

AN APPROACH TO CONTEMPORARY QUESTIONS
IN THE LIGHT OF ANTHROPOSOPHY

The Golden Blade

EVIL AND THE POWER OF THOUGHT -	<i>Rudolf Steiner</i>
SEEDS OF FUTURE WORLDS - - -	<i>Rudolf Steiner</i>
Two Lectures given at Dornach, September 23-4, 1921	
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GODDESS INTO SAINT - - - - - and THE BIRD ON THE HARP	<i>Isabel Wyatt</i>
THINKING ABOUT KNOWING - - -	<i>Alan Howard</i>
MELANCHOLY IN OUR AGE - - -	<i>Rudolf Treichler</i>
THE WORK OF ALICE BAILEY: 1880- 1949 - - - - -	<i>Frances Banks</i>

Reviews of books by *Albert Steffen*,
Alfred Heidenreich, *Katharine Trevelyan*,
Stanley Drake, *Evelyn Derry*, *Eleanor Merry*,
Isabel Wyatt.

Edited by **Arnold Freeman** and **Charles Waterman**

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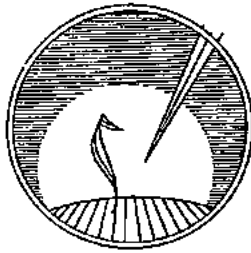
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Evil and the Power of Thought

Rudolf Steiner

*The first of two Lectures given at Dornach on September 23-4, 1921 **



Anthroposophy, a way of thought rather than a body of dogma, springs from the work and teaching of Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925). He spoke of it as "a path of knowledge, to guide the spiritual in the human being to the spiritual in the universe".

The aim of this Annual is to publish writings which bring the outlook of Anthroposophy to bear on questions and activities relevant to the present time.

The title derives from a reference by Rudolf Steiner to an old Persian legend. "Djemjdid was a king who led his people from the north towards Iran, and who received from the God, whom he called Ahura Mazdao, a golden dagger, by means of which he was to fulfil his mission on earth It represents a force given to man whereby he can act upon and transform external nature".

IF an oriental sage of early times, who had been initiated into the Mysteries of the ancient East, were to turn his glance towards modern Western civilisation, he might perhaps say to its representatives: "You are living entirely in fear; your whole mood of soul is governed by fear. All that you do, as well as all that you feel, is saturated with fear and its reverberations in the most important moments of life. And since fear is closely related to hatred, so hatred that plays a great part in your whole civilisation."

Let us make this quite clear. I mean a sage of the ancient Eastern civilisation would speak thus if he stood again to-day among Western people with the same standard of education, the same mood of soul, as those of his own ancient time. And he would make it plain that in his time and his country civilisation was founded on a quite different basis. He would probably say: "In my days, fear played no part in civilised life. Whenever we were concerned to promulgate a world-conception and let action and social life spring from it, the main thing was joy—joy which could be enhanced to the point of a complete giving of oneself in love to the world." That is how he would put it, and in so doing he would indicate (if he were rightly understood) what were from his point of view supremely important constituent factors and impulses of modern civilisation. And if we knew how to listen to him in the right way, we should gain much that we need to know in order to find a starting point for trying to get a grip on modern life.

In fact, an echo of the ancient civilisation still persists in Asia, even though strong European influences have been absorbed into its religious, aesthetic, scientific and social life. This ancient civilisation is in decline, and when the ancient oriental sage says, "Love was the fundamental force of the ancient oriental culture," then it must certainly be admitted that but little of this love can be traced directly in the present. But one who is able to discern it can perceive even now, in the phenomena of decline of the Asiatic culture, the penetration of this primeval element of joy—delight in the world and love for the world.

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In those ancient times there was in the Orient little of what was afterwards required of man when that word resounded which found

* From a shorthand report, unrevised by the lecturer. Published by permission of the Rudolf Steiner-Nachlassverwaltung, Dornach, Switzerland.

its most radical expression in the Greek saying, "Know thyself!" This "Know thyself" entered the historical life of man only when the early Greek civilisation set in. The old eastern world-picture, wide-ranging and light-filled, was not yet permeated by this kind of human knowledge; it was in no way orientated towards directing man's glance into his own inner being.

