Rays from the Rose Cross



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*"A Sane Mind, A Soft Heart, A Sound Body" SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1999—\$5.00*

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ROSICRUCIANS—TRUE AND FALSE  
THE WAY OF THE PASSION—THE CROWNING WITH THORNS  
IN DEFENSE OF DISBELIEF  
MEDITATION—GUIDANCE OF THE INNER LIFE

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A CHRISTIAN ESOTERIC MAGAZINE





“In such wise of those sempiternal roses  
The garlands twain encompassed us about,  
And thus the outer to the inner answered.”

—*Paradiso* XII, 19-21

Above: from *Illustrations for Dante's Divine Comedy*, Gustave Doré (1833-1883);

### *The Sun—Glorified Souls*

Front cover: Sunset, Paramount Photos

Back Cover: St. John the Evangelist, Stained glass, 1832, Christ Church Cathedral. Corel Professional Photos



# Rays from the Rose Cross

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P.O. Box 713, Oceanside, California  
92049-0713 U.S.A.

2222 Mission Avenue

Oceanside, CA 92054 U.S.A.

Telephone: (760) 757-6600

Fax: (760) 721-3806

E-mail: [rosfshp@cts.com](mailto:rosfshp@cts.com)

Internet:

[www.rosicrucian.com](http://www.rosicrucian.com)

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*“A Sane Mind,  
A Soft Heart,  
A Sound Body”*

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## FEATURE



Watercolor (The First Nails), James Tissot, Brooklyn Museum

### A Vision of the Christ

My soul beheld a vision of the Master;  
Methought He stood with grieved and questioning  
eyes,  
There Freedom drove its chariot to disaster  
And Toilers heard, unheeding, Toilers' cries.  
Where Man withheld God's bounties from his  
neighbor,  
And fertile fields were sterilized by Greed.  
Where Labor's hand was lifted against Labor,  
And suffering serfs to despots turned when freed.

Majestic rose tall steeple after steeple;  
Imperious bells called worshippers to pray;  
But as they passed, the faces of the people  
Were marred by envy, anger, and despair.  
"Christ, the Redeemer of the world has risen,  
Peace and good will," so rang the major strain,  
But forth from sweatshops, tenement and prison  
Wailed minor protests, redolent with pain.

Methought about the Master, all unseeing  
Fought desperate hosts of striking clan with clan;  
Their primal purpose, meant for labor's freeing,  
Sunk in vindictive hate of man for man.  
Pretentious Wealth, in unearned robes of beauty,  
Flung Want a pittance from her bulging purse,  
While ill-paid Toil went on dull rounds of duty,  
Hell in her heart and on her lips a curse.

Then spoke the Christ (so wondrous was my  
vision),  
Deep, deep, His voice, with sorrow's cadence  
fraught:  
"This world today would be a realm elysian  
Had my disciples lived the love I taught.  
Un-Christlike is the Christian creed men fashion,  
Who kneel to worship, and who rise to slay.  
Profane pretenders of my Holy Passion",  
Ye nail me newly to the Cross each day.

—Ella Wheeler Wilcox

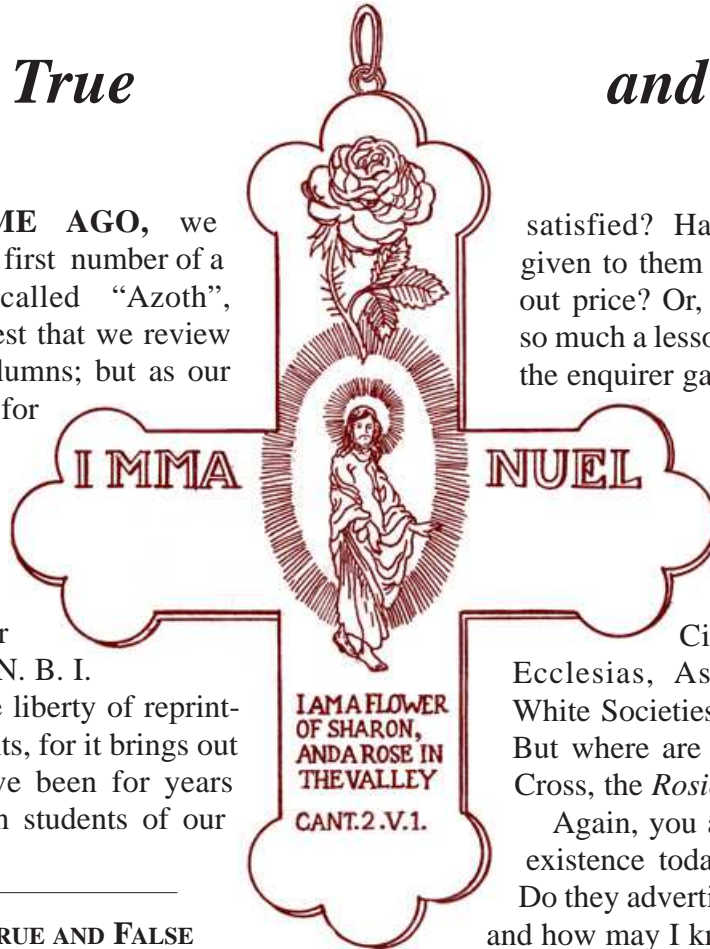
# EDITORIAL

## *Rosicrucians*

*True*

*and False*

**S**OME TIME AGO, we received the first number of a magazine called "Azoth", with a request that we review it in our columns; but as our space is all too limited for the regular articles, we regret that we cannot comply. However, in looking over the pages of "Azoth", we found an article under the above caption by "N. B. I. L.", which we take the liberty of reprinting with some comments, for it brings out a point which we have been for years trying to impress upon students of our philosophy.



Sacred Symbols of the Rosicrucians of the 16th and 17th centuries. Altona, 1735

### ROSICRUCIANS—TRUE AND FALSE

How the name of *Rosicrucian* fires the blood of all Occult students! The imagination runs riot. The Soul reaches out to—it knows not what, yet in its deepest recesses it is always seeking for Truth and Light. How many neophytes have been asked the question "What do you wish?"; and have given the answer "Light, more Light, and Truth!"

How have these earnest seekers after truth been answered? Has the Light been unveiled to their uplifted eyes? Has the longing of their souls been

*Though this article appeared in an earlier issue of the Rays, we believe that it continues to be as relevant now as when it was first published and that its relevance warrants reprinting in the editorial section, notwithstanding its length.*

satisfied? Has the information been given to them without money and without price? Or, has the "master" charged so much a lesson? And, after all, what has the enquirer gained?

On this vast Western Continent there is today a great unrest, a people running hither and thither, after this teacher and that. There are Schools, Circles, Classes, Lodges, Ecclesias, Assemblies, Fellowships, White Societies, and so on, *ad infinitum*. But where are the Brethren of the Rosy Cross, the *Rosicrucians*?

Again, you ask me: "Are there any in existence today? Where do they meet? Do they advertise? Where can I find them and how may I know them?"

Let me answer these queries as I have recorded them.

Rosicrucians are in existence to-day.

Their meeting places are secret, none but the members of the Order knowing of the places and times of assembly.

They do not advertise; nothing is more repugnant to their teachings.

It is not permissible for me to answer the remaining queries. A member may be sitting next to you on the car, or at your elbow in your office or workshop. You may discover him by your earnestness in seeking to live a right life, by your endeavors to attain true spiritual equipoise and knowledge of



yourself. And you may know him by his unassuming life, by his endeavoring to live up to the injunction, "Let him that is greatest among you become the servant of all."

He that seeks earnestly shall find. To him that knocks, the Door shall be opened. To him that asks, if he be of good report, it shall be given in great abundance.

"Oh, yes," you reply wearily, "I have heard all this before, but tell me, how, out of these numerous societies and their various claims upon the credulous, am I to know which is which? You say that the Rosicrucian wears no emblem on the lapel of his coat, no charm on his watch-chain, no signet ring on his finger. Then how am I to know where to seek, or to knock, or to ask?"

The reply is test, Test, TEST, all. When you are ready the teacher will appear.

Testing the authenticity of an order is very simple. If you are contemplating the purchase of a house you do not rely upon the mere word of the vendor. The first thing you do is to fully examine the title. Then to make doubly sure, if you are wise, you call in an expert from a title insurance company. If his report be adverse, you refuse to complete the purchase.

If purchasing a piece of jewelry you turn it about to find the assay mark; if it be 14 carat, you pay 14 carat price, and if 22 carat, 22 carat price. If it have no assay mark you put it down as bogus.

In buying diamonds you go to a reputable firm and get a guarantee of their genuineness and weight.

If you wish to become a Freemason, you go to someone you have reason to believe is a member of that Order. You tell him your desires and ask from him his authority and the status of his Lodge, whether legally instituted or clandestine. You assure yourself by the most rigid scrutiny that all is absolutely correct and upright. Then you are ready to associate yourself with the Masons, if you are acceptable to them.

These are the methods you should use in testing the genuineness of the claims made by any society that invites your affiliation with them. If they will not stand the acid and microscope tests, reject them.

The false order blazons its trademarks all over

the columns of such newspapers as it can get to take its copy. The editors are just as ready to take the stuff as is the gullible reader to believe it. I have been amazed at the utter stupidity of some editors in lending their columns to so bold and flagrant a mass of Baron Munchausen fables.

In your search, you will discover that the Rosicrucian Order never asks anyone to join. You will speedily find that it is like looking for a needle in a haystack to learn where they meet.

I have read a report that there are thousands of Rosicrucian temples throughout the world, and that hundreds of thousands of members are ready to welcome Rosicrucians from this country who may be visiting France, Italy, Egypt, India, and England. There is not an authentic temple the world over that would receive one of the members of any organization which publicly claims itself to be Rosicrucian.

The members of the Rosicrucian Order are not generally known, and there is no authority given to anyone to tell an outsider who these are.

I saw printed in a publication, some months ago, a list of twenty or twenty-five names of men and women Rosicrucians, presumably prominent throughout the world. Being jealous for the honor and integrity of the true Rosicrucian Order, I wrote to these persons whose names and addresses were public property, with the result that I had returned to me, through the Dead Letter Office, the majority of my letters marked "Not Known." And they are still coming back one by one.

By their fruits ye shall know them. Any so-called Rosicrucian Order that dabbles in spiritualistic seances or hypnotism is bogus.

If any high-degree Mason is a member of a fraudulent Rosicrucian Order he can readily learn for himself its lack of genuineness. Whether he be a 32nd degree member or a Knights Templar, he will soon discover that the authentic source of these Orders is lacking. In the true Rosicrucian Order there is no mistaking the origination of Masonry.

This was not written for the man in the street; he will pass it by; it holds nothing for him. He may call it twaddle, simple, inane, or any other name that suits him. But to the Truth-seeker, who asks to

be led aright, there is much hidden.

Go search, and you will find the message.

N. B. I. L. is right in a number of his points. There *is* a great unrest and hungry souls *are* running hither and thither seeking the bread of life. They are also often caught by a name that has nothing to back it, and given a stone or even a serpent that turns to bite and poison them.

But just as there must be a genuine dollar before there can be a counterfeit, so there must be a real Rosicrucian Order before a pseudo order can be formed, and in order to give our students a proper conception of what the real Order of Rosicrucians is and to guard them against misconceptions as to their own status and the status of the Rosicrucian Fellowship, we have made some very explicit statements from time to time. We quote the following from a lesson published in 1911:

“It is essential that the student should understand exactly who and what are the Rosicrucians and their relation to the Rosicrucian Fellowship, for there are many people who foolishly or ignorantly call themselves Rosicrucians, and even students of the Rosicrucian Fellowship might commit the same mistake in their enthusiasm for the teachings.

“There are upon earth seven Schools of the Lesser Mysteries, and five of the Greater Mysteries, and the whole is grouped under one central Head Who is called the *Liberator*.

“In the Schools of the lesser Mysteries the pupil is taught to understand his past evolution upon earth (as thoroughly explained under the chapters on Initiation in the *Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception*), and is also shown the future development during the remainder of the Earth Period. The Rosicrucian Order is one of these Schools and its teachings are particularly suited to the people of the Western World. The other



Painting, Steffi Grant, based on original design of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, Skoob Pub., U.K.

#### **Golden Dawn Cross**

*This densely symbolic design is an amalgam of occult figures, including the central Rose Cross, whose history dates at least as far back as the Middle Ages. It is surrounded by the three Mother letters (corresponding to the elements of fire, air, and water); seven Double letters (corresponding to the planets); and twelve Simple letters (corresponding to the twelve signs of the zodiac) of the Hebrew alphabet. Each of the four arms of the larger cross bear a pentagram surrounded by the symbols for the four elements, plus the fifth element (quintessence) of spirit, and the alchemical symbols, in changed positions, for sulfur, salt, and mercury. The planetary hexagram is surrounded by the six planets with the sun in its center. The letters I.N.R.I., atop Christ's cross, are at the fixed angles.*

Mystery Schools are variously graded to meet the spiritual requirements of the most precocious among the earlier races with whom they work.

“We know well that when a boy has graduated from grammar school he is not therefore fitted to teach; he must first go through high school and then through college, and even after that training

he may not feel the call to teach, but desire to take up some other vocation. Similarly, in the school of life, while graduation from the Rosicrucian Mystery School does make one an Adept, he is still not yet a Rosicrucian.

“These Adept-graduates of the schools teaching the Lesser Mysteries advance into one of five schools that teach the four Greater Mysteries. After they pass the four Great Initiations they reach the Liberator and receive knowledge concerning other evolutions. They are then given the choice of remaining here to assist their brothers, or of entering other evolutions as Workers. Those who elect to stay are given various positions, according to their tastes and natural bent. The twelve Brothers of the Rose Cross are among those Compassionate ones, and they, with their august Head (the Thirteenth), are the only ones who have the right to use the name “Rosicrucian” as applying to themselves.

“Neither the lay-brothers or lay-sisters who have received one or more Initiations at their hands, or the Adepts who have graduated from their school, are entitled to use that name, much less, of course, the students in the Rosicrucian Fellowship, who have just commenced a study of their sublime teachings and started to live the life which, if persistently pursued, will eventually bring them in direct touch with the Elder Brothers of the Rose Cross.”

Unfortunately, N. B. I. L. is right—there are many people who sacrilegiously desecrate the name *Rosicrucian*, as there are thousands of people who commit sacrilege by applying the name *Christian* to themselves. While it may be pedantic to harp upon these distinctions, it is well to hold them in mind and, upon occasion, to enlighten those who are not aware of the facts

But N. B. I. L. is emphatically wrong when he says that “a member (of the Rosicrucian Order), may be sitting next to you on the car or at your elbow in the office or workshop.” The Elder Brothers are not riding around in street cars, nor have they time to work in a shop or office. That may apply to lay-brothers, and even very few of them are so employed at any time. Nor are Adepts

to be thus found. They have a greater work to do.

Nor does N. B. I. L. give the test by which the true Teacher is known and which we have given time and again to protect our students from imposition by unscrupulous charlatans and self-styled teachers who offer to initiate them into this, that, and the other thing, though they have nothing to give, and leave the credulous, who think they can substitute dollars for soul-growth and buy their way into heaven, poorer in pocket but richer in experience. They are lucky if they do not find themselves on a hospital cot or in an insane asylum.

All this may be avoided if the student will only use common sense and realize that though the Elder Brothers are human, they are vastly exalted above our own status, and that a considerable time lived as an intensely zealous *visible* helper is necessary for the aspirant to evolve his soul-body to such a degree of luminosity that it will attract the Teacher. No listless, easygoing study or dreamy contemplation will bring him. He is himself a *servant* in the highest sense of that word, and no one who is not serving with all his soul need expect to meet him.

When he does come, he will need no credentials, for the very first sentence spoken by him will carry its conviction, and so will every other word he ever speaks to the pupil; for being endowed with the consciousness which we will all possess in the Jupiter Period, (see *Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception*), each sentence creates in the listener a series of pictures, which accurately illustrate his meaning.

If he undertakes to explain the method of death, the pupil sees inwardly the passing spirit leaving the body; he may note the uncoiling of the Silver Cord; he sees the rupture of the seed-atom in the heart and how it leaves the body and clings to the spirit.

No charlatans can produce these effects, and if people would “judge them by their fruits,” instead of falling for their baseless claims, they would soon go out of business. But, alas, it is easier to pay \$25 or \$100 for “Initiation” (?) than to live the life, and we are afraid that people will continue to demand the services of the imposter. However, the students who have digested the facts here stated know how to differentiate. □



## *The Way of the Passion— Crowning with Thorns*

**T**HE INNER MEETING with the spiritual Thorn-crowning, which follows on the Foot-washing and the Scourging, reveals fundamental spiritual facts and laws no less important than those disclosed by the Foot-washing and the Scourging. It reveals the kind of adjustment, desired and intended by the Spiritual World, of the relationship between *frontal* and *dorsal*. For this relationship will be just as consciously regulated under the Christ-impulse as the relationships of above and below, left and right are regulated by spiritual work, destiny and world-history.

To understand on what the relationship of frontal and dorsal depends, we must first observe the human being from this point of view. And indeed we must begin by considering, in its spiritual bearing, the “simple” fact that Man, in perception, speech, action and gait, is organized in a *forward* direction. The frontal Man is the Man who perceives, speaks, and uses his hands and feet, while the dorsal Man is blind, dumb, and incapable of action. The physical organization of Man expresses the inner fact that the active Man is provided for in



*Die Bibel in Bildern, Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld (1789-1853)*

### ***Adam and Eve Hide from the Presence of the Lord***

*“Hiding from the Lord” describes the condition of humanity fallen from etheric to material consciousness, and thus separated from perception and knowledge of their Creator. “Where art thou?” called the Lord God. Adam answered, “I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.”—Genesis 3:7-11*

front and the passive Man, behind. All the courage needed for life on Earth finds not only its expression, but also its organs in the frontal Man; all devotion to the governance of the higher and the unknown in existence is located in the dorsal Man.

But Man—as he has become since the Fall—does not represent exclusively courage and devotion. He is, on the contrary, so organized that Fear and Shame play at least as important a part as courage for life and devotion to destiny. For the two basic elemental forces which entered into Man through the Fall are precisely Fear and Shame. This fact is indicated in the Bible when we are told

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*This is the third in a series of six articles on the Way of the Passion, drawn from Valentin Tomberg’s studies of the New Testament, copyright by Candeur Manuscripts (1985) and reprinted with the permission of the Anthroposophical Press.*

that Adam hid himself from the Lord God, and that the first human pair saw “that they were naked.” Their eyes were indeed “opened,” but at the same time they became aware of their “nakedness.” Lucifer certainly kept his promise: the senses of the frontal Man were opened to the outer world, but at the same time Shame entered into him. And the power which expelled the dorsal Man from Paradise and drove him to flight was the power of Fear. Since then, the frontal Man has been filled with Shame, and the dorsal Man filled with Fear. For these two forces prevent Man from experiencing “Paradise,” on whose Threshold the Guardian stands.

Shame causes him to turn from Paradise, and Fear holds him at a distance from it. But the activity of these forces is, for the most part, hidden in Man’s subconsciousness. There they form the curtain concealing the Spiritual World. Only a small part of these forces penetrates into the experience of consciousness in the physical body. But when consciousness rises into the etheric body, it becomes aware of those forces. And it meets them in the etheric body in a way which corresponds to the character of the ether-body as the *time*-body; for it experiences Shame as the elemental force which conceals the past, and Fear as the force veiling the future.

For the organization of Man in his ether-body is the opposite of his physical organization. This applies not only to sex, but also to the relationship between the frontal and the dorsal man. Whereas in the physical body Man is so constituted that he looks forward, in the etheric body he looks backward. The seeing—that is, the “frontal”—man is, in the ether body, the man that looks towards the past, and the “dorsal” man faces forward, in the direction of the future.

But this organization is more fully developed in a higher sphere during Man’s life after death; there Man experiences the Kamaloka-[Desire World] state in a backward direction, and the Devachan-[Thought World] condition on into the future. But this arrangement is not, as a rule, elaborated during the life between birth and death, and the cause of that is that Shame and Fear conceal the Spiritual World. These two forces are the “inward” karma of the Luciferic and Ahrimanic influences

in Man. They keep Man back from consciously entering the Spiritual World. But the same forces become wings to the soul when Shame is converted into Conscience, and Fear into Reverence. For Shame and Fear are the rays flashing from the two-edged sword of the Guardian who stands at the Threshold of the Spiritual World to prevent the unauthorized from crossing it. Awakened Conscience and Reverence, on the other hand, are the pinions whereon the Guardian raises the souls of men into the Spiritual World.

The meeting with the Guardian of the Threshold is, therefore, the third principle of the Christian Rosicrucian path. For this meeting determines the method of preparation, and also vouches for the *certainty* of the knowledge gained of the Spiritual World. Because the untransformed Luciferic influences and the Ahrimanic influences are left on this side of the Threshold, the experience on the other side is sure; it is free from the intervention of those forces which produce illusions.

Then again, there are other paths which, indeed, lead to spiritual experiences *without* the meeting with the Guardian of the Threshold. There are those, for instance, who extol “blissful rest in the light.” But they strive to achieve it by desiring to experience the Spiritual World as bliss. They raise themselves by an enhancement of Reverence to an experience of light-filled blessedness in which they forget everything—even all the troubles and pain of humanity. In this way, however, they offend against the injunction of the Guardian—to keep Conscience awake. They certainly practice Reverence, but the striving after blessedness (*anañda*) benumbs the Conscience. And because the Conscience is dulled, the consciousness of meeting with the Guardian of the Threshold is also dulled.