In this respect man is dependent on the circumstances prevailing in his environment. The ancient oriental civilisation was founded under a different influence from the sun's light, and its earthly circumstances were also different from those of Western civilisation. In the ancient East, man's inner glance was captured by all that he experienced in the surrounding world, and he had a special motive for giving over his entire being to it. It was cosmic knowledge that wove in the ancient oriental wisdom, and in the world-conception that owed its origin to this wisdom. Even in the Mysteries themselves—you can infer this from all you have been hearing for many years—in all that lived in the Mysteries of the East there was no fulfilment of the challenge, "Know thyself!" On the contrary—"Turn your gaze outwards towards the world and endeavour to let that approach you which is hidden in the depths of cosmic phenomena!"—that is how the precept of the ancient Oriental civilisation would have been expressed.

The teachers and pupils of the Mysteries were compelled, however, to turn their glance to the inner being of man when the Asiatic civilisation began to spread westwards; as soon, indeed, as Mystery colonies were founded in Egypt and in North Africa. But particularly when the Mysteries began to develop their colonies still further to the west—a special centre was ancient Ireland—then the teachers and pupils of the Mysteries coming over from Asia were faced, by virtue of the geographical features of the West and its entirely different elemental configuration, with the necessity of cultivating self-knowledge and a true inner vision. And simply because these Mystery pupils, when still living in Asia, had acquired knowledge of the outer world and of the spiritual facts and beings lying behind the outer world—simply by the strength of this fact, they were now able to penetrate deeply into all that exists in man's innermost being.

Over there in Asia all this could not have been observed and studied at all. The inward-turning glance would have been paralysed, so to speak. But by means of all that the men of the East brought to the Western Mystery centres, their gaze having long been directed outwards so as to penetrate into the spiritual worlds, they were now enabled to pierce through into man's inner being. And it was only the strongest souls who could endure what they perceived.

We can indeed realise when an impression was produced by this self-knowledge on the teachers and pupils of the Oriental Mysteries if we repeat a precept which was addressed to the pupils over and over again by the teachers who had already cultivated that vision

of man's inner being, a precept which was to make clear to them in what mood of soul this self-knowledge was to be approached. The precept I mean is frequently quoted. But in its full weight it was uttered only in the older Mystery colonies of Egypt, North Africa and Ireland as a preparation for the pupil, and as a reminder for every Initiate in regard to the experiences of man's inner being. The precept runs thus: "No-one who is not initiated in the sacred Mysteries should learn to know the secrets of man's innermost being; to utter these secrets in the presence of a non-Initiate is inadmissible; for the mouth uttering these secrets then lays the burden of sin upon itself; likewise does the ear burden itself with sin when it hearkens to those secrets."

Time and again this precept was uttered from out of the inner experience to which a man, prepared by Oriental wisdom, was able to attain when he penetrated, by virtue of the terrestrial configuration of the West, to the knowledge of man. Tradition has preserved this precept, and to-day it is still repeated—without any understanding of its intrinsic nature—in the secret orders and secret societies of the West which, externally, still have a great influence. But it is repeated only from tradition. It is not uttered with the necessary weight, for those who use it do not really know what it signifies. Yet even in our own time this word is used as a kind of motto in the secret societies of the West: "There are secrets concerning man's inner being that can be transmitted to men only within the secret societies; for otherwise the mouth uttering them is sinful, and the ear hearing them is likewise sinful."

We should be aware that in the course of time many men in Western countries (I am not speaking of Central Europe) learn to know in secret societies what has been handed down as tradition from the researches of the ancient wisdom. It is received without understanding, although as an impulse it often flows into action. In later centuries after about the middle of the 15th century—the human constitution became such as to make it impossible to see these things in their original form; they could be understood only intellectually. Ideas about them could be picked up, but a true experience of them could not be attained, though individuals had some inkling of it.

Such men have sometimes adopted strange forms of outer life, as for instance Bulwer Lytton, the author of "Zanoni." What he became in his later life can be understood only if one is aware of how he received, to begin with, the tradition of self-knowledge, but how, too, by virtue of his individual constitution, he was also able to penetrate into certain mysteries. Thereby he became estranged from the ordinary ways of life. Precisely in him one can observe what a man's attitude towards life becomes when he admits into his inner experience this different spiritual world; not only into his thoughts, but into his whole soul. Many facts must then be judged by other than conventional standards.

Of course, it was something quite outlandish when Bulwer travelled about, speaking of his inner experiences with a certain emphasis, while a young person who accompanied him played a harp-like instrument, for he needed to have this harp-music in between the passages of his talk. Here and there he appeared in gatherings where everything else went on in a quiet formal, conventional way. He would come on in his rather eccentric garb and sit down, with his harp-maiden seated in front of his knees. He would speak a few sentences; then the harp-maiden would play; then he would continue his talk, and the maiden would play again. Thus something coquettish in a higher sense of the word—one cannot help characterising it in this way at first—was introduced into the conventional world where Philistinism has made such increasing inroads, above all since the middle of the 15th century.

Men have little idea of the degree of Philistinism into which they have grown; they have less and less idea of it just because it comes to seem natural. They see something as reasonable only in so far as it is in line with what is "done." But things in life are all interconnected, and the dryness and sleepiness of modern times, the relation human beings now have to one another, belongs to the intellectual development of the last few centuries. The two things belong together. A man like Bulwer, of course, did not fit into such a development; one can quite well picture to oneself people of older times travelling about in the world accompanied by a younger person with some pleasant music. One needs only to perceive the distance between one attitude of soul and another; then such a thing will be seen in the right light. But with Bulwer it was because something lit up in him that could no longer exist directly in the immediate present, but appeared only as a tradition in the modern intellectual age.

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We must, however, recover the knowledge of man that lived in the Mystery colonies of which I have spoken. The average man to-day is aware of the world around him by means of his sense-perceptions. What he sees, he orders and arranges in his mind. Then he looks also into his own inner being. The sense-perceptions received from outside, the ideas developed therefrom, these ideas as they penetrate within becoming transformed by impulses of feeling and of will, together with all that is reflected into consciousness as memories—here we have what forms the content of the soul, the content of life in which modern man lives and out of which he acts. At most he is led by a false kind of mysticism to ask: "What is there really in my inner being? What does self-knowledge yield?" In raising such questions he wants to find the answers in his ordinary consciousness. But this ordinary consciousness gives him only what originated in external sense-perceptions and has been transformed by feeling and will. One finds only the reflections, the

mirror-pictures, of external life, when looking into one's inner being with ordinary consciousness; and although the outer impressions are transformed by feeling and will, man is still unable to tell how feeling and will are actually working. For this reason he often fails to recognise what he perceives in his inner being as a transformed reflection of the outer world, and takes it, perhaps, as a special message from the divine eternal world. But this is not so. What presents itself to the ordinary consciousness of modern man as self-knowledge is only the transformed outer world, which is reflected out of man's inner being into his consciousness.

If man really and truly desired to look into his innermost being, then he would be obliged—I have often used this image—to break the inner mirror. Our inner being is indeed like a mirror. We gaze on the outer world. Here are the outer sense-perceptions. We link conceptions to them. These conceptions are then reflected by our inner being. By looking into our inner being we get only to this mirror within. We perceive what is reflected by the memory-mirror. We are just as unable to penetrate into man's inner being with ordinary consciousness as we are to look behind a mirror without breaking it. This, however, is precisely what was brought about in the preparatory stage of the ancient way of Eastern wisdom so that the teachers and pupils of the Mystery colonies that came to the West could penetrate directly through the memories into the innermost being of man. Out of what they saw they afterwards uttered those words which were meant to convey that one must be well prepared—above all in those ancient times—if one desired to direct one's glance to the inner being of man. For what does one then behold within?

There, one perceives how something of the power which belongs to perception and thought, and is developed in front of the memory-mirror, penetrates below this memory-mirror. Thoughts penetrate below the memory-mirror and work into the human etheric body—into that part of the etheric body which forms the basis of growth, but which is equally the source of the forces of will. As we look out into the sunlit space and survey all that we receive through our sense-perceptions, there radiates into our inner being something which on the one hand becomes memory-ideas, but also trickles through the memory-mirror, permeating it just as the processes of growth, nutrition and so on permeate us.

The thought-forces penetrate first through the etheric body, and the etheric body, permeated in this way by the thought-forces, works in a very special manner on the physical body. Thereupon a complete transformation sets in of that material existence which is within the physical body of man. In the outer world, matter is nowhere completely destroyed. This is why modern philosophy and science speak of the conservation of matter. But this law of the conservation of matter is valid only for the outer world. Within the human being, matter is completely dissolved into nothingness.

The very being of matter is destroyed. It is precisely upon this fact that our human nature is based: upon being able to throw back matter into chaos, to destroy matter utterly, within that sphere which lies deeper than memory.

This is what was pointed out to the Mystery pupils who were led from the East into the Mystery colonies of the West, and especially of Ireland. "In your inner nature, below the powers of memory, you bear within you something that works destructively, and without it you would not have developed the power of thought, for you have to develop thought by permeating the etheric body with thought-forces. But an etheric body thus permeated with thought-forces works on the physical body in such a way as to throw its matter into chaos and to destroy it."