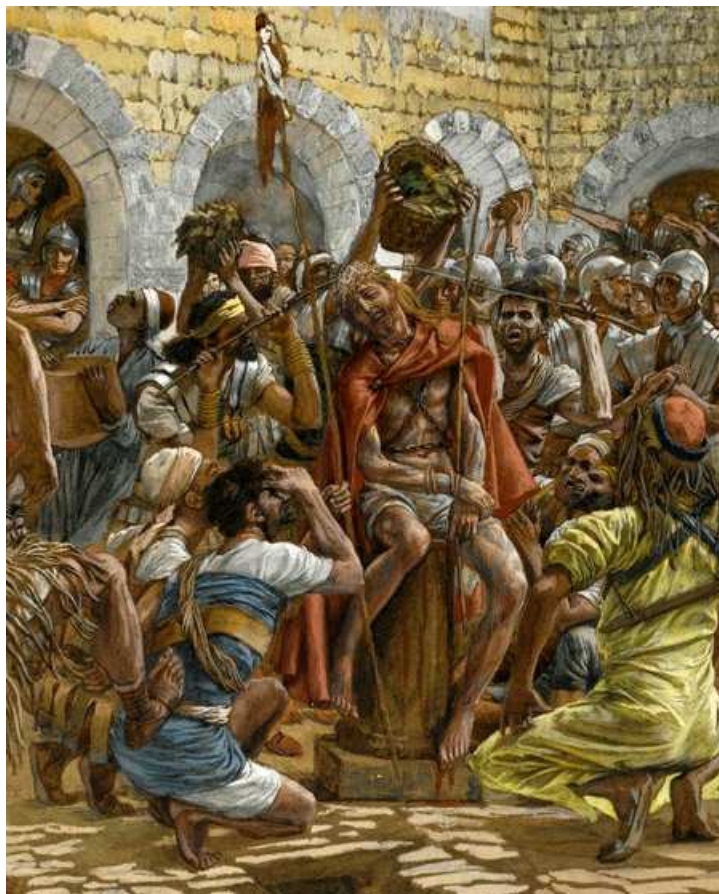
As far as consciousness is concerned, this meeting does not take place; and, consequently, the entrance into the true Spiritual World does not take place. The “light-filled blessedness” experienced on this path is not the Spiritual World entered by Man after death only when he has been purified in the Kamaloka-state, and on the path of Initiation, only after meeting with the Guardian of the Threshold. It is, on the contrary, a distinct sphere of existence which may be called the “Luciferic



devachan.” This region is a kind of “Luciferic double” of the Earth; it is full of light, but there is no truth in it.

Others again strive after a knowledge of the occult by the overcoming of Fear. But what they evolve in this way is not the courage which is the expression of Conscience, but the courage of a realism without Reverence. Thus, they arrive at the so-called “unvarnished truth” concerning Man and the Universe. They learn, in fact, the secrets of the subconscious, both in Man and in the Earth-organism. All forms of human egoism are, by this means, revealed to them, and many forces of the Subterranean Spheres become known to them. Courage, indeed, is needed to perceive these things, but it is a courage which, by its very nature—because it is without Reverence—is a spiritual cynicism. And Man, as he is recognized on this path, is not the true Man but the lower man of the subconscious; and the world thus recognized is not the true Spiritual World, but, rather, a reflection distorted into its opposite, in the form of the spheres of the Interior of the Earth. It is not possible to penetrate into the Spiritual World by this path; for the Guardian of the Threshold requires the courage of true Conscience and devotional Reverence from all who enter there. If anyone evades the meeting with the Guardian, his one-sided endeavor leads not into the Spiritual World, but into the world either of Lucifer or of Ahriman.

For this reason the meeting with the Guardian of the Threshold is just as fundamental to the method of the Christian Rosicrucian school as are the principles of Foot-washing and Scourging. But the meeting with the Guardian of the Threshold has quite definite consequences for one who has experienced it. Certain secrets of existence are revealed to him, and he becomes thereby, himself, a “guardian” of these mysteries. Henceforward, the Guardian of the Threshold entrusts a part of his mission to him. He himself is trusted with a share in the responsibility and the task which the Guardian of the Threshold has. What was confided to him by the Spiritual World, the Man must now “guard” in the spirit of the task of the Guardian of



Opaque watercolor over graphite on wove paper. J. James Tissot, 1836-1902. Brooklyn Museum

### *The Crowning of Thorns*

*Experiencing ultimate forms of derision and abuse are the lot of the disciple of Christ who submits to the crowning of thorns.*

the Threshold. But this means that he is left free to decide in what manner he will place his knowledge at the service of Mankind. For the “guardianship” does not consist in withholding or keeping secret this knowledge, but in the task of making it accessible in the right way to all who consciously strive after it, and really need it.

A new dignity is conferred upon Man when he passes the test of meeting with the Guardian of the Threshold. He is assigned a “crown,” but such a crown as would involve scorn and contempt in the eyes of the world, if the world ever heard of it, and which, for the man himself, means fresh pain and further trials. For as he had to overcome Shame and Fear in response to the demands of the Guardian of the Threshold, so, from henceforth, he is no longer only a representative of the Mysteries, but also an awakener of Shame and Fear in others. He is not only liberal benefactor to other men, he

also becomes a trial or test for many people. He must accept the fact that standing for the truth before men frequently brings with it the shaming and frightening of men. It may even involve the necessity of remaining dumb under the eyes of many—under eyes which are either greedily spying out something in the man unworthy of the truth for which he stands, or seeking in his conduct something to prove that his truth is not true.

For Shame, anxious not to be exposed, sharpens the eyes for all deficiencies in the personality of him who represents spiritual truth; and Fear, wanting to remain hidden, gives to the glance a readiness to find contradictions in the spiritual truth which is represented. To such eyes is a man exposed when he has undertaken the task of “guarding”—of representing—spiritual truth. And he who wears the *Crown of Thorns* must overcome Shame and Fear under exposure to such human eyes, just as he had to overcome them at the voice of the spiritual Conscience representing the Guardian of the Threshold. He must not allow himself to be drawn into polemical self-defense, nor must he shrink before the “keen and brazen glance” of those who wish to strip him naked and to cut in pieces all that he holds most holy. He must not permit himself to take one aggressive step forward, nor to yield one step backward. The Thorny Crown of his task obliges him to stand—to stand fast in the Truth. It is the experience of a new dignity—the dignity of Truth represented by Man. And this is true human dignity, the dignity of the Son of Man.

What we have attempted to characterize here in a general way can be made clear and astonishingly alive by many actual examples, if the life of Rudolf Steiner is studied from this point of view. The life-history of Rudolf Steiner is, assuredly, the best source from which to draw profound understanding of the Foot-washing, the Scourging, the Crowning with Thorns, the Cross-bearing and the Crucifixion. These stages in the spiritual history of the present day run through the story of that life, and, at the same time, exhibit the characteristics of the future spiritual history of Mankind. For as the Scourging, for instance, is a karmic necessity in the history of Man’s future, so also is the

Crowning with Thorns. The Thorn-crowning will be part of the spiritual history of Man’s future at the epoch when “white humanity” is pitted against Ahrimanic humanity—after a complete severance of the two currents. Then white [figuratively speaking] humanity will stand as the representative of spiritual truth—and, at the same time, as a reproach and a warning to the rest of Mankind. But it will be standing before a humanity grown clairvoyant for all deficiencies and weaknesses—a humanity which will have the faculty not only of spying out every imperfection, but also of working destruction through the entrance-doors of those imperfections. Then will the words become historical truth: “Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.” All Goodness to which the element of compromise still clings will be destroyed by the forces of the other section of humanity; so that “even that he hath” will be taken away from those who “hath not” an attitude free from compromise.

And herewith our study of the first three stages of the Passion, in their significance for methods of occultism, for karma, and for the spiritual history of humanity, may be brought to a close.

Nevertheless, a short spiritual-moral summary of the essentials on which these three stages are based may not be out of place. This summary may be given in quite short sentences. For in Foot-washing we deal with the conquest of pride through service; and in Scourging, with the uncompromising attitude which swerves to neither side; while in the Crowning with Thorns we deal with the firm stand in the name of truth—neither striding forward, nor shrinking back

Thus the first three stages of the Christian path may be summed up in these words:

***The First must be the servant of all.***

***His left hand must not know what his right hand doeth.***

***He must know that the servant is not greater than his lord.***

The further stages of the Way of the Passion will be considered in the next article. (Continued) □



# MYSTIC LIGHT

## *The Value of Work*

**W**ORK IS A PANACEA for most ills of mankind. Work is the endeavor of living. To live we must work. Not for a living, or to earn a living alone, but because to work is good. Endeavor is growth, and we must grow.

No man can work and not receive inspiration. Sometimes it would seem to the individual that his labor is anything but inspiring, that it is mere deadening drudgery, disagreeable and tiresome. When this is true, be assured that it is not the work causing such a result, but the worker.

There is no denying that many workers are laboring at jobs not to their liking, and for which they have no special ability. They are merely earning their daily bread. It is also true that earning one's daily bread is the least of the many values contained in work. Yet the earning of daily bread is essential to the well-being, mental and physical, of any man. In spite of this we repeat: It is the least of the many values contained in work.

Proper food is purely a physical benefit, without which the body housing the imperishable spirit cannot continue to manifest perfectly. Improper food contributes to the body's imperfection, detracts from its healthy functioning, preys upon the mind, and generally disturbs the equilibrium of the person. So, we must not underestimate the importance of working to earn sustenance.

So far as we are able we must, in all justice to ourselves, maintain, or, in many cases, *attain* a perfect vehicle for the indwelling individual spirit, which is



© Joe Vandallo

Acrylic on canvas

### *Men at Work*

*That treasure which we may "lay up in heaven," the "gathered pabulum of the soul and the extract therefrom [which were], symbolized by the Shew Bread and the fragrant essences" in the Tabernacle of the Wilderness, was "the product of actual toil, of orderly systematic work."—from the Rosicrucian Fellowship Full Moon Service*

the true self or ego.

We live in cycles: we respond to our endeavors and grow from out them. As we mature and gain in mental and moral stature, we then proceed to endeavor differently, and as a result we gradually transform our personalities. They become more objective, more impersonal, though no less human. Then it seems that wise Providence gives us another opportunity to apply the fruits of our growth to a situation similar to one previously encountered, but, perhaps, not fully mastered. This small cycle furnishes us with the opportunity to observe and gauge our progress. This retrospective comparison enables us to see how far we have traveled and how much we have grown; thus we take new courage for the ever onward and upward journey.

If you dislike your work and go to it reluctantly each day, buoyed only by the thought of the wages or salary you will receive—

If you are critical of your fellow workers and asso-

ciates—

If you feel resentment against fate for forcing you into your present situation—

If you have any grudges whatever, any jealousies, envies, or just plain dislikes—

It is these that are holding you back. It is these that form the millstone around your neck and make quicksand where you would move freely.

Do these observations seem harsh? Is the writer sitting in judgment? I think not. We know that every thought we think has substance and form; it has vibration whose formative signature is an identifiable wave-length. Thoughts are things; they have color, pattern, and power.

Granting this to be true, it is then easily understood how and why silent thoughts can and do affect our daily living, our advancement, our prosperity, our happiness.

We are oppressed more by the weight of our own thoughts and attitudes than by the exertions or circumstances of our labors. As we continue to entertain our resentments (some entertainment!) and dissatisfactions, we increase the height of our self-confining barriers and landmine our path with pitfalls and stumbling-blocks. We lose promotions we felt we were entitled to. We have accidents that pass up the fellow next to us. We suffer undeserved reprimands while obvious malefactors go free. We seethe with the injustice of it all. Yet we ourselves, alone, are responsible for all our discomfiture.

This being inescapably true, should we go on fighting everything? Or should we confront the real adversary and begin a new battle within ourselves?

It is no small job to master one's self, to correct habits of negative thought, to think always up and not down, to think constructively and not destructively.

We pose ourself the following foolish question because our actions suggest we do not know the answer: Which is better, an employer who comes raving at us for our blunders, or one who kindly and sympathetically points out a better, easier way to achieve a certain result, with perhaps a hand of encouragement on our shoulder, a smile in his eyes?

The law of doing unto others, of placing oneself in the other fellow's shoes, is very simple and effective, and easy to put into operation—at least so it would

seem.

Just as the employer working in generous and kindly sympathy with his employees gets better results than one who needs to “call the shots” and “lord it over” others—so does the willing, cooperative worker pleasantly attract better results for himself than the reluctant, resentful, morose, or obstreperous worker.

Every position we obtain, in work as in life, is the effect of our own thought, attitude, and behavior.

It matters not what one's formal education has been, in what line one has been trained; nor is experience per se, or the references of others the controlling factor in the law of merit. It is a function of purely intrinsic qualities: What we make of our experience; how we use what we know; the consistency with which we permeate our moment-to-moment lives with earnestness and good will.

So, if you are unfavorably situated and feel inclined to blame (itself a dubious enterprise)—whether it be the political set-up, your employer, neighbor, family, or God—pause and reconsider. Redirect your attention selfward. Get rigorously honest. See where the real problem lies and where real progress can be made. Then with newly opened eyes, a new perspective, and a humble willingness, set to work to get the most out of the least of your work. If you are faced with an especially arduous task, one you dislike more than any other, ask yourself, *What can I learn from this? In what manner can I benefit from it?* Then perform the task with zest. If it is possible, make a better task of it. To master great things we must first perfectly master small things.

If there is someone working in your group against whom you have been holding ill will, begin to honestly search for his good qualities; or perhaps better still, be truthful with yourself to learn why you are nursing grievances. Usually you will find he has injured only your ego, deflated your sense of importance, because you will find you have been thinking only of *yourself* and *your* agendas, *your* view on matters.

If you are sure this is not the case, then, in all sympathy, consider why he is as he is—what combination of prior causes and circumstances may have contributed to his present personality and general attitude.



Silently and without condescension imagine yourself as a physician who is in sympathy with the ills of the patient. Suppose the condition is most objectionable, brought on by the patient's selfishness and folly. But the physician does not sit in judgment; he only goes to work to repair the damage, if he can.

While we do not need to try to make over our fellow associates, we could with profit seek to understand (in the sense of accounting for) their "ailments" and the imperfections that irk us. Once understanding these, we may be able to lessen their difficulties, and by so doing smooth our own rough path.

Suppose some one certain thing is a source of constant irritation to you on your job. Stop and weigh its importance. If you find it really does not matter except to you personally, then seek to shut it out; refuse to be irritated, practice peace of mind.

Our general attitude toward work makes or breaks us. We are happy or we are unhappy, according to our attitude. We progress, or we remain in a rut; we sail along blithely, enjoyably soaring over obstacles, or we plod tiresomely along in the rut, gradually digging ourselves in deeper.

The responsibility is ours; we are free agents, whether or not we care to believe it.

If our attitude is that our wages are small, therefore we are only going to do as much work as is commensurate with the pittance we are paid, we are not only laying the foundation for demotion, or unemployment, we are burying our talents, laying the foundation for our future misery, and retarding our spiritual progress.

If we refuse to help, without material compensation, in some worthy undertaking, thinking—*Why should we? We don't owe them anything*—we are but creating grief for ourselves. Or, if we overcharge for our work because our client is in immediate need



Oil on canvas, 1943, José Clemente Orozco (1883-1949); Museo de Arte Alvar y Carmen T. de Carrillo Gil, Mexico City

### ***Christ Destroying His Cross***

*Not without some basis in fact, the necessity for work has been regarded as a consequence of man's first and ongoing disobedience, whose net effect required Christ's salvatory assumption of human form. The painter's intuition graphically illustrates the breaking up of crystallized forms which have become bereft of the living spirit, be they codified laws, sense-locked learning, or elitist art itself. Depicted in vigorous and violent action, the once passively crucified Christ now becomes an aggressively avenging force, with which a people exploited for their labor can especially identify: A drastic preliminary to his words, "Behold! I make all things new."*

and unable to secure other help, once more we are creating bad karma that we shall eventually be called upon to liquidate.

Work because it is good to accomplish, not because you get paid for it. Work because any good endeavor increases your own working ability and power and therefore is to your advantage. Work because you feel the urge to give service where it is merited, though not necessarily appreciated. Withholding service where the need is great or the cause is good and right is like throwing away precious jewels. With each instance of such behavior we reject a particular benefit to the soul and are spiritually the poorer for it.

No job should be too lowly for well doing, nor should any job be deemed so great as to tempt us to vainglory. Rather, the greater the job, the more humbly should we approach it. We should work because it is good to work, and our daily prayer should be: "Lord, let our work be good." □

—Carol Cornish

Planet Art

## *Meditation—Guidance of the Inner Life*

**W**HEN FRANCIS TOOK leave of Mount Alverno, upon which he had received the stigmata, he cast a last glance back towards the sacred heights. He knelt down and said, “Farewell, thou mountain of God, thou Holy Mountain; *mons coagulatus, mons pinguis, mons in quo bene placitum est Deo habitare*; farewell, Mount Alverno, may God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost bless thee; peace be with thee for we shall see one another no more.”

He who is alive to the soul of words like these can feel what the still places of prayer meant in the soul of Francis and what the man of today lacks. Where now has man his mount of worship? An impression from nature, upon a lonely mountain height at sunrise, is the last dying whisper of the memory of that which the men of past ages felt upon their mountain tops. We must regain that which echoes in such sayings of Francis, if the very best is not to be lost from humanity.

Solovieff speaks in one place of the “inner Athos” which every man must have. The spirit of Russia in him looks back to the sacred mountain in Greece, from which so much blessing has streamed out over Russia. But Solovieff knows also that the past does not return. The man of today must found his own cloister within himself. This is true in a very much wider sense than one imagines.

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*With this issue of the Rays we begin a series of articles drawn from Meditation, Guidance of the Inner Life, by Friedrich Rittelmeyer, © The Christian Community Press and published by Floris Books, Edinburgh. Reprinted here with permission.*



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### *Contemplatio*

*“The call for the cloister is born out of inner need....But each must build his cloister within himself; out of freedom in solitude.”*

This longing for the cloister in many men comes from deep reasons. But were we to flee to the Roman Catholic cloisters, we should find a world other than that which we expected, a world in which we could no longer feel at home. Even at the best we should admit to ourselves that our longing had been for something different from what we found there. But in the Protestant church this call for the foundation of evangelical cloisters has largely died away. It was really a misunderstanding. The call for the cloister is born out of inner need. But it means something other than men themselves think. It really calls for that which we are trying to do here. What is here taking place is the founding of an order. But each must build his cloister within himself; out of freedom in solitude. Those who belong to such an order may indeed sometimes meet or talk with one another. But what



is most important comes in being alone. All the cloisters of the past are prophecies of that which must happen within the soul.

But let us return from the Catholic to the Biblical picture. When, in John's Gospel, the Samaritan woman points Christ to Mount Gerazim and its sanctuary, Christ speaks words full of meaning for the future: "God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." The mountain of which Christ speaks is within, and He calls it "the spirit." The temple of which He speaks is invisible; it stands upon no spot of earth, and He calls it "the truth." The mountain of the spirit, upon which stands the temple of truth, is what we seek. We want to build it within us as an "inner Athos," as "the sacred Mount Alverno." And when we go to men and to our daily work, then shall we "come down from the mountain." Once when Christ came down from the mountain, with the glory in which He dwelt there shining around Him, His disciples entreated Him: "Lord, teach us to pray; to pray as thou canst pray." When we are able to rouse in men longings for the mountain of the temple from which we draw our strength, then shall we be the healers of our age.

Rudolf Steiner once said that if this hurried, external life of ours continues for a few more decades, the children will be born already trembling. Such words can most forcibly impress upon our souls the seriousness of the mission which we have to ourselves and to our times.

The "truth" of which Christ speaks is a great kingdom which we must first discover for ourselves. One can find it only when one has the quality which corresponds to it, that is: sincerity. If one suggests to oneself a thought to which one has no inward right, one takes a destructive element into one's soul. That is why it is so misleading when Coué can recommend to mankind as a meditation, "Every day, in every way, I get better and better." One may, of course, attain something by such meditation, as one may often cure a disease by simply ignoring it or, as in Christian Science circles, by simply treating illness in humanity as if it did not exist. Yet the tendency of this is false and danger-

ous and its failure to preserve entire truthfulness to the facts must somewhere and somehow lead to a relapse. It would be better to meditate thus: "I wish that it should go better with me," or "I wish that the illness may be overcome." Then we need only ask further if such a representation to oneself of one's bodily condition and health does not overlook still

***The mountain of the spirit,  
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deeper associations with reality, and invite into one's inner life spirits of egoism and materialism, which may indeed help against the evil of the moment, but later demand a worse penalty. We have the right to defend ourselves against every illness. But true insight knows also that every illness is meant to bring its own blessing into the house, for the soul and . . . for the body also. We ought to let no illness depart from us without our having wrung from it its blessing. One can apply to it exactly the old saying: "I will not let thee go except thou bless me."

That for which we are here striving bears within itself bodily health also. But this is spread through the body through the soul's becoming healthy. This feeling of becoming healthy ought to occur after every right meditation. "Through Thy word my soul becomes whole," says the Act of Consecration of Man.\* For my part I must admit that I never rightly knew what health meant until I experienced it through meditation. A real feeling of health permeates soul and body. Some may think they know this feeling after a strenuous mountain climb or vigorous exercise in a game. The feeling described here is similar, only very much more spiritual. And

\*The Act of the Consecration of Man is the Communion Service of the Christian Community, a movement for the renewal of religious life through a living experience of Christ.

in this way one feels oneself safe, and in the long run gets further than by curing oneself of some particular illness by auto-suggestion.

From such false advice men have come to think that every meditation is self-suggestion. It is no more and no less so than if a man should undertake to master his temper, or to bear a pain, or to behave decently to someone else. By accusing it of being auto-suggestion, one can throw suspicion on every effort of the will. One can even forbid any kind of influence exercised by teachers upon children, because it may be suggestion. In reality the question is whether that to which one wishes to give the mastery in one's soul is a truth or an ideal which one has understood, and which one may safely make a lasting possession. In the very nature of suggestion and autosuggestion is implicit an unreality which one would like to press upon oneself and others, or at least the unlawful interference with another's freedom. Through such confused conceptions it comes about that men do not trust themselves to exert their wills against their natural instincts at that moment in their history when it is all-important that they should learn to do so, in order to remain human, and even to become human. Concerning the exercises of the soul which are here recommended, one can only repeat that they should be practiced only in the land of truth and freedom. In it even the strongest will can bring no harm, but will be a real help and benefit.

So that we may first learn the value of inward occupation with oneself from exercises which everyone who comes to them from without can share, let us here discuss fully such a preliminary exercise. But first it is well to reply to a question often asked by beginners: "What bodily attitude is best for meditation?"

Certainly the bodily attitude is not unimportant. And from the body difficulties arise, which we shall discuss more fully later. The Eastern man brought his body to rest by sitting down upon his

crossed legs. But, apart from the fact that we are unaccustomed to such a position and assume it only with difficulty, it cuts men off from certain currents which pass from the earth into the body. By such a bodily position the Oriental man assists his striving away from the earth, which striving is the content of his meditation and the spirit of his

view of the world. We see almost exactly the opposite of this in Western man, who for centuries has prayed upon his knees. In such a bodily position man is outwardly nearer to the earth, but he receives the earth influences, though naturally quite gently and unconsciously, yet more strongly into himself. This occurs the more readily, as we indeed can feel, because the feet have much more spirituality of their own than the knees have. We feel them in a much more living way. Therefore, when we kneel, we unite ourselves still more closely with that

which streams forth from the earth, and also by kneeling to pray, the mission of the West to the earth is prepared and furthered.