If, therefore, a person ventures into this inner being of man with the same frame of mind with which he penetrates as far as memory, then he enters a realm where the being of man has an impulse to destroy, to blot out, that which exists there in material form. For the purpose of developing our human, thought-filled Ego we all bear within us, below the memory-mirror, a fury of destruction; a fury of dissolution, in respect of matter. There is no human self-knowledge which does not point with every possible emphasis towards this inner human fact.

For this reason, whoever has had to learn of the presence of this centre of destruction in the inner being of man must take an interest in the development of the spirit. With all intensity he must be able to say to himself: Spirit must exist, and for the sake of the maintenance of the spirit matter may be extinguished.

It is only after one has spoken to mankind for many years of the interests connected with spiritual scientific investigation that one can draw attention to what actually exists within man. But to-day we *must* do so, for otherwise man would consider himself to be something different from what he really is within Western civilisation. Enclosed within him he has a fiery centre of destruction, and in truth the forces of decline can be transformed into forces of ascent only if he becomes conscious of this fact.

What would happen if men should not be led by Spiritual Science to this awareness? In the developments of our time we can see already what would happen. This centre which is isolated in man, and should work only *within* him, at the one single spot within, where matter is thrown back into chaos, now breaks out and penetrates into human instincts. That is what will happen to Western civilisation; yes, and to the civilisation of the whole Earth. This is evidenced by all the destructive forces appearing to-day—in the East of Europe, for instance. It is a fury of destruction thrust out of the inner being of man into the outer world; and in the future man will be able to find his bearings in regard to what thus penetrates into his instincts only when a true knowledge of the human being once again prevails, when we become aware once

more of this human centre of destruction within—a centre, however, which *must* be there for the sake of the development of human thought. For this strength of thought that man needs in order that he may have a world-conception in keeping with our time—this strength of thought, which must be there in front of the memory-mirror, brings about the continuation of thought into the etheric body. And the etheric body thus permeated by thought works destructively upon the physical body. This centre of destruction within modern Western man is a fact, and knowledge merely draws attention to it. If the centre of destruction is there without any awareness of it, this is much worse than if man takes full cognisance of it, and from this conscious standpoint enters into the development of modern civilisation.

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It was fear that seized upon the pupils of these Mystery colonies when they first heard of these secrets. This fear they learnt to know thoroughly. They became thoroughly acquainted with the feeling that a penetration into man's innermost being—not frivolously in the sense of a nebulous mysticism but undertaken in all sincerity—must arouse fear. And this fear felt by the ancient Mystery pupils of the West was overcome only by disclosing to them the whole weight of the facts. Then they were able to conquer by consciousness what arose in them as fear.

When the age of intellectualism set in, this same fear became unconscious, and as unconscious fear it still exists. Under all manner of masks it works into outer life. It belongs, however, to our time to penetrate into man's inner being. "Know thyself" has become a rightful demand. It was by a deliberate calling forth of fear, followed by an overcoming of it, that the Mystery pupils were directed to self-knowledge in the true way.

The age of intellectualism dulled the sight of what lay in man's inner being, but it was unable to do away with the fear. Thus it came about that man was and still is influenced by this unconscious fear to the degree of saying, "There is nothing at all in the human being that transcends birth and death." He is afraid of penetrating deeper than this life of memory, this ordinary life of thought which maintains its course, after all, only between birth and death. He is afraid to look down into that which is eternal in the human soul, and from out of this fear he postulates the doctrine that there is nothing at all outside this life between birth and death. Modern materialism has arisen out of fear, without men having the slightest idea of this. The modern materialistic world-conception is a product of fear and anxiety (*Angst*).

So this fear lives on in the outer actions of men, in the social structure, in the course of history since the middle of the 15th century, and especially in the 19th century materialistic world-conception. Why did these men become materialists—why would they

admit only the external, that which is given in material existence? Because they feared to descend into the depths of man.

This is what the ancient Oriental sage would have wished to express from out of his knowledge by saying: "You modern Westerners live entirely steeped in fear. You found your social order upon fear, you create your arts out of fear, your materialistic world-conception has been born from fear. You and the successors of those who in my time founded the ancient Oriental world-conception, although they have come into decadence now—you and these men of Asia will never understand one another, because after all with the Asiatic people everything sprang ultimately from love; with you everything originates in fear mixed with hate."

These are strong words indeed, but I prefer to try to place the facts before you as an utterance from the lips of an Oriental sage. It will perhaps be believed that he could speak in such a manner if he came back, whereas a modern man might be considered mad if he put it all so radically! But from such a radical characterisation of things we can learn what we really must learn to-day for the healthy progress of civilisation. Mankind will have to know again that intelligent thinking, which is the highest attainment of modern times, could not have come into existence if the life of ideas did not arise from a centre of destruction. And this centre must be reckoned with, so that it may be kept safely within and not pass over into our outer instincts and thence turn into a social impulse.

One can really penetrate deeply into the connections of modern life by looking at things in this way. Thus the realm that manifests as a centre of destruction lies within, beyond the memory-mirror. But the life of modern man takes its course between the memory-mirror and the outer sense-perceptions. Just as little as man, when he looks into his inner being, is able to see beyond the memory-mirror, so far is he from being able to pierce through all that is spread out before him as sense-perceptions; he cannot see beyond it. He adds to it a material, atomistic world, which is indeed a fantastic world, because he cannot penetrate through the sense-images.

But man is no stranger to this world beyond the outer sense-images. Every night between falling asleep and awakening he enters this world. When you sleep, you dwell within this world. What you experience there beyond the sense-images is not the atomistic world conjectured by the visionaries of natural science. What lies beyond the sphere of the senses was in fact experienced by the ancient Oriental sage in his Mysteries. It can be experienced only when one has devotion for the world, when one has the desire and the urge to surrender oneself entirely to the world. Love must permeate the act of cognition if one desires to penetrate beyond the sense-perceptions. And it was this love that prevailed especially in the ancient oriental civilisation.

Why must one have this devotion? Because if one sought to

pierce beyond the sense-perceptions with one's ordinary human Ego, one might be harmed. The Ego, as experienced in ordinary life, must be given up, if one wants to penetrate beyond the sense-perceptions. How does this Ego originate? It is brought into existence by man's capacity to plunge into the chaos of destruction. This Ego must be tempered and hardened in that realm which lies within man as a centre of destruction. And with this Ego one cannot live on the far side of the outer sense-world.

Let us picture to ourselves the centre of destruction in man's inner being. It extends over the whole human organism. If it were to spread out over the whole world, what would then live in the world through man? Evil. Evil is nothing else but the chaos thrust outside, the chaos which is necessary in man's inner being. And in this necessary chaos, this necessary centre of evil in man, the human Ego must be forged. This human Egohood cannot live beyond the sphere of the human senses in the outer world. That is why the Ego-consciousness disappears in sleep, and when it figures in dreams it is often as though estranged or weakened.

The Ego which is forged in the centre of evil cannot pass beyond the realm of the sense-perceptions. Hence to the ancient oriental sage it was clear that one can go further only by means of devotion and love, by a surrender of the Ego; and that on penetrating fully into this further region one is no longer in a world of Vana, of weaving in the habitual, but rather in the world of Nirvana, where this habitual existence is dissolved.

This interpretation of Nirvana, of the sublimest surrender of the Ego, as it occurs in sleep and as it existed in fully conscious knowledge for the pupils of the ancient oriental civilisation—it is this Nirvana that would be pointed out to you by such an ancient sage as I placed hypothetically before you. And he would say: "With you, since you had to develop Egohood, everything is founded on fear. With us, who had to suppress Egohood, everything was founded on love. With you, there speaks the Ego that desires to assert itself. With us, Nirvana spoke, while the Ego flowed out into the world in love."

One can formulate these matters in concepts and they are then preserved in a certain sense, but for humanity at large they live in feelings and moods, permeating human existence. And through such feelings they bring about a living difference to-day between the East and the West. In the West, men have a blood, a lymph, that is saturated by an Egohood tempered in the inner centre of evil. In the East men have a blood, a lymph, in which lives an echo of the longing for Nirvana.

Both in the East and in the West these things escape the crude intellectual concepts of our time. Intellectual understanding draws the blood from the living organism, turns it into a preparation, places it under a microscope, looks at it and then forms ideas about it. The ideas thus arrived at are infinitely crude even from the point

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of view of ordinary experience. That is all one can say about it. Do you think that this method touches the subtly graded differences of the people who sit here next to one another? The microscope, of course, gives only crude ideas about the blood, the lymph. Subtle shades of difference are to be found even among people who have come from the same milieu. But these shades of difference naturally exist much more emphatically between the men of the East and those of the West, although only a crude idea of them can be had by modern thinking.

All this comes to expression in the bodies of the men from Asia, Europe and America, and in their relation to one another in outer social life. With the crude understanding that has been applied in the last few centuries to the investigation of external nature we shall not be able to tackle the demands of modern social life; above all we shall not be able to reach an adjustment between East and West. But this adjustment must be found.