And now what is our position? For us, it is not right to allow ourselves to be supported by any natural spiritual force whatsoever, which we do not understand, but we must seek the higher world out of a clear consciousness and out of a free will. Therefore, there is only one rule for us: our natural bodily existence must disturb us as little as possible. The position in which our spirit feels itself as little disturbed as possible, is best for us. One can find this out only by experiment. One man requires greater comfort, which makes another man go to sleep. The other requires a more rigid posture, which would distract the first. One can only say, "as much comfort as is possible without laziness."

The meditation of which we are now about to speak is an aid to acquiring calmness of spirit. It is so arranged that it is of especial benefit to the man of the present day in his hurried life, and at the same time shows how one can rise to the very highest from what is quite simple.



Ink on paper, courtesy of Harry Menne

Let us simply turn our attention to the word “rest.” At a time when the quiet life of the hermit is common, it would not be good to choose it, but, in the age of incessant haste, it may be to innumerable people a rare benefit to body and soul to come to be at home with this word “rest.”

Here again the treasures of remembrance must come to our aid. Where, in my past life, did I most strongly experience what rest is? We think of a quiet evening in a wood. We sat upon a seat by a lake. The waves rippled gently at our feet. The trees rustled almost imperceptibly in the evening wind. Twilight spread itself like a sheltering garment over the land. That day we had done our full measure of work. Now we had rest at evening. The more living and concrete the picture is, the better. When we have called the picture strongly to life, then we dismiss it and retain only the feeling; the feeling of a great refreshing peace filling all around.

What an evening in a wood is to one man, the impression made by high mountains with eternal snows may be to another, as he saw them quite suddenly, far before him in the distance, as he went on an expedition, like an unfathomable premonition of a higher world. And still another may recall the starry heavens, as they made their strong impression upon him when he came out from some stormy public meeting or lively private assembly. . . . It is always important that all the details of one’s recollection should serve only as a help to reaching a feeling of great rest.

This rest must be felt as strongly as possible. We may say to ourselves in such a case: “You have now a strong feeling of rest, but there are certainly people who feel it ten times as strongly as you do.” It is not only necessary in this meditation, which may last from five to fifteen minutes, to continue to hold fast to this rest as consciously as possible, and at the same time to assent to it inwardly, but it is also necessary to let it become ever stronger, as far as this is possible, and to fill the whole body with it and to pour forth the body with it. We may also, in order to remain inwardly active, bring our limbs to rest one by one. Then we will notice how much tension there is in our limbs, in our hands, our feet, our brain and in the neck muscles which carry our head. We look upon rest as a drink which

flows throughout all the kingdom of the body.

Certainly some will say “That would send me to sleep,” and is it such a bad thing if one has a means of going to sleep? This meditation may help him to sleep who finds it hard to do so. He relaxes himself in it. He goes around his body like a watchman round a house and sees what is unwilling to sleep and brings it to rest. Especially there, where the head joins the body, it is well to see that everything is right, so that the head may be quite relaxed. One lets “rest” really rest within one. If a man really wishes it, he may even in apparently difficult cases, go to sleep by means of the exercise; but he will often notice that he is not really willing to do so; rather that he is in love with his disturbed thoughts and feelings, and will on no account give them up for such a rest. But if he really cannot get to sleep by these means, yet the rest which fills him when he really ceases to think of particular things and rests only in this rest, may be also as beneficial as a real sleep.

If anyone is trying to find rest at night in sleep, I would advise him as far as possible to make himself a part of the following picture: Here I rest upon my bed, around me are the walls of the house, but outside is the procession of the stars; stars are above me, stars are around me, stars are under me. I should see them through the earth, had I the eyes. The walls of the house, the whole house around me is passing away, even the earth itself is passing away, but that which lives in the stars, remains. I give myself to it, I go out among the stars, I share myself among them until nothing of myself remains here, all is outside with the stars. I move along with them in their courses, slowly, calmly, majestically, I eternally. . . .

[T]his way, with our conscious wills, we go to meet that which sleep requires of us. Such a rest can be of inexpressibly great benefit to us, and when we know it we might almost choose to sleep no more. But if, after this conception of a picture, we can come to the conception of a voice and hear the whole heaven of stars singing this song of praise: “Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace to men of good will,” and if we can further retain the living feeling which lies at the root of this conception of sound, can keep the sacred spirit



of peace, which turns in praise to the heavenly Father, the joyful heavenly rest, the restful joy of heaven, as one keeps a taste upon one's tongue, and can have it throughout our whole being, then we are really with the angels, and can spiritualize and transfigure our sleep in a way of which we have not had hitherto even a distant idea.

But, throughout, we have to do, not with the ability to sleep, but really with the ability to awake. As one can imagine eyes which see by day the starry heaven which is always around us, there can at least be a spirit which dives down so deeply into peace of soul that he feels deep within him that the starry heaven is above him by day also. The spirit of the stars, as we may call it, accompanies him upon his life's way.

As one can take in rest like a medicine, so one can, of course, take into oneself all other possible spiritual contents. An especially health-giving exercise is: *purity*. One can build it up and shape it in the same way as we have done with *rest*. In this, it may help us to plunge ourselves into the innocent life-stream of the plants, or into the crystal pure glory of a snowy landscape, or the picture of the Sistine Madonna, or again, the heaven of stars. In the same way a man can learn to draw into himself strength of will, sincerity, kindness. He will find that a great spiritual store of healing, which he can never exhaust, is at his disposal.

If we turn back to the exercise on *rest*, it can present itself to him as a sanatorium, which he has built for himself. He does not require long and costly journeys into the mountains when he wants rest and refreshment. He enters into his own rest. At first, I often imagined to myself that I lived in this rest, as a diver stays under a great glass bell in the sea. Outside the waves pass, the fish go by, the sharks and other sea pirates seek their prey, but he is safely sheltered in his transparent house from which he looks out at what is around him. Thus may a man look out in spirit from his house of rest upon the noise and haste outside. So one can strengthen the feeling of rest by contrast.

Many people will in such ways gradually learn what rest really is. Up till now they have known it only in the form of unconscious sleep. Rest itself passes into us, rests in us, awake and living, feeds



Planet Art

Oil on panel, Raphael (1483-1520), Gemäldegalerie, Dresden

***The Sistine Madonna***

*Its harmonious composition and purity of conception make the Sistine Madonna an inspiring subject for meditation.*

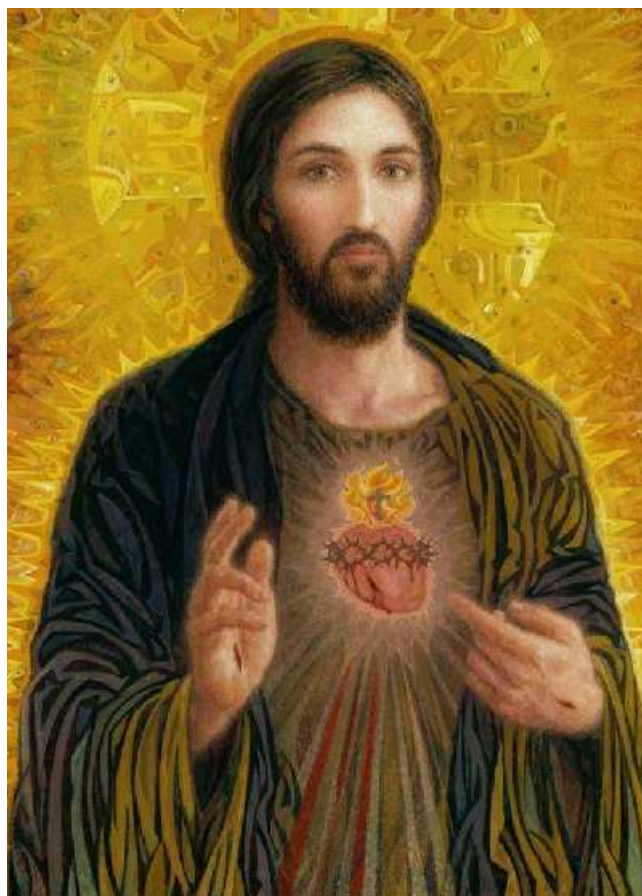
us, heals us, makes us divine. When I first experienced that, I had the feeling that now, at last, I saw the possibility of doing something for "nerves." As we can lift a load if we can get a grip beneath it, so now we find a realm which lies below the nerves, and we need only think of the word "rest," and we are already in our house of rest. In the worst of street noises, in the most excited meeting, if we only think of it, *rest* rises up like a temple and receives us into its peace.

When we put this into words, we are working at the spiritual life of humanity like a nerve specialist. No drug will help men like these exercises in rest. If humanity would only take seriously what is here written, the danger of neurasthenia and of other worse mental illnesses, which arise from distracting haste, would be overcome in a few decades.

In this study, we have, up to now, spoken in such a way that even the man who is furthest from reli-

gion can accompany us. In conclusion, let something more be added out of the world of which religion speaks. Let him who finds grounds for it in his life, change this rest into a great and complete trustfulness. Let him look up to the spirit which rules behind and above all the starry worlds, and permit the peace, which streams to him from afar, to flow back in a great, deep, perfect trustfulness of heart. He will then notice that, in so doing, very much within him will be relaxed which he did not even know was strained. He will be able to “react away” much hidden anxiety and fear, without first bringing it by psychoanalytical methods fully into his consciousness. Only it must be a living trust which does not sink down into a fatalistic resignation. For the man of today needs the power of active world-conquest. Resignation has been reached by many men of the past. That which is told of Roman Stoics and still more of Buddhist monks, and especially of Buddha himself, arouses reverence before these heights of self-trained humanity, but it is not yet Christian peace.

Therefore it is good here also to look at Christ. Is He not the Word; the Word for the world? Does not that which spoke to us out of all the depths of the starry heaven, sound forth also from Him? Is not the angels’ song of praise upon that holy night really His own being echoing forth? In His farewell discourse Christ said to His disciples, “These words have I spoken unto you that in Me ye might have peace: in the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” And this other word, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you.” This word of Christ is found in the Act of Consecration of Man, as it was also in the ancient Mass. In the former it is born again out of His innermost spirit in the words “I am at peace with the world. This peace with the world can be with you also because I give it to you.” And after the resurrection Christ greets His disciples in words full of meaning: “The peace be with you.” One may think of this word as spoken once in the past of Christ’s history. But one can also think of it as spoken out of the present, as it is every evening in the starry sky, when the revelation of the highest and most divine Spirit is seek-



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#### ***Sacred Heart of Jesus***

*“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you....These words have I spoken unto you that in Me ye might have peace” (John 14:27, 16:33)*

ing for our souls. If we experience this out of the greatness of the universe, then there is no danger, either that our peace will be merely personal, as so easily happens in a religion of forgiveness of sins, or that we should remain in passive peace, as so easily happens in a religion of trusting in God. But the stern progress of the great world-clock there outside is in sympathy with our inmost feelings. And that is why it is there. Then we are at peace with the world, but we make ourselves one with its progress, as that can come about through Christ. “My peace,” says Christ with emphasis in John’s Gospel. That means, the peace which is I. From that we receive authority to hear Him speaking to us also: “I am the peace. The peace which is I, be with thee I.” If one can so experience the meditation on *rest* that one hears the voice of Christ Himself out of all breadths, depths and heights, then one has carried it upward to the greatness and

divine power which can be attained by men.

The reader will now wish to ask: Yes, but which meditation ought we then to pursue, that on Love, suggested in the first letter, or this on Peace, which is here suggested? Such questions will become more urgent for many when we discuss a whole series of other meditations in the following studies, from which it will, we hope, become more and more clear what meditation is and is intended to be. The fact is that one cannot, in advice given in letters, name for everyone the exact meditation which is suited to him. Therefore we can here develop only an organism of inward exercises in which lives the whole Gospel of John. Out of it each must choose that which is right for him. But he may also choose the whole of it, and then his life-work may be to make it inwardly his own. He is upon a good path. For the spirit of John's Gospel, which is so near to the spirit of the coming age, lives in all its fullness in this organism. But we must always keep our eyes fixed upon the central saying which sums up all: "I am Love." We shall unfold the meaning of this saying as we proceed to experience this "I" in the seven "I am's," and then look on "Love" in its divine revelation, in the seven stages of the passion, and lastly see, in the seven miracles of John's Gospel, the "am" in its actual earthly life, and receive it into ourselves.

But the words "I am Peace," which we are considering today, are as a background to this. I can imagine a reader finding that he first requires peace more in the sense of John's Gospel; then he might so meditate that he lets peace sound out until it dies away into love, so that it can be no selfish and passive peace, but the peace "which unites itself with the world's evolving." Another might prefer to remain at the word "love." Then he might first let the word "peace" sound out so that love acquires the greatness, the purity, the rest of the cosmic background, out of which it came with Christ, and so does not lose itself in unhealthy worries or in human pettiness. For the "world's evolving through Christ," of which the Act of Consecration of Man speaks, comes out of "being at peace" with the world.

But we can also think as follows. We take the word "peace" in the evening, so that it passes away into "love," and the word "love" in the morning, so

that it proceeds out of "peace." We can let the word "love" arise over us with the sun and the new day; just as we hear the word "peace" resound from the starry heavens and the sheltering night. A great rhythm comes into our life, like the rhythm of day and night, which, indeed, bears within itself the very spirit of this rhythm. This is like a daily divine breathing. A breathing-in when we meditate upon the word "peace," a breathing-out when we meditate upon the word "love." It is like a going out from, and returning into the Father, which corresponds to the hidden rhythm of the life of Christ Himself, as it is shown to us in the Gospel in His day and His night life. Yes, this rhythm lies deep in the background of the proclamation of Christ Himself, as it is shown to us in John's Gospel. "I come from the Father," says the first part; "I go to the Father," says the second part.

And so we learn in these two meditations to take Christ into our life, as He is described to us by His nearest disciples and friends. . . . [T]he great divine life bears within itself its mighty and solemn rhythm, since ever, after a world-day of a million years, there comes an evening of rest for the world, when the world returns to God, to come forth from him again newer and greater. With the words "love" and "peace" we come as near as is humanly possible to this rhythm in the life of the Father God.

And let us not keep silence about one secret more, even if to most of our readers it is only like a tale that is told. If our being bathes itself in peace, in harmony with the deepest powers of the cosmos, then gently and inwardly another body builds itself up for us out of the cosmos. If love, the divine spirit of the cosmos, streams through our being, our blood is actually renewed. And therefore in this twin meditation one can experience the highest communion and receive from Christ, to whom we may ever look as far as we may understand Him, His body and His blood.

This is the highest to which we can rise by meditation, that we should simply look into Christ, pass into Him, learn to be in Him and live in Him. To make this possible for men, in all its life and fullness, is the purpose of these studies. Man can feel himself as if enfolded in Christ, breathe in Him as in a higher air, awake as in a higher light, arise as in a higher body. (Continued) □



## MYSTIC LIGHT

### *A Dream within a Dream*

**I**DREAMED THAT I WAS a prisoner in a house where there were many others. The guards were very cruel and seemed to have taken a special dislike to me, torturing me whenever possible. I was knocked down and otherwise mistreated and a guard watched over me to prevent me from leaving the house. Moreover, surrounding the house was a tall fence made of swords which seemed impossible to climb. But one day, hungry and utterly exhausted, I escaped. Taking a companion in misery by the hand, I gave one jump and both of us seemed to fly over the fence. The rest did not miss us, they were more interested in themselves and in begging the guards to be lenient, to give them food and drink to keep them from starving.

We had walked but a little distance when we met a small child. She asked where we were going. I answered that I was seeking rest and quiet and wanted to go far away where there was no trouble. With a child's look of entire trust and confidence, she pointed to a number of houses on a hill, saying, "My Father can help you—he knows everything."

Thereupon we were led by this little child up a hill to a large group of buildings looking somewhat like a monastery. A broad flight of steps led to a wide porch covered by grapevines from which large clusters of grapes hung in strangely transparent bunches. It seemed as if a light were back of them and to the taste they were very sweet and refreshing.

As we hesitated, an old white-bearded man came to the door. Light was shining from his almost transparent face and his bright eyes glowed and shone with a pure white light. They were a dark blue black and looked kindly down at me.

My companion had left me and taking my hand, the venerable man said, "Child, you want peace, yet peace is within you. You want rest and rest is all about you. You know and yet have come for help. Don't you know that in my Father's house are many mansions? You must seek, not by books, but by practice."

He talked long and lovingly, then, as he bade me Godspeed, he again repeated these directions: "Child of the world, go! Seek near and far among my Father's Mansions. You will learn much, and when you have gained the right, you will be admitted into the place of peace, where sorrow teaches its lessons in the way God intended. The House of Soul Rest you will find, but learn well each lesson as it comes, and God will bless you and care for you in your search."

I Turned toward the broad path pointed out before me, full of obstacles and trials, then I looked back. The man's face was still beaming, only more so, if that were possible, and his arms and hands were extended toward me in a blessing as I started on my way.

One by one I surmounted the obstacles in my path and triumphantly moved onward. Miles flew by, buildings appeared and disappeared, trains rushed by and there was much noise and confusion around me.

Something seemed to impel me into a large structure, open at the sides, where people in all stages of grief and trouble were gathered. Some were softly sobbing, others were crying out in agony. Some had hands and arms wounded and bleeding. Some were on crutches, and still others had limbs partly torn off and hanging. Crushed faces and small babies in spasms increased the effect of torment

and suffering. In this great crowd of unfortunates I saw only one soul who appeared to be aware of the others' grief; they were exclusively preoccupied in bewailing and cursing their own misfortunes.

Stooping to speak to a tiny child and comfort it, I saw a pair of pensive blue eyes watching me. The mouth was drawn in pain yet it uttered no word of complaint. Only the man's eyes spoke of resignation. Going over I discovered that both his limbs were missing, so I stayed with him.

I must have slept a while for I remember getting up and going to another building that glistened like sunwashed white marble. Where before confusion and trouble reigned, here there was quiet and serenity. Smiling faces appeared everywhere I looked for the child and the man. The white glistening building was ablaze with golden light, but I found neither the child nor the man.

I passed through a door. On the lintel above it was written in large letters of yellow light "House of Soul Rest and Peace." I sat down on soft white cushions and watched the play of colors that came and went through the room. Golden light was everywhere; the iridescent air gleamed and glistened all around me.

Sinking into the cushions I could feel tranquillity pouring over, in and through me. At last my soul ceased its longing. After what seemed endless stress and countless struggles I had found peace, just as my friend had predicted. All earthly affairs were forgotten. I wanted to stay there for ever, in this supreme happiness. Nothing else mattered, only that I remain in the "House of Soul Rest and Peace" and experience this supreme contentment.

But then I remembered the child and the man. I saw again the house of tears and agony. I heard again the moan of the maimed, and I burned with shame and humiliation at the thought of having deserted my suffering brother to seek my own ease and peace.

So I fled the House of Soul Rest, vowing never to return till I had found my brother and brought him also.

Then I awoke from the dream within the dream and found myself sitting again by the man and the child. I recognized them as the little child that had first led me and the benevolent Father who had

## The Password

A neophyte approached the temple door,  
And wondered at the portal open wide.  
No guard behind, no watcher stood before.  
Yet few passed in, though very many tried.

"No doubt," he mused, "they lack 'the word'  
who fail.

But those possessing it need have no fear.  
Its potent power is certain to prevail."  
And confident in this he then drew near.

He gave the password, *Service*, and essayed  
To cross the sacred threshold. But alas  
A subtle force repelled him and, dismayed,  
He realized his impotence to pass.

Chagrined, he sought the wisest of the sages,  
Whose dwelling is the boundless depth within.  
There lies concealed the wisdom of the ages,  
And all of this may steadfast courage win.

That rugged path *Experience* he traveled.  
The shining One he reached in course of time.  
And then the mystic problem was unraveled,  
In presence of the Higher Self sublime.

By those who merely know 'the word' and give it,  
The lesson of its potency is missed.  
For those who by persistent effort *live it*,  
No barriers of any kind exist.

—W.T. Carson

taught me. Again he smiled, and his face shone even brighter when he said:

"My daughter, you have learned one secret of the path to the House of Soul Rest—it cannot be enjoyed in solitude. I will tell you another secret, every pain in the world detracts from the pleasure of those within this House. Seek you therefore all who are weak and heavy laden and try to bring them rest, for in so doing you will find the only true and lasting peace."

And as I woke there fell from my lips the vow: "I will strive first to show my brothers the path to peace, and in God's good time I shall follow." □

—Pearl Peterson

## FROM MAX HEINDEL'S WRITINGS

### *Commendation*



### *vs Condemnation*

**T**HE ROSICRUCIAN FELLOWSHIP lays stress upon actual service to our fellowmen, and very, often the question is asked, "How can I serve my fellowmen? I do not seem to have the opportunity." It may therefore be well to point out that service does not necessarily mean a great and spectacular deed, such as getting in front of a runaway horse and carriage and saving the lives of the people in it, or going into a burning building to rescue those who would otherwise burn to death. Such opportunities do not come to every one, or every day; but all without any exception whatever have opportunity to serve, no matter what their environment is. The line of service that we shall indicate in this article is of even greater value than any one single act of saving someone from death, which must sooner or later be the portion of all, for surely it is of greater value to help people to live well than to help them merely to escape death.

It is a deplorable fact that the great majority of us are selfish to a high degree. We seek the best there is in life with an almost entire disregard of our neighbor; and one of the ways this selfishness expresses itself most frequently is in maintaining an attitude of self-satisfaction. We are too prone to compare our efforts, our belongings, our faculties with those of others, and where it is manifest that they have more than we, that they are more accomplished, etc., there is a feeling of jealousy and envy that prompts us to speak slightly of them or in some way to minimize their success or attainments, under the illusion that by this comparison we rise to their level, or above it.

If, on the other hand, it is manifest that they have not as much as we, if it appears that their social standing is beneath our own, and it seems easy to establish their inferiority, we may adopt the supercilious attitude, we may speak patronizingly or condescendingly of them, thinking that by such comparison we raise ourselves greatly above our actual position.

If we hear someone speak evil of another, we are usually ready and prone to believe the very worst, because then by comparison we seem to be so much better, so much holier, and so far exalted above the culprit in the case. And where merit is so manifest that praise can not be withheld, we generally give it in a grudging manner, for we feel as if the praise given to others takes away from ourselves, or perhaps even exalts them above ourselves.

That is the general attitude of the world. However deplorable or lamentable it may be, it is a fact, and among the great majority of mankind everybody seems concerned to keep everybody else back. This is one of the greatest items of man's inhumanity to man, which makes countless thousands mourn, and causes them to make other countless thousands mourn in return.

What greater service can anyone render to everyone else than that of adopting a systematic attitude of encouragement and commendation? There is nothing more true than the sentiment of the doggerel: "There is so much good in the worst of us, and so much bad in the best of us, that it scarcely behooves any of us to find fault with any of the rest, of us." In the home, in the shop, in the



office, everywhere, we meet day by day different people, every one of them amenable to encouragement. As the sunshine is to the flower, so is an encouraging word to any person in the world. If someone has done well and we speak a word of appreciation, that word will help him or her to do even better the next time. If someone has done wrong or failed, a word of sympathy and confidence in his ultimate ability to achieve or retrieve will encourage him to try again and to win, just as surely as an attitude of discouragement will wither and make a wreck out of the life that might have been saved by a word of cheer. When someone comes along with a tale of evil about someone else, be very slow to believe, and be slower still to tell anyone else. Endeavor by every means of persuasion to stop the one who came to you with the tale from repeating it to others. No good can ever accrue to yourself or to anyone else from listening to and believing in such tales.

This line of service may seem to be very easy at first thought. But you must bear in mind that it will very often require a great deal of self-abnegation to carry on such work, because we are all so imbued with selfishness that it is next to impossible for most of us to put self away entirely, place ourselves in the position of others, and give to them the encouragement and commendation for which we ourselves so earnestly long.

But if we persist in this attitude, and carry it out consistently with everyone in our environment, always making it a point to speak a word of encouragement wherever we can possibly find an opportunity, we shall presently find that people come to us not only with their sorrows, but also with their joys; thus we may gain some recompense. We shall feel then that we have had a large share in their attainment; and in all these successes of other people there will be a joy and a success that legitimately belong to ourselves, a success moreover that no one can take from us, something that will go with us beyond the grave as treasure in heaven.

Let it not be forgotten that every single little act is engraved upon the seed atom in our hearts, that the feeling and emotion which accompanies that act will react upon us in the postmortem existence,

and that all the joy, all the pleasure, all the love that we pour out toward other people will react upon us in the first heaven and give us a sublime experience. This will develop in us a wonderful faculty of giving more and more joy to others, of being of

***When anyone comes to us with a tale concerning someone else, no matter what we may think ourselves, no matter what may be the justification, repetition does not do any good, it does harm.***

greater and greater service. And let us remember that this is the only true greatness, the only greatness which is worth working for, the greatness that helps us to be of service.

Above everything, even more than encouraging others in their work, let us remember the part of the service outlined that deals with stopping tales. When anyone comes to us with a tale concerning someone else, no matter what we may think ourselves, no matter what may be the justification, repetition does not do any good, it does harm. As a snowball that rolls down a mountain accumulates more and more snow, grows larger and larger, so also the tale which is carried from one mouth to another becomes exaggerated, and much sorrow and suffering are caused by the tongue of the gossip.

Therefore we can render no greater service to the parties involved or the community than by endeavoring to get those who carry tales of evil to stop that habit. Homes have been wrecked, communities have been disrupted, men have gone to the gallows time and again, or to a life-long servitude in some institution, which is far worse, because of idle tales carried about. Therefore we can render as great a service by refusing to listen to gossip as by encouraging those who have failed in their ambition, or by commending those who have succeeded. Every day opportunities are knocking at our door, no matter where we are or what our station in life is. □

## READERS' QUESTIONS

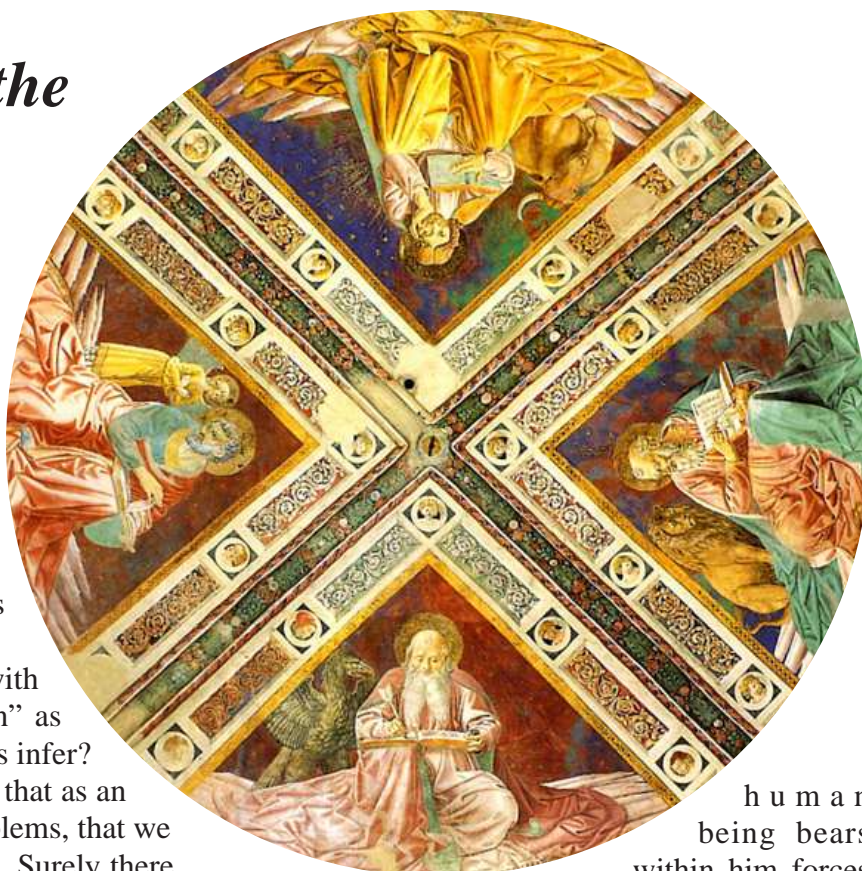
### *Significance of the Four Gospel Symbols*

**QUESTION:** In one of his writings Mr. Heindel indicated that originally the Gospels had a symbol: a man's face for Matthew; a lion for Mark; a bull for Luke; and an eagle for John. What is the significance for each?

My pondering has produced that with the teachings in Matthew we "begin" as humanity, but then what do the others infer? I think I also understand about John, that as an astrological eagle we rise above problems, that we see or perceive an overall dimension. Surely there are additional and deeper teachings implied. Please—what?

**ANSWER:** The four zodiacal icons associated with the four canonical Christian Gospels collectively constitute one of the oldest and most compact symbols in occultism. They originate in earlier epochs of human development and find their most cogent form in the Egyptian Sphinx, a composite of bull, lion, eagle and human aspects. And it is generic Man who is the answer to the riddle posed Oedipus by the Sphinx. For it is spiritual Man, Man made in the image of his Creator, who is the answer to all Earth riddles.

Of the "four living creatures" that appeared to Ezekiel (Chapter 1), *each* "had the likeness of a man," even though each had four faces, only one of which was a "human face." The others were of a lion, an ox, and an eagle. We must conclude, and spiritual science confirms, that the composite



The Four Evangelists, Benozzo Gozzoli (c. 1421-1497), fresco, vault of choir chapel, Sant'Agostino, San Gimignano, Tuscany

h u m a n  
being bears  
within him forces  
whose physical manifestation or condensation can be identified in these creaturely forms.

The "four beasts" seen by John the Apocalypticist (4:6-8) are an echo of Ezekiel's vision. Both seers are viewing the four creative Group Spirits of early humanity. In pre-Lemurian times the physical human hovered as a shadowy, tenuous form in the periphery of the earth.

During the Lemurian Age what worked on the human structure, as if from the inner part of the earth to the surface, is related to that which subsequently worked constructively on our ruminating animals, and is comprised esoterically in the symbol of the Bull.

Later, those forces which are summed up esoterically under the name of the Lion began to influence human development. A third creative stream poured in upon man from cosmic space and is characterized by the name of Eagle.

The external physical form of man is a harmonic synthesis of the Eagle, Bull, and Lion outpourings, streams from angelic hierarchies raying forth substance of their spiritual being. The real Man, Archetypal Man, is the product of Saturn (Eagle), Sun (Lion), Moon (Bull) and Earth (Man) evolutions. Thus the Sphinx represents the riddle of man's development. Contemplating this fourfold being clairvoyant consciousness is inwardly drawn to acknowledge, "That am I myself."

The four Gospels have retained traces of the formative origins of human development, as seen through the various initiation experiences of their respective authors. Matthew knew particularly the "Man Mystery" initiation as exemplified in the life of Jesus of Nazareth, which was closely akin to the wisdom of Egypt. Thus only he mentions Jesus' journey to Egypt as a child.

Luke also had in former incarnations achieved initiations leading to the Bull Spirit through the Egyptian Mysteries, though his Gospel does not mention the Flight to Egypt. His "Bull knowledge" is more internal.

The author of the Gospel of St. Mark describes only what occurred after the Baptism by John. The initiation this Evangelist had undergone was the one that led to a knowledge of the higher worlds as given through the Leo Spirit. Therefore ancient tradition links him with the symbol of the Lion.

He who wrote the John Gospel was initiated by Christ Jesus Himself, so he was able to foretell something of the efficacy of the Christ-Impulse for the far distant future. This Evangelist was one of the Eagle initiates who had advanced to a later evolutionary stage. The initiation contemporary for that time was set down by the author of the Mark Gospel. The Christ activity pertaining to future times, actively transcending earthbound matters, is described in St. John, which explains why tradition connects him with the symbol of the Eagle.

When the scientist of spirit investigates earlier human evolution he sees how four group-souls, four archetypes, have developed out of the common involving macrocosmic god-man. Through the light of the Holy Spirit this fourfold wisdom is expressed in the four Gospels.

The Matthew Gospel with its Aquarius/Man symbol should not be viewed as the most exalted representative of the human archetype. Rather is there a fifth—not Man but the Son of Man, the new Adam, the essence of the four, the quintessence, the One Who rules the seven planetary stars (Revelation 1:12) when He fully appears to man in His true form. □

### OCCULT INTERPRETATION OF CAIN AND ABEL

**QUESTION:** Is the Bible account of the slaying of Abel by Cain true, or is it just an allegory?

**ANSWER:** The story of Cain and Abel as recorded in the Bible is allegorical. In the light of occult understanding Cain is a symbolical name representing 'that part of humanity who have the creative instinct highly developed and who have therefore become the craftsmen of the world. Accordingly, Cain represents those who are working out their own salvation by mastery of the forces and material resources of nature. Cain also represents those individuals who acquire conscious knowledge of spiritual realities by means of the positive development of their own inner potential spiritual powers.

Abel symbolizes that part of humanity who live by faith, that is to say, those who acquire their knowledge of spiritual realities from intuition and from the teachings of those highly advanced Leaders and Teachers who have charge of the various phases of the evolution of mankind

The reference to Cain killing Abel also symbolically expresses the fact that the development of materialism on the part of the human race has gradually extinguished the spiritual perception of the invisible realms which primitive man possessed in earlier ages before he had involved so far away from the spirit world.

This inner spiritual perception is typified by Abel. A later product, namely, faith, symbolized by Seth, manifested itself after Abel was killed; that is, the faith fostered by the orthodox church has for many ages taken the place of the inner spiritual, intuitive understanding possessed by the sons of Seth. □



# WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

## *Miscellaneous*

### *Interpretations—Part 2*

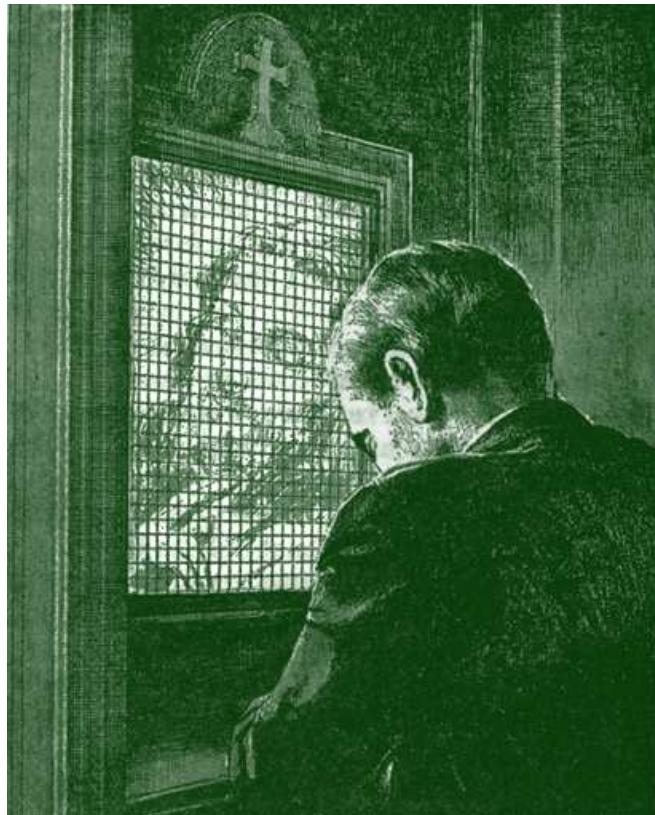
#### *Confession and Absolution*

**I**F ONE THINKS of confession and absolution as practiced in the Catholic Church, it may be stated that the priest, certainly, has no power to forgive the sins of the penitent, and the practice of confession by order of a church is usually but an outward show of penitence, putting one in mind of the prayer of the Pharisee who went into the temple that he might be seen of men.

If, on the other hand, confession is made in the spirit of the publican, which is the spirit of true penitence, then there is a certain value, for as a little child who has committed a wrong feels conscience-stricken and sorry, so may we feel extremely penitent for our sins of omission and commission.

It is a fact often noticed by kind parents that penitence in silence is sometimes insufficient to the child which feels the need of going to the parent and confessing its sin. When the forgiveness of the parent has been obtained its conscience is at rest. So also with the child of God. We sin and we are sorry for our sins; we determine not to commit this or that wrong again but if we confess to someone in whom we have faith, and get their sympathy and assurance that this wrong will not be held against us, we shall feel easier in conscience.

That was the principle underlying the command of the Bible, "Confess your sins to one another." The one to whom we confess will, of course, be a person for whom we have a profound respect and love, and he or she will stand toward us at that moment as the representative of God in our own higher nature, and we shall feel very much relieved at having received his sympathy. But we shall feel also that the pact we have made with ourselves not



Created by Ariel Agemian exclusively for the Confraternity of the Precious Blood

#### *Confession*

*"I seek a pure heart, and there is the place of my rest."—Is. 66:1*

to commit the sin in question again has been strengthened by having him as a witness. If confession is made thus, and absolution so obtained, then it has undoubtedly a very beneficial effect.

#### *The Value of Ritual*

At the present time all humanity has evolved so far that they are above law in some effects. Most people obey the law "Thou shalt not steal," for instance.

Law is a curb on the desire nature, but where occult or rather spiritual advancement is contemplated, the spiritualization of the vital body must also be accomplished. That is attained by means of art and religion, in oft-repeated impacts, for the keynote of the vital body is repetition, as we can see by looking at the plants which have only a dense

body and a vital body. There stem and leaf follow each other in upward succession; the plant keeps on growing them alternately. It was the vital body that built the vertebrae of the human spine one after another by constant repetition. And memory, for instance, which is one of the faculties of the vital body, is strengthened and developed by constant iteration and reiteration.

When the Protestants left the Catholic Church they truly left many of the abuses behind, but they also left almost everything of value. They abandoned the ritual which everyone may know and understand regardless of poor enunciation upon the part of the preacher. Knowing the ritual, the laity could send their thoughts in the same direction as the thought of the priest who was reading, and thus an enormous volume of identical spiritual thought was massed together and projected upon the community for good or evil.

Nowadays the congregation in a Protestant church listens to the extemporaneous prayer or sermon of their minister, who usually does not think so much of the spiritual work before him as he does of how he may turn out the most harmonious phrases to tickle the ears of his congregation. They often forget what he has said before they leave the church. Those who go to a Catholic Church understanding the ritual are still today able to unite their thoughts in spiritual conclave and keep within memory that which has been gone through. Thus they are every time adding a little to the spiritualization of their vital bodies, while the Protestant church members have been affected only in their emotional natures, and that effect is soon thrown out. The Bible tells us to pray without ceasing, and many have scoffed saying that if God is omniscient, He knows whereof we have need without our prayer, and if He is not, He can hardly be omnipotent. Therefore our prayers are not granted, and it is useless to pray. But that command was written from a knowledge of the nature of the vital body, which needs that repetition in order that it may be spiritualized.

As to the use of the Latin language, it is stated in the first chapter of John that in the beginning was the word...and without it was nothing made that was made. Word is sound. If we take sand or plant spores and place them upon a brass or a glass plate, then take a violin bow and draw it across the edges,

we shall produce a sound. That sound will cause the spores or grains of sand to arrange themselves in geometrical figures, similar to the crystals of which all things are composed. Every sound produces a different formation. Thus, if a certain sound produces a certain effect which we wish to produce, we cannot change the sound without also changing the effect. If we emit a certain sound and say "Deum," then translate Deum and say "God," the sound is very different, and as sound produces certain effects upon our invisible bodies, the effects that were produced by the original Latin ritual have been lost to the Protestant churches which changed it into English or dropped it altogether.

*"I came not to send peace but a sword."*

It is said that the "law and the prophets were until Christ," and there are four steps whereby man lifts himself to God. At first, when he awakens to a consciousness in the physical world and is in the savage state, he finds himself surrounded by other men who, by the very stress of circumstances, are forced to fight for life. Men among whom "might is right." Here he learns to rely upon his own strength to save him from the onslaughts of wild animals and other men. But he perceives around him the nature powers, and of them he is afraid, for he knows their ability to kill and his own impotence to cope with them. He therefore begins to worship, seeking to propitiate the God he fears, by bloody sacrifice.

Then comes the time when he begins to look to God as the giver of things, who will reward him here and now for obedience to His law and punish him instantly for disobedience. This God is a mighty ally against his (man's) enemies but also a powerful enemy, therefore He is much to be feared. Man thus worships and sacrifices animals through fear and avarice.

Then comes the stage when he is taught to worship a God of Love and to sacrifice himself from day to day, through his whole life, for a reward in a future state which he is to believe in by faith and which is not even clearly outlined.

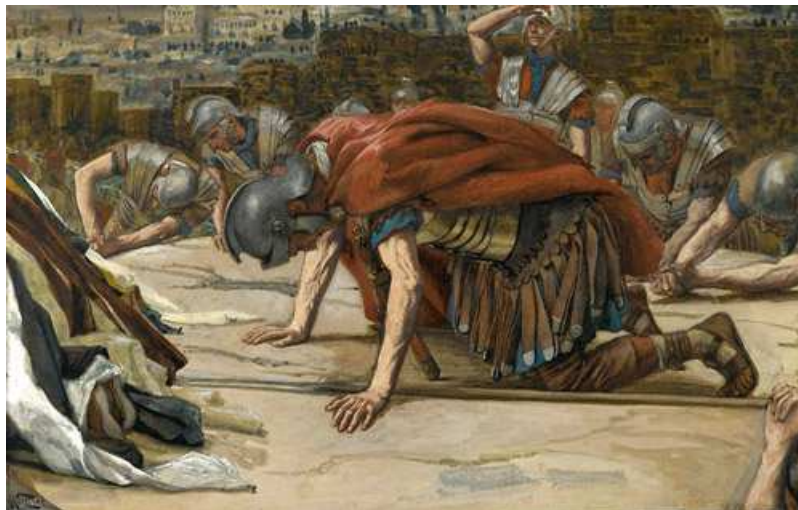
Finally man will reach a stage when he will recognize his divinity and do right because it is right, without thought of fear or bribe.

The Jews had reached the second of these stages and were under the law. The Christian religion is

gradually working through the third stage, though not yet freed from the second. All of us are yet under laws made by God and by man in order to curb our desire bodies by fear, but to advance us spiritually from now on we must sensitize our vital body, which is amenable to love, while not at all cognizant of law which governs the desire nature. In order to prepare this coming state, the priests, who were more advanced than the ordinary people, kept separate and apart from them. We hear in the East that only a certain caste, the Brahmins, were allowed to enter the temples and perform the temple services. Among the Jews, only the Levites were allowed to approach the holy place, and among other nations it was the same. The priests were always a distinct class, who were not allowed to marry among the ordinary people. They were separate and apart in every respect.

That was because the leaders of humanity could use only the strain where there existed a certain laxity between the vital body and the dense body. And so they bred these priests and herded them around the temples, regulating their life in every respect. But at the time when Christ was liberated from the body of Jesus and diffused His Being throughout the whole Earth, the veil was rent, as a symbol of the fact that the need for any special condition had passed away. From that time on the ether has been changing in the Earth. An increasingly higher rate of vibration allows for the expression of altruistic qualities. It was the starting of that enormous vibration which caused the darkness said to have attended the crucifixion. That was not darkness at all, but an intense light which blinded people for the time being until the vibrations slowed down by immersion in the dense, physical earth. A few hours later the radiant Christ Spirit had drawn into the Earth sufficiently to restore normal conditions. But gradually the power from within is gaining the ascendancy, and the etheric vibrations are being accelerated, increasing altruism and spiritual growth. Thus the conditions are now such that no special or privileged class need exist, but each and every one may aspire to enter the path of Initiation.

However, old conditions die hard. Under the



Watercolor, J. James Tissot (1836-1902), Brooklyn Museum of Art

*The Centurion glorifies Christ Who irradiates blinding light.*

regime of Jehovah, the Spirit of the Moon, humanity had been broken up into nations, and in order that He might guide them it was necessary that He should at times use one nation to punish another, for humanity was not then amenable to love—it would obey only under the lash of fear. Before the great Universal Brotherhood of Love can be inaugurated it is necessary to break up these nations on the same principle that if we have a number of buildings composed of bricks and we wish to build them into one grand structure, it is necessary first to break them to pieces so that the individual bricks will be available for use in the larger building. Therefore, the Christ said, “I came not to send peace, but a sword.”

We must outgrow patriotism and learn to say as that great soul, Thomas Paine, “The world is my country, and to do good is my religion.” On the holy night when the Christ child was born, the Angels sang a song, “Peace On Earth and Good Will Among Men.” Later the child grew up and said, “I came not to send peace, but a sword,” and the Christian religion has been the bloodiest of all religions of humanity. It has carried desolation and sorrow with it wherever it has gone. But out of all the travail there will yet come the day when the song of the Angels will become a fact and the words of the Christ uttered at other times concerning love to one’s neighbor will be lived. When the sword has done its work it will be beaten into plowshares, and there will be no more war, for there will be no more nations. □

—Max Heindel



## *Neptune in the Horoscope*

**D**EAR FRIENDS, let me reiterate that though we are now considering the effects of a certain planet, ♃, Neptune, the method of judgement is identical for the other planets, and that when we know how to combine the effects of aspect, house, and intrinsic nature of one planet, we may readily apply the same system of combination to the other planets. To convey in one word all that is included in the sphere of influence of a planet is difficult; but if you will meditate upon the keywords given below, you will receive more illumination concerning the inherent nature of planetary vibrations than you can ever obtain by reading of other people's ideas, for the divine spark which is YOU, by this earnest striving after spiritual understanding, draws directly from the fountain-head of information—namely, the planetary Spirit of the particular heavenly body upon whose nature you are meditating.