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In the late autumn of this year (1921) people will be going to the Washington Conference, and discussions will take place there about matters which were summed up by General Smuts, the Minister of Africa, with his instinctive genius. The evolution of modern humanity, he said, is characterised by the fact that the seed-ground for cultural activities, which has hitherto been in the regions bordering the North Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, is now moving to the Pacific. The culture of the countries situated round the North Sea has gradually spread throughout the West and will become a world culture. The centre of gravity of this world culture will be transferred from the North Sea to the Pacific.

Mankind stands face to face with this change. But men still talk in such a way that their speech savours of the old crude ideas and nothing essential is reached—although it must be reached if we are really to go ahead. The signs of the times stand with menacing significance before us and their message is: Until now only a limited trust has been needed between men, who in fact were all secretly afraid of one another. Their fear was masked under all sorts of other feelings. But now we need an attitude of soul that will be able to embrace a world civilisation. We need a confidence which will be able to bring into balance the relationship between East and West. Here a significant and necessary perspective opens out. The assumption to-day is that economic problems can be handled quite on their own account—the future position of Japan in the Pacific, or how all the trading peoples on earth may have free access to the Chinese market, and so on. But these problems will not be settled at any conference until men become aware that all economic activities and relations presuppose the trust of one man in another. In future this trust will be attained only in a spiritual way. Outer civilisation will be in need of spiritual deepening.

YESTERDAY I spoke of how we find within man a kind of centre of destruction. I showed how as long as we remain within the limits of ordinary consciousness, we retain memories of the impressions made upon us by the world, but that this is as far as we can go. We receive our impressions from the world; we turn them into experience through our senses and through our understanding, through all the manifold effects they have upon our soul; and later we are able to call up again pictures of what we have experienced. We bear these pictures within us; they are for us our inner life.

It is indeed as though we had within us a mirror; but one that works differently from the ordinary spatial mirror. For the ordinary mirror reflects what is in front of it in space, whereas the living mirror we carry within us reflects in quite another way. It reflects the sense-impressions we receive, and reflects them in the course of time. Something or other—at some later moment—causes this or that impression to be reflected back again into consciousness, and so we have a memory of a past experience.

If we break a mirror that is in space, then we can see behind it; we can look into a realm we cannot see when the mirror is intact. Correspondingly, if we carry out inner exercises of the soul, we come, as I have often suggested, to something like a breaking of the inner mirror. The memories can as it were cease for a time—for how long a time depends upon ourselves—and we can look more deeply into our inner being. As we do this, as we look within behind the memory-mirror, then what I described as a kind of centre and heart of destruction meets our gaze.

There must needs be such a centre within us, for only in such a centre can the Ego of man establish itself. It is a centre for the strengthening and hardening of the Ego. But, as I said, if this hardening of the Ego, if this egoism is carried out into social life, then evil ensues, evil in the life and actions of men.

You may see from this how complicated is the life into which man is placed. Here you have something which has its good use and purpose within man, for otherwise he would not be able to develop his ego, but something which must never be allowed outside. The bad man carries in into the outer world; the good man keeps it inside him. If it is carried outside, it becomes evil and wrong. If it

* From a shorthand report, unrevised by the lecturer. Published by permission of the Rudolf Steiner-Nachlassverwaltung, Dornach, Switzerland.

is kept within, it is the very thing we need to give the Ego its right and proper strength.

After all, there is really nothing in the world that would not bring blessing to man, were it only in its right place! We should be thoughtless and unreflecting, if we lacked this centre within us. For this centre enables us to experience in it something we would never be able to experience in the external world. In the external world we see objects in a material sense, and following the custom of present day science we speak of the conservation of matter, the indestructibility of matter. But in this centre of destruction it really happens that matter is destroyed. Matter is thrown back into nothingness, and we have the power within this nothingness to cause the good to arise. We do so, if instead of instincts and impulses, which are bound to work in the direction of egoism, we pour moral and ethical ideals into the centre of destruction. Then, in this very centre of destruction, the seeds of future worlds arise. Then we, as men, take part there in the coming into being of worlds.

When we speak, as you may read in my *Outline of Occult Science*, of how our Earth will one day suffer dissolution, and of how out of all manner of intermediate states of transformation the Jupiter existence will eventually be evolved, then we have to see it in this way. The Jupiter existence will contain nothing but the new creation that is being formed to-day in man within this centre of destruction. It is being formed out of man's moral ideals, but also out of his anti-moral impulses, out of what works as evil from his egoism. Hence the Jupiter existence will be a battle between the good which man, already here and now, is bringing to birth by carrying his moral ideals into his inner chaos, and the unmoral and anti-moral which is due to the presence of egoism.