In order to impress upon the student's mind how perfectly reasonable this idea is and to give a better understanding of the method whereby this inner illumination may be obtained, let us illustrate: In a machinery hall giant wheels are revolving; the friction of the belts, humming of electric dynamos, etc., blend in a noise which is deafening and confusing to the inexperienced; a chaos of sound. But to the trained ear of the engineer there is no chaos. He hears a variety of well ordered sounds, each bringing to him intelligence regarding the condition and work of the particular machine whence it emanates. Each variation from the standard sound

has its meaning, which the trained man comprehends as readily as if the engine were endowed with speech. Study of the internal construction of each machine has given him his knowledge and the ability to act quickly in emergencies to avert imminent disaster before the uninitiated would have realized that anything unusual was taking place.

Similarly, we are living in a world flooded with sound; the Harmony of the Spheres is about our ears though we hear it not, and each vibration carries with it certain intelligence. If our ears are deaf we are the losers, as are the blind who miss the beauty of the flower, the glory of the sunset. But if we train ourselves to understand the heavenly symphony recorded upon the page of the horoscope we shall know things that must ever remain secret from the unlearned, and thus we may become co-workers with God in a most intimate manner.

After years of close study and meditation I use the following keywords for the intrinsic nature of the planets:

- ☉ LIFE
- ♃ FECUNDATION
- ♁ ALTRUISM
- ♆ REASON
- ♀ ATTRACTION
- ♁ OBSTRUCTION
- ♂ DYNAMIC ENERGY
- ♃ DIVINITY
- ♁ IDEATION

If you meditate on each planet by itself or with its opposite or with its affinities for a few days or weeks at the time you devote to this study, you will gain a wonderful insight into their natures and effects; for instance: The ☉ (Sun) is LIFE

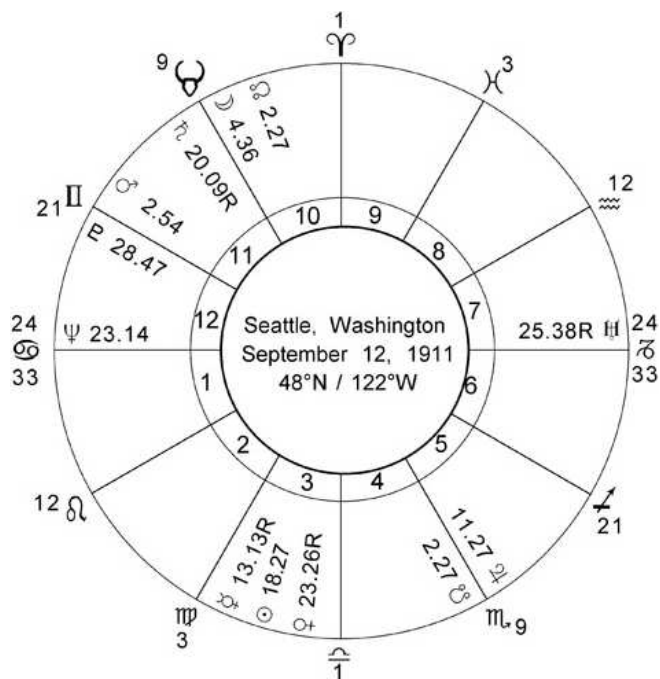
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*The text for this article is excerpted from lessons 7-9 in the Senior Astrology Course. Readers may take this course after they have completed the 26 lessons of the Junior Astrology Course.*

absolute, manifest or unmanifest; but ♂ (Mars) represents the DYNAMIC ENERGY which is a manifestation of life. ♄ (Saturn) seeks to OBSTRUCT, and when he succeeds death ensues. The ☾ (Moon) gives the germ of LIFE, ♀ (Venus) furthers FECUNDATION, and thus a body is produced. ♃ (Jupiter) gives the germinal IDEA, ☿ (Mercury) fecundates the mind so that ideas take definite form as THOUGHT, and the DYNAMIC ENERGY of ♂ brings them into manifestation so that thoughts become things.

“Love” is a much hackneyed word, and the emotion thus miscalled is usually so tainted with passion and desire that it is Martian rather than Venusian in character. Coalition suggests a most intimate union, a blending of the very souls of two or more people who compose a family; but altruism, the keyword of ♃, hints at such an all-embracing love as our Savior felt when He wept over Jerusalem and applied that wonderful simile of the hen which gathers its brood under its wings. Thus ♃ is the octave of ♀, and anyone ready to enter the Path of Preparation which leads to the Way of Initiation must gradually learn to outgrow the ♀ love which makes the immediate family all in all and begin to cultivate the all-embracing ♃ altruism. The aspects of ♀ and ♄ to ♃ bring the tests which further our development, if passed, and delay us when we fail. The goal is high, and those who aim high often fall low. When we essay to transcend the ♀ love and cultivate the ♃ altruism we are in great danger, and the most promising lives are sometimes wrecked by the pernicious theory of soul mates, clandestine love affairs, and perversion of the creative function.

In a horoscope such as we are considering, where the progressed MC (midheaven) squares ♄ in the 12th house, Neptune at the same time opposing ♃ on the cusp of the 7th, we have one of the most dangerous combinations, for the aspect to ♄ tends to attract spirit controls. These despicable entities have a knack of beguiling their unsuspecting victims, by plausible platitudes, into the most abominable practices, as indicated by the aspects of ♃ and ♄. The double square to the MC, which rules honor and social standing, would indicate that a public scandal is inevitable—IF.



Yes, thank God there is always that “if,” for in the final analysis there is the man with his Godlike faculty of reason to be reckoned with. Experience has taught us the unwisdom of depending upon the appearance of an applicant for a position of trust ; we demand credentials as to character and antecedents. Ought we not to be much more careful with “spirit voices” from the Invisible? Paul exhorted his followers to “try the spirits.” They are known by their fruits. Love, Joy, Peace, Forbearance, Kindness, Goodness, Fidelity, Meekness and Self-control are mentioned as “fruits of the godly spirit.” Paul exhorts his followers particularly not to use their liberty for “an occasion of the flesh,” licentiousness being mentioned as prime “fruit of the flesh.”

Paul was speaking to people upon the Path of Preparation and all who have qualified to receive these lessons are there also, though at varying stages. They feel the Uranian vibrations urging them to love beyond the confines of the family circle. May God bless their efforts.

But remember this: Altruism does not require return of the love bestowed upon others; it has absolutely no concern with sex. It will not lessen the love for our family, but they, being nearest to us, will feel the increase of our love to a greater degree than those farther away. Unless our love brings forth such fruits, it is not Uranian, nor even

Venusian; it will not further us upon the Path of Attainment. When ♀ is on the Asc. in ♋ (Pisces) or the 12th house, spirit voices are the tempters; in the 9th house, one's own mind; in the 7th an associate, etc.

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the Temple."

Mercury is usually associated with reason and intelligence; to him is ascribed rule over the nervous system, which is the medium of transmission between the embodied spirit and the world without. Thus, as Neptune signifies the subhuman and superhuman intelligences who live and move in the spiritual realms of the universe, but who work with and upon us, so Mercury indicates the human intelligence focused upon the terrestrial, physical world where we live from birth to death. Therefore it may be said that Neptune is the octave of Mercury. But there is a deeper sense than this.

Reference to a textbook of anatomy or physiology will show that lengthwise fissures in the spinal cord divide it into three parts which together enclose a hollow tube. Each of these columns is ruled by one of the Hierarchies in closest touch with us—the lunar, martial, and mercurial; one or another predominating according to the stage of evolution of the individual. In the spinal canal the rays of Neptune kindle the spiritual fire whereby the human spirit is enabled to pierce the veil of flesh and contact the worlds beyond. The resulting vision is colored according to the column of the cord most actively excited.

In the childhood days of mankind the creative force which is now turned outward to build ships, houses, railways, telephones, etc., was used inwardly to build the organs of the body, and as the surrounding physical world is photographed upon the table of a camera obscura, so the spiritual world was reflected in the spinal canal. There man

first beheld the lunar God, Jehovah, whose angels were then his tutors. Later, angels who had fallen behind the standard of their compeers and whose evolutionary requirements were therefore different, forced entrance to the spinal cord of man.

The spiritual inner vision of mankind faded when "their eyes were opened and they saw that they were naked." Then they lost touch with the higher self, they saw only the person, and the docile creature of Jehovah was soon transformed into a savage and a brute under the impulses of the

Lucifer spirits, the Hierarchy of Mars. But by their promptings man learned to conquer material obstacles, to build outwardly and become architect of the world.

To counteract the unmitigated selfishness bred by the Martian angels and to make mankind humane, our

Elder Brothers from Mercury, human like ourselves, whose high state of evolution required the high vibration generated and prevailing in close proximity to the sun, were required to invest the spinal cord of mankind also. Through their labors civilization has taken on a different form. Mankind is again beginning to look inward, and when the mercurial ray meets the ray of Neptune in the spinal canal, man finds again his higher self: *the Christ is born within*.

Thus you see the connection between the Moon, Mercury, and Neptune. Those who come in touch with Neptune through the Moon become irresponsible mediums, victims of obsession, etc., but where Mercury is the gate, reason and understanding guide the aspiring spirit. An afflicted Mercury may sometimes tempt seekers to enter by the wrong door, and mental trouble may result. If aware of the danger, however, continual care and persistence usually unlock the door of the Temple, for the good forces are in ascendancy now and grow stronger as time passes. □

—Max Heindel

***Mankind is again beginning to look inward, and when the mercurial ray meets the ray of Neptune in the spinal canal, man finds again his higher self: the Christ is born within***



## *Horoscope Interpretation Part 2*

**A**NOTHER SOURCE of apparent error in horoscope interpretation is the meaning of experience. As mentioned in the first article of this series (*Rays* July/August 1999) experiences have different meanings to different people.

Due to a subconscious pull from the past, when we all participated in a group consciousness without any individuality, there is a tendency to want to conform to a peer group. This, in turn, gives a tendency to interpret experiences in terms of the common values and to suppress differences which arise through the development of individuality. This tendency is further supported by pressure from others to conform to a common belief because they are unsure of their own individuality. The tension thus created between the development of individuality and the pressure to conform often results in psychological confusion, neurosis, insecurity feelings, and fears and uncertainties about one's own self.

The astrologer, having a key to the individuality in the horoscope, may sometimes touch upon such a point of tension, where the individual indications are at odds with the values of the common group. This may then draw an objection. But now is the time for the astrologer really to be helpful by assisting the person to understand his own self, as distinct from a group consciousness. The more people understand their own selves and their own patterns of living, the more consciously and meaningfully they can contribute to society instead of just existing as a part of it, and the more fulfillment they can experience in their actions.

Here we see another side of the coin. It has already been said that a self-seeking attitude pre-



Painted by Augustus Knapp for *The Secret Teaching of All Ages*

*The inception and evolution of religions is a response to and manifestation of the precession of the equinoxes and the regnant constellation on the equator at the vernal equinox. Thus, the sequential influence of the four zodiacal signs of Taurus, Aries, Pisces, and emerging Aquarius account for the religions pictured above in their identifying imagery.*

sents the danger of projecting one's own values onto others. We now see another danger, that of projecting the values of group consciousness onto people who should be developing as individuals. Thus, again, the astrologer should be able to face his own horoscope, so that in understanding his own individuality he will be able to understand and appreciate the individuality of others.

All this conflict comes about as result of the transition from a group consciousness to an indi-

vidual consciousness. It is the struggle between unconscious submission to the whole and conscious co-operation with the whole. During the transition period there is likely to be much confusion, selfishness, misunderstanding, and strife because of an unsettled and uncertain state of affairs. It is necessary for people first to establish their individuality, implying temporary separateness, before they can make an individual contribution to the whole.

Thus, let us realize that, ultimately, each person will become a law and an authority unto himself, and that each horoscope represents the pattern of an emerging individual, which must be considered relative to itself.

It is generally recognized that the horoscope does not show a person's free will. It is not so generally recognized that there is another factor which is not shown by the horoscope, and that is the level of evolution that a person is on. That is to say, the degree of emergence of the individual.

To take an example: let us assume a horoscope with Sun conjunct Mercury in Gemini and the 3rd house, trine to Jupiter in Aquarius and the 11th house. Traditionally, we could consider that this configuration basically indicates a sharp, inquisitive, philosophical mind that is quick on the uptake in mental pursuits, and that this person is a good writer and talker and probably at the top of his class in school.

Suppose we made such a delineation to an individual, and he replied that he was only getting C's in school, and that although he liked to read, write, and think a lot, he just did not seem to be able to do as well as others. What would we say then?

We made our error when we compared him to others by saying that he would be near the top of his class, when we had no justification for so doing. A more creative interpretation would be as follows: a sense of purpose is found along intellectual lines, and inner strength of character manifests in light-hearted, inquisitive behavior. The mind is also of an inquiring nature and seeks knowledge along diverse lines, in cooperating with the inner strength of character and sense of purpose. The above tendencies are applied to learning about and understanding everything the person contacts. The

knowledge thus gained is freely and cheerfully imparted to others, and friends and acquaintances gain thereby. Stimulation toward further mental development comes through the encouragement of acquaintances who are also somewhat intellectual in nature, though perhaps less inquisitive and more fixed in their ideas.

When our friend now complains about his average showing in school it in no way affects the delineation. There are people who are at the top of their classes in school who have very little of an inquisitive nature or cheerful attitude; they merely follow the book and conform to the notions of the day. Our friend may have a good, clear understanding in many areas, but because he does not choose to subscribe to the same way of thinking as "the usual," he does not do as well according to the norms established at the time by others.

Discussing points such as the above can do much to reassure a person and help him understand himself and his experiences in the proper light.

In summary, the main point is that each horoscope must be interpreted relative to itself and be applied accordingly to specific experiences. Experiences should be interpreted in the perspective gained from the horoscope; the horoscope should not be interpreted relative to the experiences.

It occasionally happens that people are not ready to hear what the astrologer has to say. In this case, they may strenuously deny, object to, argue with, or in some way indicate discomfiture. If, after carefully reexamining the horoscope, the astrologer arrives at the same conclusions, it is wise merely to have stated the matter and then let it drop. Something has been brought to the surface which the person cannot presently handle, but which he may be able to deal with at some later time.

It should be made clear that a horoscope is never interpreted once and for all. The amount of information that can be gleaned from a horoscope at any particular time is limited by the astrologer's knowledge and experience, and by the person's ability to relate and react to what is said. Further development of both persons will open the way for a more complete understanding of the horoscope.

Furthermore, the horoscope shows the pattern



and tendencies a person has brought with him into this life. Those schools of astrology which claim that the horoscope shows what one is supposed to be, or what one is supposed to develop into, are not only misleading, but also deny the spiritual viewpoint. The spiritual viewpoint maintains that the horoscope shows to a great extent the material from which we build our lives, but how we use this material is left to our own free will. The person who ends up exactly as his horoscope portrays him has wasted his life, because he has failed to develop anything beyond what he had brought over from the past.

The astrologer must take this into account and realize that the person who takes the high road in life will tend to change the tendencies shown in his horoscope, so that as he grows older he will be ruling his stars, and his stars will no longer be ruling him.

A horoscope delineation should include both the positive and negative points, imparted impartially. Too much one-sided emphasis on the positive sounds nice but does not alert the person to difficulties that lie ahead and thus help him to prepare for them. Therefore, such an approach is naive, deceptive, and really quite useless. On the other hand, too much one-sided negative emphasis leads to undue depression and pessimism, and gives no strength or hope with which to overcome and transmute the negative things. Admittedly, there can be a very fine line of balance between these two undesirables, and it is not always easy to know when too much has been said, when not enough, and when just the right amount.

One final note is that the astrologer himself should calculate the horoscopes he intends to interpret as often as possible. Aside from the fact that others may make errors which pass completely unnoticed, the astrologer can pick up some good intuitive feelings about a chart in the process of setting it up. As he is calculating a chart, he is tracing out a symbolic pattern of a person's life, and if he is at all sensitive, he will pick up some very definite insights relative thereto, which are not so easily gained otherwise.

There are some very good computer services which do horoscope calculation and eliminate practically all possibility of mathematical error.



Illumination on parchment. Codex Vindobonensis 2554 (French, ca. 1250), f.1 verso, in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

#### **God the Geometer**

*God as Creator marks off a portion of chaos and gives it primordial form, the circumscribed area showing a striking resemblance to the female womb bearing embryonic life, but as easily construed as nascent creation at any dimension—cosmic or molecular. Closer inspection of the image shows sun and stars surrounding a geocentric amorphous Earth.*

Although these may be good for statistical research purposes, to help the beginning astrologer check his calculations, and other such matters, they should be avoided by the experienced astrologer for most interpretive purposes.

Some astrologers will complain that doing their own calculations takes too much time. But let us remember that we strive to understand a person through the horoscope and to help that person accordingly, and the extra time spent in doing calculations is well worth it in accomplishing that end. Our purpose is loving, self-forgetting service, not mass production of doubtful advice in order to make money. It is far better to be able to help a few people meaningfully than to dispense superficial information to many.



### The Format

The most difficult problem for the aspiring astrologer is how to go about interpreting a chart. Even when he has taken the necessary time and effort to learn the meanings of the basic astrological factors and has gathered a good sampling of horoscopes from among his friends and acquaintances, he is still almost always baffled when it comes to organizing everything into a workable system of interpretation. He stares at a horoscope, and his mind promptly goes blank, refusing to give the slightest hint as to what the thing might mean.

Several difficulties bar the way to learning horoscope interpretation. Some of these have been touched upon in foregoing comments. Not the least difficulty is the lack of a good, systematic approach to the horoscope. To be sure, there is no system that will answer equally well for all horoscopes, but there is a definite need for some type of format which will help the student get a grasp on the information presented in the horoscope.

There are two general approaches to organizing the information in a horoscope. The first is to take each particle of information presented and tie it together with every other by means of some formula or sequence. The second method is first to try to grasp the main points in a horoscope as a whole, by means of certain patterns and planetary distributions, and then move to consideration of each part.

The former method has traditionally enjoyed the greater popularity, practically to the total exclusion of the latter, until relatively recent times. The latter method is now steadily gaining in popularity, however, and, unfortunately, has a great deal of appeal to the modern astrological mind.

That may seem a rather startling comment, but nevertheless, let us review the matter from a spiritual point of view: *to move from the whole to the parts*, as the second method does, *is contrary to the trend of evolution*. On the other hand, to move from the parts to the whole, which the first method does, is precisely in line with the evolutionary impulse and is therefore the method which the spiritually oriented astrologer should use.

Why should it make any great difference which method the astrologer uses, as long as he gets results? Because, as mentioned in the previous

article, horoscope interpretation can reach right to the heart of a person and affect him accordingly. To do an interpretation that proceeds from the whole to the parts impresses a person with a tendency that leads further into materialism, which is to say, away from a true spiritual understanding of things. An interpretation that proceeds from the parts to the whole helps to elevate a person's consciousness to a higher level, because it is in line with natural law.

At the commencement of man's journey through matter, he was possessed of cosmic consciousness and perceived the unity of all things; but he had no self-consciousness. Thus, in a manner of speaking, we could say that he possessed cosmic *unconsciousness* because he was not aware of his state; he merely existed in it. The purpose of man's pilgrimage through matter is to make him self-conscious, so that in regaining his cosmic state of consciousness, he can be a voluntary, creative participant in it and be aware of his participation.

The part of man's journey that leads from cosmic to individual consciousness is termed *involution*. During this period, man, the Virgin Spirit, acquired his three vehicles—the dense, vital, and desire bodies—and the mind, and had his threefold Spirit—Divine, Life, and Human—awakened. This is the part of the journey that led from the whole to the parts and resulted in the full waking consciousness that we experience today. First, man was a united whole; then he associated himself in turn with a race, tribe, clan, and family, and finally, he perceived himself as an individual.

The part of our journey which now lies before us is *evolution*, wherein the awakened Spirit works through its vehicles to produce soul, which will nourish the individual consciousness into a self-conscious, creative consciousness.

As each man becomes more of an individual, there will be less selfishness, for selfishness comes about when a person first realizes his individuality but is unsure of what it is or how to handle it. He feels the preciousness of this acquisition which he has worked so hard to attain through eons of unconscious involution, and being afraid to lose it, he finds it necessary to assert his own self, regardless of others. However, as a man who is sure of

his own strength finds it unnecessary to be constantly testing it or showing it off in front of others, as a bully does, so the man who is sure of his individuality no longer finds it necessary to be selfish, self-centered, or self-assertive. Then, united in the bonds of Christlike love and friendship, man will share a unity of purpose and interest, though the diversity of talent, creativity, and method will make possible a more glorious whole than could ever have been realized before. We shall know the joy of sharing with each other as individuals, where each has something to give to the other.

Consider the manner in which we learn how to accomplish things in the physical world: if we wish to learn how to be artists, we first learn the general principles of light, color, proportion, painting technique, etc. After this, more specific knowledge and technique are learned, until we feel confident to try doing serious art work on our own, taking the ideas we have learned and combining them in our own individual style, producing cre-

ative works of art.

There are as many different styles in art as there are individual artists, and certainly no one would advocate that all artists should conform to one style. It is the diversity of style and technique and the richness of variety in art that make it such an excellent medium of expression. Each artist makes his own particular contribution to the field of art through his works, from which other artists may learn and profit according to their needs and inclinations.

Thus, the heritage of art grows in proportion to the development of individual artists, just as the heritage of the human race grows in proportion to the development of individualized consciousness. It may seem that we have made a rather lengthy digression, but it was necessary that we thoroughly understand these principles so that we can now apply them to the problems of horoscope interpretation. (Continued) □

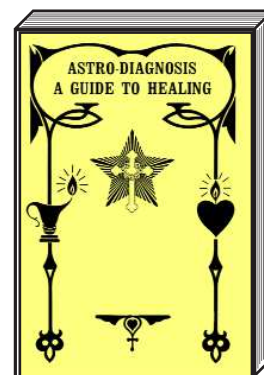
—Karl Kleinstick

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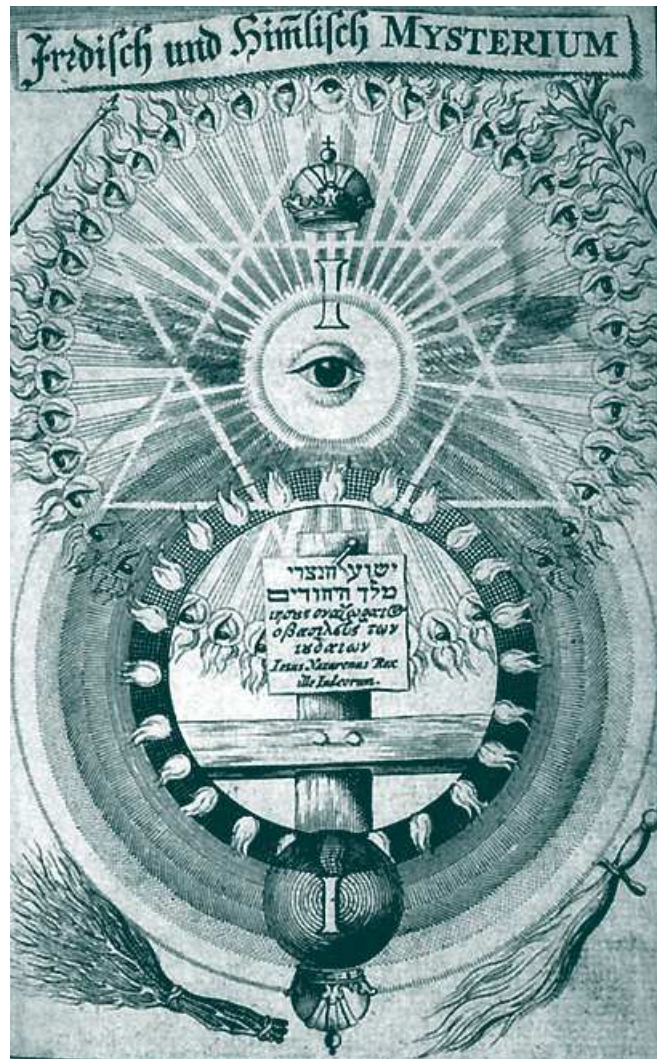
Ninth Edition. 446 pages. Indexed. Paper. Order on page 64. Published by The Rosicrucian Fellowship.

## *Transmuting Squares to Trines*

**S**UPREME BEING manifests in His threefold aspect as Power, the Word, and Motion—corresponding to the Will, Wisdom, and Activity of the God of our solar system. The Trinity—perfect unity, completeness, the triune God—is represented by the astrological Trine. God, the creative Word, spoke or brought into being all the different worlds with their infinitude of forms, which were received and worked out in detail by the innumerable creative Hierarchies emanated from Him. This creation is still going on. From activity, matter in motion — incompleteness—comes the astrological *Square*.

The nearest approach we have to a visible symbol of God is the Sun, orb of light and life. His messengers and assistants are the spiritual Intelligences in the planets, the fixed stars of the constellations, and the zodiac. In the immensity and splendor of our solar system we may read the Word of God, guiding man as a God-in-the-making on his evolutionary path toward perfection; from impotence to omnipotence, from the Virgin Spirit to a self-conscious, spiritual, creative Intelligence.

The great Laws of Rebirth and Consequence explain in a most satisfactory and illuminating manner the reason and method of the spirit's long pilgrimage through matter. This may be likened to a period of training in school. Life is a school whose purpose, end, and aim is not to play but to work, to learn lessons, to gather experience, to gain knowledge and wisdom that we may improve and advance to higher fields of endeavor. Our present life on earth may be compared to one term or



Jacob Böhme, *Theosophische Werke*, Amsterdam, 1682, Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg

### *Earthly and Heavenly Mysteries*

The “square” of the cross, the earthly world compounded of the four elements signified by the superscription letters I.N.R.I., describes the way in which the “squares” of incarnate experience are transmuted into the “trine” of trinitarian Spirit.

class in school. When we return from vacation—our stay in the heaven world—we start anew according to our previous record.

The horoscope, set up for the moment when we draw our first breath, is our report card from the preceding incarnation, with good or poor marks, our certificate of previous character, to improve or not as we choose.

The four Recording Angels, represented in the



chart as the angles, have set our poor marks as adverse aspects—squares and oppositions. Wherever in the map these are found we know that some weakness, some shortcoming, some previous breaking of nature's wise laws is indicated. The square shows inharmonious forces which, converging at right angles, will likely produce pain and suffering. Through their influence we will be impelled to take another turn, to retrace our steps, to correct our mistakes.

A square is one quarter of the 360 degree circle, or 90 degrees; the opposition is one-half, or 180 degrees. Reduced to a numerological unit each is 9, the number of the earth and man in the present incomplete stage of evolution.

The trine is the three-pointed triangle of merit, denoting good qualities of character and good opportunities earned. Whatever trines we have in our horoscope we have indeed worked hard for. Let us remember that the so-called good or bad configurations are not the result of chance or luck; they are both the product of our own voluntary acts in the past. According to the immutable Law of Consequence nothing can come to us that we have not earned, any more than we can reap where we have not sown. Neither, according to the same law, can we escape harvesting whatever we have planted of good or ill. All our attempts at evasion will prove futile, though it may take many lives before the destiny is ripe.

As an inspired poet has expressed it:

*We build our future thought by thought  
For good or ill, and know it not.  
Yet, so the universe is wrought,  
Thought is another name for fate;  
Choose, then, thy destiny, and wait,  
For love brings love, and hate brings hate.*

There is no retaliation, no retribution; eternal justice always. "Though the mills of the gods grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small." Whatever wrong or injustice we have committed must be righted; and the stars show accurately the time when the debt is due. The payment must be made; to evade it is beyond our power. But let us thoroughly understand that though there is some fate

which cannot be escaped, we have a certain scope for free will in modifying causes already set in motion. Opportunities for good, for improvement, for self-control, for service will be placed before

***How can a ball of mud and mineral in the sky affect my destiny? asks the skeptic. It doesn't, says the Rosicrucian; but the indwelling Planetary Spirit of that ball, that planet, does have an effect upon you. The planetary arrangement at birth is a photograph of your character and character is destiny.***

us, one by one in orderly succession. How we, free and independent spirits, will meet them cannot be determined beforehand. We may not even recognize them as opportunities. They may be gone before we are aware of their far-reaching possibilities. As the immortal Shakespeare says: "There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and in miseries."

When we first begin the marvelously enlightening study of the esoteric science of Astrology, we sometimes become discouraged and impatient. There appears to be so much, so vast a store of knowledge, that our dwarfed intellects cannot grasp it all. But it is steadfastness, patient persistence, with a rock-like determination to keep on, that finally will be rewarded; and then the key to the heavens will be given us.

When this key, this astrological knowledge, is ours, what shall we do with it? We might say: use it in the service of humanity. But what does this really mean? One may say: I have all I can do in taking care of my own affairs; how can I help others? Another says: my troubles simply overwhelm me. I am not well: everything goes wrong; the more I do, the more I try, the worse my condition

becomes. Furthermore, I have studied my own horoscope, and I have too many squares, there is no hope for me!

To such a one we say, No hope? Yes, there is hope. Ponder your horoscope again. Go into the silence of your own heart and begin to analyze yourself. Make a firm resolve to change the unpleasant part of your disposition, to rid it of fear, doubt, and suspicion. Lift up your heart in prayer; the light within will begin to glow, and you will see more clearly. Then begin a systematic, steady process of eradicating the most glaring faults, those that jar upon others, causing friction and unhappiness in your surroundings.

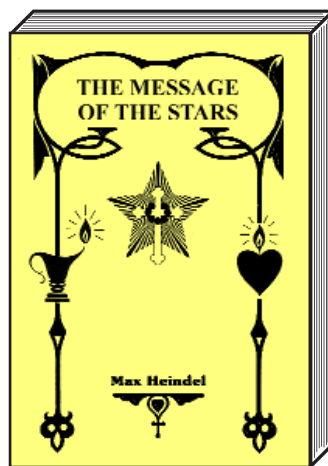
But you may say, It is the others whose faults and difficult tempers make my life so hard. Never mind; remember that the Law of Causation drew them to you. Attend strictly to yourself; do not attempt to change others until you have improved yourself. By doing this, your conduct, your behavior, and the light that shines from you will react upon them, and little by little the surcharged atmosphere of discord will clear, and you will begin to understand one another better. By thus arranging your affairs, you will get the utmost good out of your astrological squares, and make of your so-called unlucky horoscope a fruitful and blessed pattern of life.

Now finally you have arrived at the point where, through your astrological knowledge and personal demonstration of its practical value in daily life, you can be of comfort and service to others who are still struggling and groping for the light. Therefore use your Astrology for this purpose. The strongest force in the universe is love. It is love wedded to reason, intelligently directed faculties of mind, body, and spirit, which are to change the world into another Garden of Eden. By the power of imagination and the faculty of intuition build for yourself ideals of peace, beauty, and harmony, and pursue them with pure thoughts and clean living. Then energize these ideals with an intense feeling of compassion for all humanity—and behold, “The light shineth, and there is darkness no more”: the horoscopical squares are transmuted and have now the power of trines! □

—Alfa Lindanger

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# SPIRITUAL SCIENCE AND ART

## *The Ring of the Niebelung*

### *THE BATTLE OF TRUTH AND ERROR & REBIRTH AND THE LETHAL DRINK*

**T**HERE ARE NO WORDS adequate to convey a conception of what the soul feels when it stands in that presence, far above this world (where the veil of flesh hides the living realities under a mask) also, beyond the world of desire and illusion where fantastic and illusory shapes mislead us into believing that they are something very different from what they are in reality. Only in the Region of Concrete Thought, where the archetypes of all things unite in that grand celestial choir which Pythagoras spoke of as “the harmony of the spheres,” do we find truth revealed in all its beauty.

But the Spirit cannot stay there forever. This truth and reality—so ardently desired by everyone who has been driven to enter the quest by an inward urge stronger than the ties of friendship, relationship, or any other consideration—is but a means to an end. *Truth must be brought down to this realm of physical form in order that it may be of real value in the world's work.* Therefore Siegfried, the truth seeker, must of a necessity leave the rock of Brunhilde, return through the fire of illusion and re-enter the material world to be tempted and tried, to prove whether he will be true to the vows of love which pass between himself and the re-awakened Valkuerie.

It is a hard battle that is before him. The world is not ready for truth, and however vehemently it may protest its desire in that direction, it schemes and plots, by all means within its great power, to down anyone who brings the truth to its doors; for there are few institutions that can bear the dazzling brightness of its light.



Watercolor, 1910, from Rackham's *Color Illustrations for Wagner's Ring*, Arthur Rackham  
*Brunhilde, Valkyrie daughter of Wotan, refused to use her power to enforce convention because it opposed the truth.*

Not even the gods can endure it, as Brunhilde knows to her sorrow, for was she not exiled by Wotan, because she refused to use her power on the side of convention? And anyone who steps upon conventionalities, to uphold truth, will find that the whole world is against him and that he must stand alone. Wotan was her father and he professed to love her dearly. Yes, he did love her in his way, but he loved the power symbolized by Valhal more. The Ring of Creed, whereby he dominated humanity, was more desirable, in his eyes, than Brunhilde, the spirit of truth; so he put her to

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sleep behind the circle flame of illusion.

If such be the attitude of the gods, what then may be expected from men who do not profess such high and noble deals as the gods, the keepers of religion, were supposed to inculcate into them? All this and more than we can put into words—much that it will do the student good to meditate upon—flashed upon the mind of Brunhilde in the moment of her parting from Siegfried, and, in order to give him at least a chance in the battle of life, she magnetizes, as it were, his whole body to make him invulnerable. Every place in thus protected save one point on the back between the shoulders. Here we have a case analogous to that of Achilles, whose body was made invulnerable in all places save one of his heels.

There is a great significance in this fact; for as long as the soldier of truth wears this armor, of which Paul speaks, in the battle of life, and boldly faces his enemies, it is certain that, however hard he is beset, eventually he will win. Because, by facing the world and baring his breast to the arrows of antagonism, calumny, and slander, he shows that he has the courage of his convictions, and a power higher than he, the power that is always working for good, protects him no matter how great the onslaught he faces. But woe be unto him, if at any time he turns his back! Then, when he is not watching the onslaught of the enemies of truth, they will find the vulnerable spot, be it in the heel or between the shoulders.

Therefore, it behooves us and everyone else who loves truth, to take a lesson from this wonderful symbology, and to realize our responsibility to always love truth above everything. Friendship, relationship, and all other considerations should have no weight with us compared with this one great work with truth and for truth. Christ, who was the very embodiment of truth, said to His disciples, "They have hated me, and they will hate you."

So let us not deceive ourselves: The path of principle is a rugged road, and strenuous is the labor of climbing. On the way we shall probably lose caste with everyone near and dear to us. Though the world now professes to grant religious freedom, the day of persecution has not yet ended. Creed



Watercolor, 1910, from Rackham's Color Illustrations for Wagner's Ring, Arthur Rackham

Having "married" the Spirit of Truth (Brunhilde) in the World of Concrete Thought, Siegfried leaves without the ring of egoism, and resolves to fight for truth in the world of material illusion.

and dogmatism are still in power, ready to prosecute and persecute anyone who does not go along the conventional lines. But so long as we face them and pursue our path regardless of criticism, truth will always come out unscathed from the battle. It is only when we show ourselves to be cowards and cravens that these inimical forces can give us our death blow through this vulnerable spot.

Another point: when Siegfried starts out from the rock of the Valkuerie to re-enter the world, he gives to Brunhilde the Ring of the Niebelung. This Ring, as you remember, was formed from the Rhinegold, representing the Universal Spirit, by Alberich the Niebelung. And we also remember that he could not shape this nugget until he had forsworn love; for friendship and love ceased when the Universal Spirit was surrounded by the ring of egoism.

From that time the battle of life has been waged

in all its fierceness: every man's hand being against his brother because of his egoism, which impels each to seek his own, regardless of the welfare of others.

But when the Spirit has found truth and has come in contact with the divine realities, when it has entered the Region of Concrete Thought, which is heaven, and has seen that one great verity—*that all things are one* and that though they may seem separate here, there is an invisible thread uniting each with all, when the Spirit has thus regained universality and love, it cannot be separate any longer. So, when it leaves the realm of truth, it leaves behind the feeling of separateness and self, symbolized by the Ring. Thus it becomes universal in its nature. It knows neither kin nor country, but feels like the much misunderstood Thomas Paine, when he said, "The world is my country; to do good is my religion." This attitude of mind is allegorically represented when Siegfried gives to Brunhilde the Ring of the Niebelung.

As you will remember, the Valkueries were daughters of Wotan, the chief god of the Norse mythology. They rode through the air on horses at great speed, to any place where deadly combat, whether between two or a greater number, was in progress. As soon as a warrior fell dead they lifted him tenderly to their saddles and carried him to Valhal, the abode of the gods, where he was resuscitated and lived in bliss forever after. You remember, also, that the name Valkuerie was interpreted as *chosen by acclamation*. Those who fought the battle of life to the very end were chosen by acclamation to be the companions of the gods.

Brunhilde was chief of these daughters of Wotan, and her horse, Grane, was the swiftest of steeds. This animal, which had thus faithfully carried the spirit of truth, she gave to her husband; for *truth may ever be considered the bride of the one who has found it*. The horse, therefore, is symbolical of the swiftness and decision wherewith one who has married truth is able to choose aright and discern truth from error—only, *provided he remains faithful*.

Thus with the love of truth in his heart, and mounted upon the steed of discernment, Siegfried starts out to fight the battle of truth and bring the



Watercolor, 1910, from Rackham's Color Illustrations for Wagner's Ring, Arthur Rackham

*The golden rope of the three Norns (Fates), representing the laws of the old order; breaks. The old wisdom gives way to the new.*

world captive to the feet of Brunhilde. Heaven and Earth hang in the balance, for he may revolutionize the world if he is faithful and courageous; but if he forgets his mission and becomes enmeshed in the sphere of illusion, the last hope of redeeming the world is gone. *The twilight of the gods is close at hand*, when the present order of things shall be done away, when the heavens shall melt in the fiery heat so that out of the travail of Nature a New Heaven and a New Earth may be born, wherein righteousness as a garment shall clothe all and everything.

Let us now turn our eyes from heaven, from Siegfried and Brunhilde, to Earth, where the world, which the truth is to set free, waits for the coming hero. The northern myth introduces us to the court of Gunther, a king honest and upright according to the standards of the world. Guttrune, his sister, is the highest lady in the land, her brother being unmarried. Among the courtiers there is Hagen, a name which means hook, signifying inherent selfishness. He is scion of the Niebelungs, related to Alberich who formed the fatal Ring.





Bronze, early nineteenth century, Hermann Ernst Freund, Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen

### Odin

*Odin is the Scandinavian counterpart of the Teutonic Wotan*

Ever since the days when that passed out of their possession, the Niebelungs have kept close watch upon its possessors: first, Wotan, who tricked Alberich and robbed him of the Ring, then Fafner and Fasolt, the giants who had built Valhal for Wotan, and who forced him to give them the Ring in part payment to ransom Freya, the goddess of love and youth, whom Wotan had prostituted and sold for the sake of power: then when Fafner slew Fasolt, the Niebelungs watched closely the cave where Fafner lay concealed, brooding over the hoard of the Niebelung as a huge dragon. And Mime, the foster father of Siegfried, paid with his life for scheming to obtain possession of the coveted treasure.

Nor was Siegfried safe from their vigilant watch, save when he was at the rock of the Valkuerie; for no Niebelung, nor one who is a cur or coward, can ever penetrate beyond the circle flame of illusion into the realm of truth. Therefore, the Niebelungs do not know what has become of the Ring when

Siegfried emerges anew into the world; though, of course, they surmise that it has been left with Brunhilde, and instantly commence plotting how to obtain it.

The court of Gunther lies directly in the path of Siegfried, and Alberich speeds ahead and informs Hagen that the last known possessor of the Ring is coming. Together, they scheme how to find out its whereabouts and obtain possession, but each in his black heart, also plots how to outwit the other and obtain the treasure for himself alone; for there is no honor in the battle of the separate self; each is against all others regardless of who they are. Though in the world we find co-operation for a common purpose, the question that is uppermost in the mind of every one who participates is: What can I get out of it? Unless this is plain and a personal reward is in sight, the great majority of mankind are unwilling to work. The apostle tells us, "not to be concerned with the things for self alone, but also, *to be mindful of the things of others.*" And we have given intellectual assent in the Christian countries, but, alas! how few are willing to live up to the ideal of unselfish service.

### REBIRTH AND THE LETHAL DRINK

*Birth is but a sleep and a forgetting.  
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,  
Has elsewhere had its setting,  
And cometh from afar.* —Wordsworth.

When Siegfried leaves the rock of the Valkuerie and reaches the worldly court of Gunther, he is given a drink calculated to make him forget all about his past life and Brunhilde, the spirit of truth, whom he had won for his very own.

It is usually supposed that the doctrine of rebirth is taught only in the ancient religions of the Orient, but a study of the Scandinavian mythology will soon rout that misconception. Indeed, they believed in both rebirth and the Law of Cause and Effect as applied to moral conduct, until Christianity clouded these doctrines, for reasons given in the *Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception* (p. 167). And it is curious to read of the confusion caused when the ancient religion of Wotan was being superseded by Christianity. Men believed in rebirth in their hearts, but repudiated it outwardly, as the following story



told of Saint Olaf, King of Norway and one of the earliest and most zealous converts to Christianity, will show.

When Asta, the Queen of King Harold, was in labor but could not bring to birth, a man came to the court with some jewels, of which he gave the following account: King Olaf Geirstad, who had reigned in Norway many years before and was the direct ancestor of Harold, had appeared to him in a dream and directed him to open the great earth-mound in which his body lay, and having severed it from the head with a sword, to convey certain jewels, which he would find in the coffin, to the queen, whose pains would then cease. The jewels were taken into the queen's chamber, and soon after she was delivered of a male child, whom they named Olaf. It was generally believed that the Spirit of Olaf Geirstad had passed into the body of the child, who was named after him.

Many years after, when Olaf had become King of Norway, and had embraced Christianity, he rode one day, as he often did, by the mound where his ancestor lay, and a courtier, who was with him at the time asked, "Is it true, my lord, that you once lay in this mound?"

"Never," replied the king, "has my Spirit inhabited two bodies."

"Yet, it has been reported that you have been heard to say, on passing this mound, 'Here was I. Here I lived.'"

"I have never so said," returned the king, "and never will I say so."

He was much discomfited, and rode hastily away, presumably to avoid discussion of an inward conviction which all the dogmas of the new faith could not eradicate.

As a matter of fact, all ancient people, whether in the East or in the West, knew much about birth and death which has been forgotten in modern times, because second sight was more prevalent

then. To this day, for instance, many peasants in Norway assert ability to see the Spirit passing out of the body at death, as a long narrow white cloud, which is, of course, the vital body; and the Rosicrucian teaching—that the deceased hover around their earthly abode for some time after death, that they assume a luminous body and are sorely afflicted by the grief of dear ones—was common knowledge among the ancient Northmen. When the deceased King Helge of Denmark materialized to assuage the grief of his widow, and she exclaimed in anguish "The dew of death has bathed his warrior body," he answered:

*'Tis thou, Sigruna,  
Art cause alone,  
That Helge is bathed  
With dew of sorrow.  
Thou wilt not cease thy grief,  
Nor dry the bitter tears.  
Each bloody tear  
Falls on my breast,  
Icy cold. They will not let me rest.*

Students, when they realize the fact of rebirth, generally wonder why the memory of past lives is blotted out, and many are filled with an almost overpowering desire to know the past. They cannot understand the benefit derived from

the lethal drink of forgetfulness, and they look with envy at people who claim to know their past lives—when they claim to have been kings, queens, philosophers, priests, et cetera.

There is, however, a most beneficent purpose in this forgetfulness, for no experience is of value in life except for the impress which it leaves by the purgatorial or heavenly postmortem experience. This impress then acts in such a manner that at the proper time it directs, warns, or urges a certain line of action, and this warning, or urge, though dissociated from the experience, or rather for the reason that it is dissociated from the experience wherefrom it was extracted, acts with a quickness greater than that of thought. (Continued) □



St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall, Orkney  
*St. Olaf of Norway*

© Doug Houghlin

## RELIGION AND THE PUBLIC REALM

### *In Defense of Disbelief*

**A** HEALTHY DOSE of Christian disbelief or “holy skepticism” would serve as a much-needed antidote to the soft-core spirituality that saps much of contemporary Christianity, especially in its evangelical expression. An anti-doctrinal sentimentality often rules the worship and the art of our churches, where self-serving emotions are exalted over true mystery. The church of our time needs a theology that repudiates all saccharin substitutes for the hard thinking that Christian faith requires.