Thus, when we look into our deepest selves, we are gazing upon a region where matter is thrown back into nothingness.

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I went on to indicate how it is with the other side of human existence, where we are surrounded with sense-phenomena. We behold these phenomena spread around us like a carpet or tapestry, and we apply our intellect to combine and relate them and discover within them laws, which we then call the laws of nature. But with ordinary consciousness we never get beyond this tapestry of the senses. We penetrate it just as little as we penetrate the memory-mirror within. With a developed consciousness, however, we do come through it. Then men of ancient Oriental wisdom penetrated it with a consciousness informed by instinctive vision. And then they looked upon a world where egohood cannot hold its own in consciousness.

We enter this world every time we go to sleep. When we fall asleep, the Ego is dulled, and the reason is that beyond the tapestry of the senses lies that world where, to begin with, the ego-power, as

it develops for human existence, has no place at all. Hence it is that the ancient Oriental, who had a peculiar longing to live behind the phenomena of the senses, used to speak of Nirvana, of the end and disappearance of egohood.

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This brings us to the great contradiction between East and West. In times past the Oriental developed a longing to see behind the sense-phenomena, and in so doing acquired a power of vision into a spiritual world which is not composed of atoms and molecules but of spiritual Beings. This world was there in visible actuality for the perception of the ancient Oriental. In our days the Oriental, particularly in Asia but also in other parts of the world, is living in the decadent stages of this yearning to reach the world behind the sense phenomena; while the man of the West has developed his Ego, has allowed that hardening and strengthening to take place within the centre of destruction which we have described.

In saying this we are already on the way to seeing what it is that must enter into man's consciousness, now and in the early future. For if the pure intellectualism that has been developing ever since the middle of the 15th century were to continue, mankind would fall into decline; for intellectualism will never help us to pass either behind the memory-mirror or behind the tapestry of the world of the senses. And it is essential that man should acquire once more a consciousness of these worlds. He must do so, if Christianity is again to become a truth for him; it is not a truth for him to-day. We can see this clearly when we look at the modern conception of Christ—if indeed modern times may be said to have any idea of Christ at all. The truth is that we are living in a stage of evolution when man cannot possibly come to an idea of Christ as long as he makes use only of the concepts which he has been developing since the 15th century. In the 19th and 20th centuries he has become incapable of forming a true idea of Christ.

Man looks round about him on the world, and uses the combining faculty of his intellect to build up natural laws. Following a line of thought that is perfectly possible for the consciousness of the present day, he comes to the point when he could say: "The world is permeated with thought, for the laws of nature can be apprehended in thoughts; they are in reality the thoughts of the world. If I follow up the laws of nature I am bound eventually to apply them to the coming into existence of man himself as a physical being, and then I have to admit that within the world I survey with my ordinary consciousness, beginning with sense-perception and going on as far as the memory-mirror, a spiritual element lives." One must needs be ill, pathologically ill, if like the atheistic materialist one is not willing to recognise this spiritual element. We live in this world that is given for ordinary consciousness; we come forth into it as physical man through physical conception and physical birth. But what is observable within the physical world must be

inadequately contemplated if one fails to see behind the physical world a universal spiritual element.

When we are born as little babies, we are really for external perception not unlike some creature of nature. Then out of this being of nature, that is virtually in a kind of sleep condition, spiritual inner faculties gradually develop. If we learn to trace back these emerging spiritual faculties in the same way that we trace the gradual growth of the limbs, we find that we must look for their source beyond birth and conception. Thus we come to the point of thinking in a living and spiritual way about the world, where before, in our consideration of external nature, we only built up abstract laws. We come, in other words, to an affirmation of what we may call the Father God.

Scholasticism held—you will remember—that knowledge obtainable by ordinary rational observation of the world includes knowledge of the Father God. It is indeed true that if anyone sets out to analyse the world as it is given for ordinary consciousness, and does not end by gathering up all the natural laws in what is called the Father God, he must be in some way ill. To be an atheist is to be ill; that is how I put it here once before.

With the ordinary consciousness, this is as far as we can go. With the ordinary consciousness we can come to the Father God, but no further. It is symptomatic of our times when a theologian of such standing as Adolf Harnack says that Christ the Son does not really belong in the Gospels; that the Gospels are the message of the Father, and that Christ Jesus has place in the Gospels only in so far as He brought the message of the Father God. Here you may see quite clearly how with a certain inevitability this modern thinking leads men to recognise even in theology only the Father God, and to understand the Gospels themselves as containing no more than the message and tidings of the Father God. Thus in the sense of this theology Christ is of account only as having appeared in the world and brought to men the true teaching concerning the Father God.