As in so many other matters, Flannery O’Connor foresaw our reduction of transcendent faith to sentimental subjectivity. She likened it to the scientific process whereby the wings can be bred off chickens to produce more succulent white meat. O’Connor said that it is possible to breed the moral and theological sense out of people in a similar way. She described our current generation as a brood of wingless chickens. This is what Nietzsche meant, she explained, when he declared God dead. It also means that nihilism is the atmosphere of our age, the gas that we all breathe, whether inside or outside the Church. The Church has made Christianity nearly indistinguishable from the coziness of a warm blanket and the kindness of a golden heart. With typical starchiness, O’Connor added that “a golden



Created by Ariel Agemian exclusively for the Confraternity of the Precious Blood

*“Grant, O Lord, Thy help to me who am entangled in trouble, for vain is the help of man.”—Thomas à Kempis*

heart would be a positive interference for the writing of fiction.”

What sustains both faith and fiction against such incipient nihilism is Christian disbelief. O’Connor explained the need for religious skepticism in a letter to an Emory University freshman named Alfred Corn, later to become a distinguished poet and anthologist. This shy student had written in 1955 to say that he was vexed by the intellectual doubts his professors had created. Their questions had put his faith in terrible jeopardy, and he asked O’Connor what he should do. To believe in God, she replied, is not to avoid such doubts and difficulties but to undergo a lifelong combat with them. Faith is indeed a gift, she added, but it is a gift that must be

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*An earlier version of this essay was delivered by Ralph E. Wood at the Calvin College Festival of Faith and Writing, April 3-4, 1998, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Appearing in the October 1998 issue of First Things, it is reprinted here with permission. First Things is published by Religion and Public Life, an interreligious, nonpartisan research and education institute whose purpose is to advance a religiously informed public philosophy for the ordering of society.*

constantly cultivated and enlarged. Faith grows and deepens through concrete acts of charity, she explained. These deeds are prompted, in turn, by a discernment of the divine image in other persons. Only sacred sight can perceive their true worth. Such holy seeing is invigorated by imaginative more than abstract thinking. O'Connor concludes her letter with splendidly keen counsel:

Even in the life of a Christian, faith rises and falls like the tides of an invisible sea. [Faith is still] there, even when [you] can't see it or feel it, if [you want] it to be there. You realize, I think, that [faith] is more valuable, more mysterious, altogether more immense than anything you can learn or decide upon in college. Learn what you can, but cultivate Christian skepticism. It will keep you free—not free to do anything you please, but free to be formed by something larger than your own intellect or the intellects of those around you.

O'Connor believed that Christian dogma is what forms the Christian imagination into something larger than our own intelligence or the intelligence of those around us. Knowing that the word "dogma" is a pejorative term for most Americans, O'Connor boldly capitalized it, confessing in the upper case that "My stories have been watered and fed by Dogma." She rejected the popular view that dogma divides while ethics unite and that, since the practical and the useful are what truly matter, we can dispense with dogma. So long as everyone loves Jesus, according to the prevailing sentimentalism, doctrinal claims can be shelved. O'Connor believed, on the contrary, that dogma must be central rather than peripheral. It is the distilled essence of God's self-identification in Israel and Christ, and thus the true means for understanding both ourselves and the world. "Dogma is an instrument for penetrating reality," she declared. It "is about the only thing left in the world that surely guards and respects mystery."

For Flannery O'Connor, "mystery" is not synonymous with "puzzle" and "riddle"—for those conundrums that balk the mind and stifle all understanding. Nor is mystery another name for a spirituality so vague that it cannot distinguish between John of

the Cross and Max Lucado. "To St. Paul and the early Christian thinkers," wrote Claude Tresmontant, one of O'Connor's favorite biblical scholars, "[mystery] was on the contrary the particular object of intelligence, its fullest nourishment. The *mysterion* [a Greek word that can also be translated *sacrament*] is something so rich in intelligible content, so inexhaustibly full of delectation for the mind that no contemplation [of it] can ever reach its end."

Such delectations of mind and imagination also require Christians to make unmistakable declarations about what we do not believe. We cannot avoid the fact that Christian faith is inherently polemical. Every doctrinal claim implies its counterclaim, every affirmation its negation. Karl Barth learned this lesson in his encounter with the Nazis, who pronounced his writings illegal and who banned him from teaching in German universities. In response to the Nazi evils, Barth led the Confessing Church to develop the Barmen Declaration, a document wherein every *credimus* [we believe] is followed by its corollary *damnamus* [we reject]. The first article, for example, declares that "Jesus Christ, as he is attested for us in Holy Scripture, is the one Word of God which we have to hear and which we have to trust and obey in life and in death." Lest the *Deutsche Christen* of the Nazi church (or anyone else) mistake what this means, a clear reference to *der Führer* follows: "We reject the false doctrine [that] the Church could and would have to acknowledge as a source of its proclamation, apart from and besides this one Word of God, still other events, powers, figures, and truths as God's revelation."

Perhaps we need a new Barmen Declaration for Christian faith and writing in our time, a theological manifesto setting forth the things we do not and will not believe, precisely because we believe in Jesus Christ. The theologian Christopher Morse has developed such a theology for the Church amidst its current *status confessionis*. In *Not Every Spirit: A Dogmatics of Christian Disbelief* (1994), Morse argues that faithful skepticism is a biblical no less than an ecclesial imperative. Already in the New Testament it is made evident. "Beloved, do not believe every spirit," we read in 1 John 4: 1, "but test the spirits to see whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world."



The Gospel of Mark shares this same disdain for untrue claimants to the Truth: “And then if anyone says, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘Look, there he is!’ do not believe it. False Christs and false prophets will arise and show signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect” (13:21- 22). If even an angel from heaven should preach a false gospel, says St. Paul, “let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:9).

These unspecified deceiving spirits and false prophets and fake Christs are to be broadly understood, Morse states, as anyone or anything making wrongful claims to our attention and allegiance. Christians are called to name these Antichrists and to refuse them our fealty—even as we are also required to disbelieve those dogmas that have ossified into lifeless propositions. Yet Christian disbelief does not mean a principled doubting of everything. Such radical skepticism soon slides into a cynicism altogether as sentimental and self-serving as the easy optimism it rejects. Christian disbelief is, instead, a positive testing of what is true and false by a single criterion: “By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God” (I John 4:2-3).

There are many so-called Christian “spirits” now at work in our churches which deny that “Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.” These gnostic and discarnate forms of Christianity are especially evident in the sappiness of what passes as contemporary Christian culture. This is not to say that sentimental piety always produces flaccid faith. There are many staunch witnesses to the gospel who are sustained by art more saccharin than sacred, and by worship more superficial than substantial. Such devout souls live out their Christianity in ways that transcend the limits of their piety, even as many of us academics [*Wood is a Professor at Baylor University—Ed.*] must be saved in spite of our better taste and more orthodox theology. Yet the spiritual outrages being committed in the name of Christ cannot be dismissed as mere passing fads. They have come virtually to dominate the evangelical Protestant world.

Consider the following examples from a so-called Christian Book Fair. A T-shirt company called Living Epistles advertised a sweatshirt labeled “The

## Self-Inquiry

Let no soft slumber close mine eyes  
Ere I have recollected thrice  
The train of actions through each day;  
Where have my feet worked out their way?  
What have I learned where'er I've been,  
From all I've heard, from all I've seen?  
What know I more that's worth the knowing?  
What have I done that's worth the doing?  
What have I sought that I should shun?  
What duties have I left undone?  
These self-inquiries are the road  
That leads to Virtue and to God.

—Pythagoras

Lord's Gym.” It featured not Arnold Schwarzenegger but Jesus Christ as the pumped-up, steroid-loaded body builder. He is pressing himself up on a pile of rocks, blood gushing from his crown of thorns, with an enormous cross on his back that reads “The Sins of the World.” The caption beneath dares us to “Bench Press This!” On the other side of the shirt, Jesus' palm is pierced with a railroad spike and covered in blood. Inscribed beneath are the words “His Pain, Your Gain.” Other T-shirts shout such slogans as “Salvation Is Not for Wimps,” “Jesus Loved You So Much it Hurt!”, “His Blood's for You,” and “God Made Grandmas So Kids Could Feel His Hugs.” Bumper stickers declare that “Real Men Love Jesus” and “My Boss Is a Jewish Carpenter.” A key-chain featuring a soccer ball contains the slogan “Jesus Is My Goal.”

Such spiritual pap can be made to fill even book-sized containers. Consider, for example, one of the fair's prize-winning titles: *Lord, I Haven't Talked to You Since the Last Crisis*. Another much-touted work, *Jesus Christ, CEO*, describes our Lord as an executive who turned twelve ordinary men into managers of the most successful company the world has ever known. A fresh infusion of Christian skepticism would disdain such books, even as it would help deliver publishers from the temptation to get rich by manufacturing toilet tissue with the words “Get Thee Behind Me, Satan” printed on every sheet.

There are many other examples of Christian



Engraving, 1559, Peter Bruegel the Elder (c. 1525-1569), Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

### ***Faith (Fides)***

*A trenchant observer of human nature, Bruegel created *The World of the Seven Virtues, Plus One in seven engravings*. Above, the allegorical figure of Faith stands on the lid of the empty tomb amidst many objects of the Gospel story of Christ's crucifixion. While various Church sacraments are being administered (Baptism, Eucharist, Confession, Holy Matrimony) the laity is represented as largely indifferent or self-absorbed. The space containing the holy relics is otherwise empty and ignored, sharp commentary on the negative state of enlightened Christian piety, a state also indicated by the crack in the column above the cross.*

kitsch. At an Easter service held in a South Carolina Baptist church, puppets popped up from behind a screen and wagged their muppety heads while singing "I Found My Thrill on Calvary Hill" to the old Fats Domino tune. Twenty miles south of Nashville, a Christian entrepreneur named Charles Budell has set up a miniature golf course in which windmills and water-hazards have been replaced by biblical obstacles. There Christian golfers can tee off at the Garden of Eden, get past the Devil, and end up in Heaven. Along the way, one putts into Noah's Ark, drops onto Mt. Sinai, and visits the tomb of Christ. On the seventeenth hole, the ball disappears into a shaft with Satan's picture on it,

only to emerge beneath a red cross. "See," says Budell, "you beat the Devil." Angels are seated near the seventeenth hole, where the ball sinks into an opening with the word RAPTURE emblazoned above it.

One might argue that such gross parodies of the gospel are too silly to be dignified with criticism. The atrocious sacrileges of so-called Christian culture would be laughable indeed were their effects not so deadly. T S. Eliot once observed that our unconscious habits, especially our leisure lives, serve to shape our souls and form our imaginations far more decisively than all our deliberate efforts to acquire high culture. Neil Postman's argument



about America at large is even more alarmingly true of our evangelical churches: we are amusing ourselves to death. The Christian culture critic Ken Myers, editor of *Mars Hill Tapes*, rightly describes popular Christianity as being “of the world, but not in the world.” It espouses a worldly gospel of happiness and success that offers no serious engagement with the deepest needs and desires of the world.

This sub-Christian religion devoted not to the Fatherhood but the Daddyhood of God—a friend of mine calls it Kiddyanity—can be seen most vigorously at work in contemporary worship. There is no doubt that its emotional fervor serves to indict the Laodicean lifelessness of much traditional worship. Seeker services aim at introducing the unchurched masses of our post-Christian culture to the rudiments of the faith, teaching them the elementary truths of the gospel in ways that liturgical worship and doctrinal preaching might not. Yet I wonder whether childlike beginners in a dumbed-down, user-friendly Christianity will ever grow up—whether such seekers will ever become finders and keepers of the faith once delivered to the saints. It is more likely, I fear, that they will subject themselves to apostolic wrath. St. Paul warns against a permanent infancy in faith. He pronounces fierce judgment on the Corinthians who remain milk-drinking believers, never learning to eat the rich meat and to quaff the good wine of the gospel.

This new ease in Zion, this friendly familiarity with the Lord God of the cosmos, can be discerned in old-fashioned liberal no less than new-fangled evangelical churches. Edward Farley has recently declared that the relevance-driven worship practiced in oldline liberal congregations prompts one not to exclaim “holy, holy, holy” but “nice, nice, nice.” In his book *A Far Glory*, Peter Berger argues that we are witnessing “the triumph of triviality” even in traditional churches. With the anger of an Amos, Berger laments the frontal hugs that would bring sexual harassment charges in other settings, the vigorous applause that follows the choir or the soloist’s performance (as if the true audience were not God but the congregation), the raucous laughter that the preacher’s well-rehearsed one-liners evoke. “Sermons [in such churches] are political harangues,” Berger complains, “and ‘prayers’ the recital of political platforms.” Hence Berger’s bitter

litany of liturgical offenses.

One could go on: To the embarrassed handshakes mislabeled “the kiss of peace.” To the preacher mounting the pulpit in full sacerdotal regalia, only to begin his sermon with a hearty “good morning.” To the dedicated removal of every vestige of poetic beauty from the language of the liturgy...into prose resembling that of a mail-order catalogue. I think that what all these changes add up to is the statement that nothing extraordinary is going on, that what is happening is a gathering of ordinary people enjoying the experience of community.

Such loss of awe and mystery, such commodification of God into the service of our own needs, flattens the imagination of wonder and otherness. If God is only a kinder and gentler version of ourselves, there is nothing ultimate to inspire our worship or command our service. No wonder that Flannery O’Connor likened sentimentality in religion to pornography in art: they both cultivate immediate sensate experience for its own sake. In a similar way the poet and mystical writer Kathleen Norris protests the removal of the fierce psalms of lament and imprecation from contemporary lectionaries. These cursing psalms remind us, says Norris, that wickedness cannot be conquered by mere niceness. Without anger, she adds, even the praise of God dissolves into a “dreadful cheer,” a smiling blindness to the world’s woe, a gleaming-gummed oblivion to what Luther called the bruised human conscience.

Leander Keck complains in a similar vein that our churches have replaced “the theocentric praise of God” with an “anthropocentric utilitarianism.” This inversion serves to tame and domesticate the living Lord of Scripture by ridding him of his jealousy and wrath. God is “reduced to the Great Enabler [who] has little to do except [to] warrant our causes and help us fulfill our aspirations.” Hence Keck’s baleful assessment of contemporary Christianity: “The opening line of the Westminster Confession is now reversed, for now the chief end of God is to glorify us and to be useful to us indefinitely.”

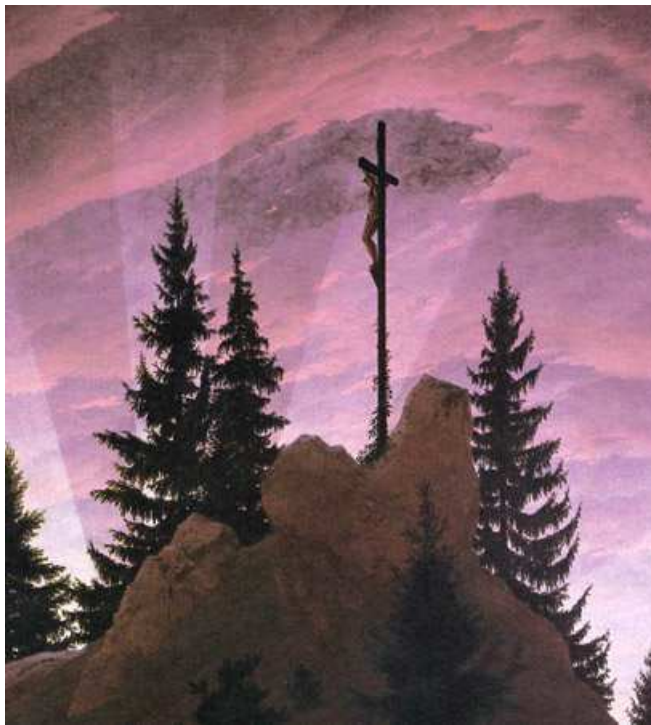
Perhaps the subtlest manifestation of sentimentality is to be found in the triumph of the word “spiri-



tuality” in Christian discourse. At its best, this new concern with the spiritual life reflects a laudable desire to make Christian faith a matter of the heart no less than the head, a discipline of devotional practices rather than a repetition of doctrinal propositions. Though he prefers the older word “piety”—with its deep rootage in Roman history and Calvinist theology—J. I. Packer offers a succinct positive definition of Christian spirituality as an “enquiry into the whole Christian enterprise of pursuing, achieving, and cultivating communion with God, which includes both public worship and private devotion, and the results of these in actual Christian life.”

If at its noblest the spirituality movement serves to revitalize Christian devotion, why substitute a name so gaseous and gossamer that it means nearly everything and therefore hardly anything? Are the practitioners of spirituality to be regarded as *spiritualists*, and thus as adepts in *spiritualism*? Will seances and necromancy soon follow? We entangle ourselves in such questions whenever we seek to avoid the offense of the gospel, its scandalous particularity and finality, its thorny refusal to be made one faith among others.

With uncanny prescience, C. S. Lewis anticipated our current obsession with spirituality. In his space novel of 1944 called *Perelandra*, Lewis depicts his demonic scientist Weston as an advocate of an immanentist life-worship that has remarkable parallels to contemporary spirituality. Weston has contempt for the notion of a transcendent God who creates and judges and redeems the world. He will have nothing to do with the incarnate Lord who requires that we worship him rather than his creation, who commands that we live not for this world alone but



Detail, 1880, Gemaldegalerie, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden

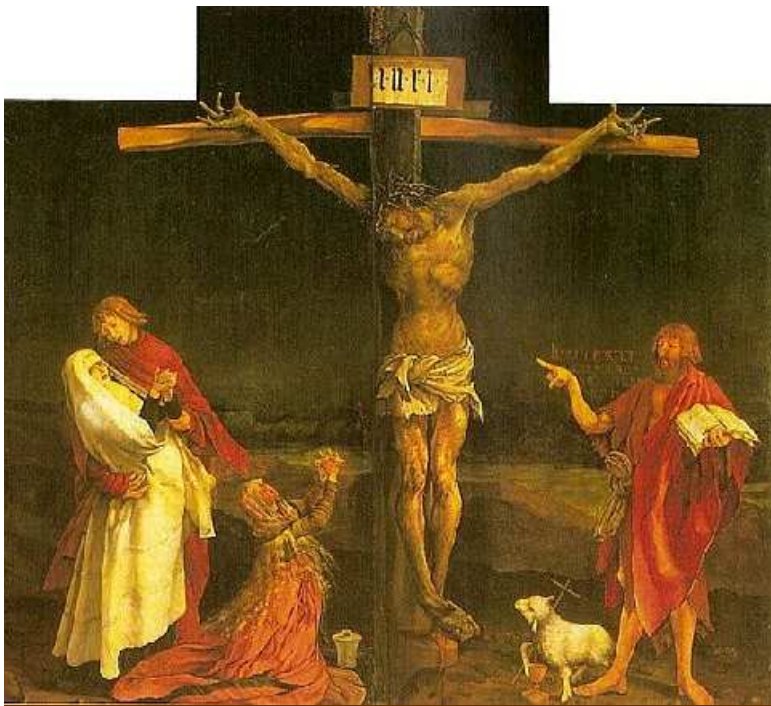
*The Cross in the Mountains*

for the Life beyond life. Weston’s anti-theistic philosophy proves predictably anti-humanistic, as the denial of God issues in hatred of humanity. Weston worships not God but the unsupervised and impersonal life process. He scorns “mere” humanity in the name of a vitalism as vacuous in its rhetoric as it is vicious in its ethics:

The majestic spectacle of this blind, inarticulate purposiveness thrusting its way upward and ever upward in an endless unity of differentiated

achievements towards an ever-increasing complexity of organization, towards spontaneity and *spirituality*, swept away all my old conception of a duty to Man as such. Man in himself is nothing. The forward movement of Life—the growing *spirituality* —is everything....To spread *spirituality*, not to spread the human race, is henceforth my mission. (Emphasis added.)

Our rampant desire to reduce knotty particularities to spongy generalities has led a cynical friend to confess that he grabs first for his wife and then for his wallet when he hears this gnostic word “spirituality.” William Temple spoke similar wisdom when he declared Christianity to be the world’s most *materialistic* religion. Redemption is an outward and public and visible thing wrought by the flesh-assuming, world-inhabiting God. The objective work of Jesus Christ is the center of the Christian life, upon which all subjective conversions are based, themselves enabled by God’s own gift of faith. Our “decisions for Christ” announce that our faith is indeed intentional; it is uniquely ours, not just the product of our parents or the community



Oil on wood, from the *Isenheim Altarpiece*, c. 1512-16, Matthias Grünewald, Musée d'Unterlinden, Colmar, France

### **The Crucifixion**

*“Like the Baptizer in Grünewald’s Isenheim Altarpiece—the long-fingered prophet who points away from himself to the crucified God—we can make witness, in both word and deed, to the salvation that we ourselves could not possibly have accomplished.”*

that nurtured us. Yet even the deepest personal encounter with God can never be commensurate with the gift of salvation itself. An evangelical reporter is said to have asked Karl Barth, when he was visiting this country in 1962, whether he had ever been saved. “Yes,” Barth is rumored to have replied. “Then tell us about your salvation experience,” the reporter eagerly requested. “It happened in A.D. 34, when Jesus was crucified and God raised him from the dead.”

Those who have turned the WWJD acronym into a fashion item—donning decorative wear that asks What Would Jesus Do?—ignore this fundamental distinction between Christ’s objective work and our subjective appropriation of it. As the Son of God slain for the sins of the world, Jesus has a life qualitatively different from ours. To ask what Jesus would do is to assume that we are his qualitative equal. The theologian Diogenes Allen puts the matter exactly the other way around. He starkly observes that, in a certain sense, Christ does not need us: “Jesus is Lord because of who he is, not because he has followers.... He is Lord because he is

the Son of God. It isn’t because of us that he is the Son of God.” A more faithful question needs to be asked, even if it cannot be reduced to an acronym: “What does Jesus Christ, because of his unique life and death and resurrection, uniquely enable his disciples to do?” The difficult answer is that he is the only Savior who, having accomplished their redemption, enables his followers to do works even greater than his own (John 14:12). Like the Baptizer in Grunewald’s Isenheim Altarpiece—the long-fingered prophet who points away from himself to the crucified God—we can make witness, in both word and deed, to the salvation that we ourselves could not possibly have accomplished.

The recrudescence of nineteenth-century theology of Christian subjectivism finds its literary equivalent in the current Christian chic of salvation through autobiography alone. Thus the current rage for telling one’s own story as if it were God’s story—when, by contrast, we are called to conform our fallen and false stories to God’s one true

Story. An important Christian writer recently declared, when asked about the sources of her art, that she writes entirely out of her own experience—her family, her friends, her church. Another avowedly Christian author confesses that doctrine no longer matters to her. She finds her audience in the many Christians who gather to praise Jesus without squabbling over their beliefs. Surely this is to forget that the gospel liberates us from subjective emotionalism, giving us new lenses for perceiving both ourselves and our world, delivering us into the great unexplored realm of the Not Merely Me. Luther in his 1535 lectures on Galatians declared that the gospel of God “snatches us away from ourselves, so that we do not depend on our own strength, conscience, experience, person, or works, but depend on that which is outside ourselves, that is, on the promise and truth of God, which cannot deceive.” Christian art consists not in the transmission of often deceptive autobiographical experience into fictional guise, but rather its radical transfiguration into the one undeceiving form: the form of the Cross and Resurrection.... □

### *Such Stuff As Dreams Are Made Of*

**O**N APRIL 20, 1999, two senior students walked through their Littleton, Colorado high school parking lot and then into the school building throwing bombs and shooting to kill as they advanced. Over a three-hour span they murdered 13 and wounded 23 before killing themselves.

Bad dream? Definitely. But worse, it actually happened. Some students initially had doubts. Was it real? Maybe the gunfire was part of a prank. Even when blood began to flow...well, a really well-devised hoax could simulate eruptions of fake blood. But any vestiges of lingering doubt were quickly dispelled. This was real—real meaning: It is happening in the space I share with the people firing weapons and the people shedding blood and I'm in danger for my very life.

Dreams and reality—there is a fine line between the two. A real dream is one where we experience inner “events” as if they were real. How do we know the events are fictive. We don't—until we wake from them and enter another world, the world of our physical senses. But the dream world images may persist and impress us with their power, their vivid facticity—even if they be unseen in the physical world, purely interior.

Students of Western Wisdom Teachings might describe dreams as lower desire world “events” depicting scenes in which the dreamer's own desire impulses are “acted out,” or where his soul is drawn to witness beings and situations he is too weak to reject or leave.

The point is that dreams can influence outward actions—as in the case of the materialized celluloid dreams (fantasies?) we call movies, and the individually packaged dreams we call videos. One of the two teenagers had customized a version of a bloody shoot-'em-up video game called Doom, in which two shooters with extra weapons and unlimited ammunition encounter people who can't fight back. A kind of dress rehearsal for the actual event.

As an investigator associated with the Simon

Weisenthal Center described it, “they were playing out their game in the God mode” (*Time*, May 10, 1999). Not the Christian God. One can do this in the electronic landscape of virtual reality—“virtual” as in “almost.” Yes, video games have consequences, but not real consequences. Not, at least, in the games themselves. That's why they are called games. But they do have consequences for life—grave consequences, whose emergence and discernable effect is but a question of time and degree. Can a viewer of video violence keep his own violence (directed towards actualization) under wraps? Usually he can, he supposes. Unless he doesn't want to. Unless he is using the medium as a staging area for the real thing, perhaps not even knowing he is headed toward that dimension where blood is warm and wet and bullet maim and kill.

How many images of apparently effectless violence does it take to impel a mind, a “disturbed” mind, to “cross over” into the domain of hard facts and play an impromptu video (*video* as in *I see*), self-produced, self-directed, and writ large, where personal responsibility is blunted, human compassion and ethical awareness are absent, and dire consequences are hidden?

What is to be learned from this senseless massacre? That thoughts and feelings are things. That before guns and bombs kill, video images of killing can kill, and before these audio-enhanced images can exert their influence, thoughts and feelings must be of like nature; in fact, can and do pivot toward material reality as video images, and then as incarnate acts in the common space we call planet Earth—say in Littleton, Colorado.

How do we prevent real “acting out”? As parents and friends, even as children, we teach and live right feeling and right thinking. We teach the love that absorbs hurt rather than hurting another. We open to the person in emotional and mental pain before that pain has driven them to commit some drastic action whose consequences are irrevocable, whose karmic debt is woeful to contemplate—and may be “hard as hell” to liquidate. □



## BOOK REVIEWS

### *Meditation—Portal to the Worlds of Spirit*

**F**REIDRICH RITTELMAYER'S *Meditation, Guidance of the Inner Life* (Floris Books, Edinburgh, 1987) is such a full and deep treatment of the vital subject of meditation that no review, short of quoting verbatim the complete text, would do it justice. And, in fact, the *Rays*, beginning with this issue, will be featuring a number of chapters taken from this important book (see page 14).

Formerly a prominent figure in the German Lutheran Church at the beginning of the twentieth century, Rittelmeyer was the first leader of the Christian Community, a movement for religious renewal.

For Rittelmeyer, the purpose of meditation is nothing short of the human transformation that is indicated by the Last Supper—the transubstantiation of earthly experience into supersensible cognitions and growing consciousness of the Spirit.

The Gospel of St. John provides the material for the twelve (a significant figure) chapters of this book, which are themselves verbal forms of meditation. Particularly fruitful for contemplation are the seven “I am” sayings of Christ Jesus.

The tone of the author's treatment is set in the first chapter, whose first meditation—“I am Love”—words not actually spoken by Christ, was the content of His life and radiate from His Person and all His deeds. We cannot *think* our way to the heart of these words, nor can a full surrender to our *feelings* achieve this goal. We must engage in a vigorous *inward activity*. It is suggested that this saying be represented as a clear altar flame burning inwardly in the soul, a flame to which our whole being offers itself. “We strive that our ego should glow and shine in this fire alone.” We sacrifice our ego to the fire of Christ. “We try to leave behind us our

whole life up to the present, to hear the voice of Christ in a divine world above the earth, as He speaks out of the purest spirit of love: ‘No one taketh My life, I give it. This new commandment have I from My Father, that I lay down My life for the brethren.’ And we seek in this spirit to return into life. We seek to make this ego, illuminated by Christ, become so strong that it glows through three circles: first, through ourselves, completely through our being and life; then, through the whole circle of men among whom we live; and lastly, as far as possible, through the whole world.”

Successful Christian meditation, whose goal is communion with Christ, radically affects every aspect of one's life.

A brief listing of the topics Rittelmeyer's study addresses includes: the posture of the body, going to sleep and the starry heavens, meditation and prayer, physical and spiritual food, household hindrances to meditation, the hallowing of time and space, sickness of the ego and its cure, the ego as vessel of the Grail, vegetarianism, the sexual life, the powers of darkness, the effect of meditation upon the body, exercises in concentration, inward baptism, training of the will, healing powers, asceticism, fear and helps against it, spiritualistic seances, our relation to the dead, images of man.

Meditation shows us both what we are and what we are not. It reveals to us our fallenness. But pursued with faith and fervor, the words and images of truth work transformatively in us as we whole-heartedly give ourselves to the divine reality they point to. Increasingly, we begin to experience real communion with God, Who is the ultimate goal of all human aspiration. □

—Carl Swan

### *Faith and Luscious Apples*

#### Two Master Keys to Health

**H**AVE YOU NOT OBSERVED the notoriously good digestion enjoyed by stomach sufferers on a holiday? Foods ingested on such occasions with more or less impunity would profoundly disturb their digestion at other times. For when the mind is carefree, when good cheer, faith, and hope dominate the mind and nervous system, the stomach glands do their best work and pour forth a copious and abundant amount of gastric juice, strong in digestive power. The stomach is probably the most suggestible organ in the whole body, exceedingly susceptible to the slightest changes in the mental state. Many stomach disorders are but a reflex of a similar mental derangement. A sour disposition in the course of the inevitable leads to a sour stomach.

When the mind is pleasantly disposed and anticipative of enjoying some favorite dish, the action of the mind upon salivary secretion is such as will produce a profuse secretion of thin, "makes your mouth water," fluid. In like manner, stage fright and other nervous and emotional states in which fear is the dominating element have been accompanied by a characteristic dry mouth resulting from the almost complete suppression of the saliva.

Faith and happiness encourage the production of a strong and active saliva—a secretion powerful in its ability to convert starch into sugar. The digestion of starch commences in the mouth. Conversely, fear not only deteriorates the quality and digestive power of the saliva, but not infrequently results in the production of a secretion so modified as sometimes to become actually bitter.

Thus fear greatly favors the abnormal growth of bacteria in the mouth, thereby exerting a pernicious influence on the teeth.

An ancient experimental criminal test of the Chinese is markedly illustrative of the power of fear to diminish the flow of the saliva. Suspects were compelled to line up and then to chew and quickly swallow a handful of dry rice. The guilty man usually became so frightened that his salivary glands refused to function. The parched condition of his mouth and throat obviously menaced his capacity to swallow the rice in the allotted time.

Chronic worriers and despondent patients universally suffer from deficient gastric juice and slow digestion. Melancholy people are almost invariably dyspeptic; indeed many cases of so-called acid dyspepsia have been traced to acid mental and nervous states. This is because a full supply of the vital electric power is withheld from the pneumogastric nerve, which conveys from the brain the life forces needed to give tone and activity to the digestive organs.

Indeed, despondency affects all the organs of the system on the same principle; the brain consumes in its excitement more than its natural allowances of nerve-electricity, and consequently it withholds the vital energy from the organs which are dependent upon it for healthful action. Faith encourages the assimilative powers of the body, while unusual sorrow and protracted grief retard and even temporarily inhibit the process of assimilation, thus interfering with the nutrition of the cell.

Fortunately for humanity, each evil carries its own remedy in its bosom; each action is followed

by a corrective reaction. In the rescue squad towers the luscious apple—king of orchard fruits.

The malic acid content of the apple is agreeably appetizing and aids digestion by assisting the digestive enzymes in the performance of their duties; thus the digestive system is stimulated to a more vigorous action and enjoys increased capacity in the handling of food committed to its care. Especially in non-malignant conditions of the stomach and liver has apple concentrate (condensed whole apple) proved particularly beneficial, because of its marked stimulating effect on the digestive function.

Malic acid also plays a stellar role as a disinfectant for mouth, stomach, and intestines. Malic acid normalizes the acidity of the gastric juices of the stomach, enhancing at the same time their germicidal effects.

Organic malic acid must not be placed in the same category as those fruit acids that have been productive of much mischief. Malic acid exists in chemical combination with the mineral salts of potassium, sodium, magnesium, calcium, iron, and the phosphates. These salts or malates are absorbed directly into the blood, and preserve and increase the alkaline reserve.

When the mucous membrane is functioning normally—as it does when faith dominates the mind—it secretes a mucus that lubricates, thus permitting food to pass along without scratching, bruising, or irritating hypersensitive alimentary walls. Fear and anger cause an inadequate secretion, often a complete suppression of mucus, which gives rise to peptic and duodenal ulcerations and other erosions. That is why the Great Cosmic Intelligence has provided fruit pectin—generously available in the condensed apple known as apple concentrate—there to exert its tranquilizing influence in soothing sensitive as well as inflamed or irritated gastrointestinal canals. Pectin is not indicated as a specific for ulcers or other lesions. We warn against self-medication in pathological conditions.

We merely want to emphasize that fruit pectin is an exceptionally fine source of uronic acid—an



important constituent of the mucus-producing cell. Any shortage of uronic acid produces erosions and ulcerations.

The principal constituent of mucus is a protein known as mucin. Uronic acid is an important component of mucin; in the event of a shortage of uronic acid, the mucous membrane is the first to suffer, for it cannot manufacture its full quota of mucus. Delicate alimentary surfaces are thus bruised in absence of this copious, viscous demulcent secretion that is soft and slippery, thus inhibiting masticated food particles from passing along in the normal easy gliding physiological way that Nature intended.

While raw apples, when ripe and properly masticated, are extremely wholesome and very digestible, doctors of repute recommend cooking, baking, or processing, via concentration, the whole fruit when included in the diets of invalids, convalescents, and those with weak digestive powers unable to load their stomachs with sufficient quantities of fresh fruits and leafy vegetables.

Doctors who were skeptical of the efficacy of this safe therapeutic measure and who availed themselves of the apple technique only as a last resort, were thoroughly satisfied with the uniformly good results obtained and have enthusiastically acclaimed apple therapy as superior to any other single mode of treatment in uncomplicated gastrointestinal derangements. □

—Lillian R. Carque, Sc.D.



# HEALING

## *Releasing Our Inner Powers*



Engraving, from *Illustrations of the Book of Job*, William Blake, 1757-1827, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York

*A buoyant, positive attitude opens the heart and mind to God's holy Presence.*

**R**ENEWED YOUTH, life, courage, and poise are the inevitable results of a release of those inner powers of the Spirit which are latent within each one of us. The creative, constructive attitude of mind and feeling is the magic key which unlocks the door to these inner treasures.

Thought is force and energy, and as immensely powerful for good or ill as that equally mysterious and intangible force called electricity. Hence equal care is required in the handling of our mental processes, if desirable results are to be obtained.

Truly, thoughts are things, and every thought we think becomes a part of our mental aura and life.

When directed properly (by the Ego, or indwelling Spirit), the human mind accomplishes good things continually in all phases of life. These vary in significance, power, and degree according to the strength of will injected into the thought form sent out. "By the power of will we project an idea through the mind, where it takes concrete shape as a thought form by drawing mind stuff around it from the Region of Concrete Thought."

Individual and collective thought, working along creative lines, produces all that is beautiful, useful, and really worth-while in life. Negative thought processes, through the constant contemplation and visualization of troubles and obstacles of all kinds, tend always to interfere with normal, healthful reactions and to hinder progress of any kind.

A cheerless outlook upon life breeds gloom and

obstructs the flow of vitality and health in the physical organism. On the other hand, a cheery, optimistic spirit drives dull care away and replaces gloom with happiness, sickness with health, and lack with plenty. □

Visible Helpers are just as necessary as Invisible Helpers, and our friends and patients may share in a high privilege, as well as add much to the power of liberated healing force, by joining us in prayer for the sick. Our Healing Service is held every evening in the Healing Temple at 6:30 (7:30 when Daylight time is in effect) and in the Pro-Ecclesia at 4:15 P.M. when the Moon is in a cardinal sign on the following dates:

September.....5—11—19—26  
 October.....2—8—16—23—29

Relax, close your eyes, and make a mental picture of the pure white rose in the center of the Rosicrucian Emblem on the west wall of our Pro-Ecclesia, and concentrate on Divine Love and Healing.

### *To Win the Prize*

**C**RAIG WAS EXCITED when his school announced a contest for drawings. He must win the prize! It would mean he could get new colors and supplies. Above all, it would convince his father. Craig's dad thought drawing was a waste of time, especially for Craig. "Just an excuse for dreaming," he said. "It doesn't do anything."

Craig knew better. It created beauty, and Craig loved beauty. Woods, fields, snow, summer clouds, old rail fences, and blue smoke curling from red chimneys on a frosty morning. Just looking was fun. But when you tried to draw things, it made you part of them.

He knew what he would draw. He went there right after school, as he had done so many times. It was a little, hidden, secret glade in the woods. A wonderful stream flowed there; this golden autumn day it was purple flecked with tiny silver circles. A bright dragonfly zipped close to the surface; water spiders rowed, contentedly.

A willow tree arched overhead, its delicate green falling like protecting hands. The sunlight was soft orange, touching the red and yellow leaves on the ground—a magic glade of peace and color and companionship. One sensed all the hidden life of the woods, the very ants and wood flies and creatures that burrowed in the ground.

This he would paint. So he started right away, drawing from his pocket the cherished water colors, the two brushes, and the big sheet of Whatman paper. Hidden under a fallen log, wrapped in waxed paper, was the drawing board. Craig drew,



Edilton Stehli

*The little glade caught the sparkle of sunlight, the haze of autumn, the crisp smell of wet, black earth and fallen leaves*

and felt within him the spirit of the forest and the stirrings of pride and happiness.

He drew each evening for an hour, all the next week. His dad had finally allowed him time off from chores, but had fumed about it. "Just mooning in the woods," he called it. His dad knew he had no chance of winning, of course. But Craig had a very different idea.

As he drew the willow seemed to come alive in all its elfin witchery, and the brook was a thing of mystery. The little glade caught the sparkle of sunlight, the haze of autumn, the crisp smell of wet, black earth and fallen leaves, the suggestion of pumpkin pies, roasted chestnuts, and cool, sweet cider. Craig tried to capture with his brushes all the things he saw, felt, and thought, all his memories, dreams, and hopes.

Then it was finished. Not just as he hoped. Perhaps it was a bit crude, but there seemed a certain something about the drawing—a spirit of beauty, of woods, elves, and woods mystery. Never had the glade seemed so glorious as this last afternoon. Craig had seen it in all seasons—in winter, when the snow turned it into a Christmas card of glitter and shimmering black and white; in spring, when the willow was a nymph dancing joyously in the breeze and the brook ran gurgily; in summer, when the Sun came through the foliage in yellow gold shafts, and the shadows were purple pools;

and on rainy days, when it was most companionable of all to huddle beneath the branches and hear the patter of the rain in a moist, lonely world. But never had he seen the glade so truly lovely as now.

Finally Craig rose, hid the drawing board, stuffed away the paints and brushes. In the west big cumulus clouds were piling up, and a low mutter of thunder sounded. He must hurry home and fix his colors.

The boy was half-way home when he heard it—the low, repeated whine. He stopped, and saw the dog lying on the ground. Tip, a neighbor's mutt. Craig had never liked Tip—a gossip and a chatterbox, barking aimlessly at everything and everybody. He simply couldn't stop now; the first big drops were beginning to fall. But Tip had seen him, too, and burst into agonized pleadings. Frowning, the boy hastened over. He saw at once what had happened. Tip, probably chasing a squirrel, had tried to get through the rail fence, caught his leg, and broken it. His eyes sought the boy's frantically.

Craig pulled his shirt loose and gently thrust the drawing between undershirt and trousers. Then, with an effort, he managed to lift the heavy animal in his arms. He was panting when he reached the back door of Josiah's sprawling farmhouse—panting, and soaking wet from the pouring rain.

Josiah came from the barn at the sound of Craig's calls. He took the whining dog in his arms, turned to reach the party telephone inside the house. At that moment the drawing managed to edge its way out and fall to the ground. It landed face up and together the man and boy looked down at a streaked, smeared, blurred ruin. The drawing now would not even pass for surrealist art. The beauty the boy had created had washed away into a stained sheet of paper.

Craig let himself into the house very quietly. He heard his mother in the kitchen as he went to his room and flung himself on the bed. He didn't mind the loss of a week's work: that had been fun. But his opportunity to show his dad was now lost. His mother understood, but his father didn't.

The boy knew his dad liked the country. After his return from the war they hadn't been able to find a home, so they had taken over this rundown farm and were making a go of it. His dad liked



Watercolor and crayon, 1992. Courtesy of the artist, Mary Whyte, Nina M. Dana Collection

growing things, and the smell of hay, and being around horses. Maybe he liked sunsets and the smell of rain and ozone, too. But he liked results. He liked to see something practical—corn, oats, buckwheat, alfalfa, and bins of apples and potatoes. Craig liked all this too, but his dad didn't understand that a fellow had an imagination, and needed the woods and the drawing of trees to sort of, well, give him something inside that made him happy. Maybe if he had shown his dad some of his drawings, he'd have understood. But Craig was secretive. Besides, as he had never done anything very good, his dad thought he just scribbled, like people doodled on pads of paper.

Craig heard them calling him in the yard, and finally he went down. They noticed how he looked. He mumbled something about the rain coming up. His dad smiled.

“Well, son, maybe now you can forget this drawing business for awhile. School and chores and all the things to do this fall can keep you happy. Later on, maybe....”



He hadn't explained. Craig wasn't much on explaining things to grownups. He worked an hour in the barn after supper and then went to his attic room again. He decided to go to bed. Then all at once he sensed the absence of something. The rain. It wasn't raining. He went to the window and looked out. The thin, filmy clouds were racing across the sky and a big yellow-white moon made the whole outdoors silver. It was beautiful, and it did something to the boy. The plan just seemed to come to him on a moonbeam. He could enter the contest after all. Why not? He had never tried anything like this. But there was a chance.

Craig found the big, clumsy charcoal pencil and a sheet of paper. A heavy box lid would serve as drawing board. He stole downstairs, passing the living room like a ghost. Outside, the air was sweet with the rain fragrance. Trees and bushes were black phantoms, the yard was pale silver. He walked some distance from the house and studied it. A black silhouette it was against the storm-sky, but not unfriendly. The yellow of his small window, the orange glow from the living room, were like beacons.

The young artist set to work, surprised at the amount of light the big Hunter's Moon offered. Black and white, shadows and highlights, the black house, the black trees, the silver lawn, the thrilling sky. Nothing detailed like the glade, just a sketch that tried to catch the strangeness of night, the vastness of sky, the friendliness of home, and lighted windows. It was nearly midnight when he finished and went to his room. All the rest, of the house was dark and all were asleep.

Craig handed in his charcoal drawing the next morning. The exhibit and judging were to take place in the afternoon. Well, he wouldn't think about it any more. He had done his best, but charcoal was new to him and he wasn't so good at it. Still, he had a chance, maybe. His heart leaped at the thought he might win after all.

Straight to the barn the boy went from school. He saw Josiah and his father talking when he went in. He spoke to Josiah and asked about Tip. Josiah told him the veterinarian had fixed the leg and he would soon be all right. His dad gave him a queer look.

"I'm sorry, son, about your water color getting ruined that way." Craig shrugged. He liked his dad for not slopping over or praising him about the dog business. They understood each other pretty well that way.

Josiah said he was sorry that Tip had cost the boy his chance to enter the contest, but that he wouldn't forget it had saved Tip's life.

Craig didn't want any sentimentality so he broke in. "But I did enter the contest." He took his charcoal drawing from his big geography and showed it to his dad.

The big man studied it silently. "I never saw our home in quite this way," he said finally. "So mysterious and yet homey." He passed it to Josiah. "I didn't know you had any ability, really, son."

"I didn't win the prize," Craig said. He turned toward the silo.



*Though Craig's picture got wet, he probably saved Tip's life.*

His father called him quietly. "Winning a prize isn't all that matters, son. You didn't give up. You tried something strange to you, and you didn't offer excuses when you lost. Maybe that's the biggest prize a man can win. I think we'll visit an art store next Saturday—together."

Craig caught a glimpse of the glade wrapped in snow, the bushes turned to magic in the sunlight; and a quick picture of his dad back of the team, harrowing, next spring. A dozen other visions flashed in his mind, of color scenes that could bring beauty to his soul and be transformed by his brushes to paper. Something began singing in his heart.

But he didn't put any of this into words. "I'll get down the ensilage now," he called to his dad. Whistling, he opened the door and sniffed the pungent, fragrant aroma. □

Coursin Black