Two things are implied in this. First, the belief that the message of the Father God cannot be read by a study of the world in the ordinary way. The Scholastics still held that it could. They did not imagine that the Gospels were there to speak of the Father God; they assumed that the Gospels were there to speak of God the Son. That men can come forward with the opinion that the Gospels speak only of the Father God is proof that theology, too, has fallen into that way of thinking which has developed as the peculiarly Western method.

For in early Christian times, up to about the third or fourth century, when there was still a good deal of the Oriental wisdom in Christianity, men were occupying themselves intently with the question of the difference between the Father God and God the Son. These fine differences that engaged attention in the early Christian

centuries have long ceased to have meaning for modern man, who has been occupied in developing egohood as a result of the influences I have described.

A kind of untruth has thus found its way into modern religious consciousness. Through inner experience, through his analysis and synthesis of the world, man comes to the Father God. From tradition, he has God the Son. The Gospels speak of Him, tradition speaks of Him. Man has the Christ, he wants to acknowledge Him—but through inner experience he has Him no longer. Therefore he takes what he *should* apply only to the Father God and transfers it to the Christ God. Modern theology has not the Christ at all; it has only the Father—but it calls the Father “Christ,” because it has received the tradition of the Christ Being in history and, quite naturally, wants to be Christian. If we were honest, we should simply be unable to call ourselves Christians in modern times.

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All this is quite changed when we go further East. Even in the East of Europe it is different. Take the Russian philosopher of whom I have frequently spoken—Soloviev. You find in him an attitude of soul that becomes a philosophy and speaks with full justification of a difference between Father and Son. Soloviev is inwardly justified in so speaking because for him both the Father and the Christ are experiences. The man of the West makes no distinction between God the Father and Christ. If you are inwardly honest with yourselves, you will feel that the moment you want to make a distinction between the Father God and the Christ, the two ideas become confused and involved. For Soloviev that would have been impossible. He experiences each separately, and so he has still an understanding for the spiritual conflict that was fought out during the earliest Christian centuries, in the endeavour to realise in consciousness the distinction between the Father God and God the Son.

This, however, is the very thing that modern man needs to learn. There must again be truth in calling ourselves Christians. It must not be that we make a pretence of worshipping the Christ and attribute to Him only the qualities of the Father. But to avoid this we must bring forward truths such as I have been indicating to-day. That is the only way we can come to the twofold experience, the experience of the Father and the experience of the Son.

It will be necessary to change the whole form of our consciousness. The abstract form of consciousness in which modern man is born and bred, and which does not permit of more than the recognition of the Father God, will have to be replaced by a much more concrete life of consciousness. Needless to say, one cannot set things before the world at large to-day in the way I have described them to you here, for people have not yet been sufficiently prepared by Spiritual Science and Anthroposophy. Yet there are ways in

which one can point out even to modern men how they carry in them a centre of destruction, and how in the world outside there is something wherein the Ego of man is as it were submerged, where it cannot hold itself fast—as in earlier times men were told about the Fall and other doctrines of that kind. We in our time have only to find the right form for *these* truths—a form which would enable them to find their way into ordinary consciousness; they must become part of ordinary consciousness, even as the doctrine of the Fall of man used to give instruction concerning a spiritual foundation of the world, in ways that were different in their effect from our teaching of the Father God.

Our modern science will have to become permeated with conceptions such as those we have expounded here. At present it is ready to recognise in man only the laws of nature. But in this centre of destruction of which I have been speaking the laws of nature are united with the moral laws; there, natural law and moral law are one. Within man matter is annihilated, and so are all the laws of nature. Material life, together with all the laws of nature, is thrown back into chaos; and out of the chaos a new nature is able to arise, filled through and through with the moral impulses we ourselves lay into it. As we have said, this centre of destruction is below our memory-mirror. So that when we let our gaze penetrate deep down below this memory-mirror, there at last we observe it, though it is always within us. A man is not changed by knowledge: he merely comes to know what he is like, what his normal condition is. And he must learn to meditate upon these facts.

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When we are able to penetrate into this inner core of evil in man, and are able also to become conscious of how into this evil, where matter is destroyed and thrown back into chaos, moral impulses can find their way, then we have really found in ourselves the beginning of spiritual existence. Then we perceive the spirit within us in the act of creating. For when we behold moral laws working upon matter which has been thrown back into chaos, we are beholding a real activity of the spirit taking place within us in a natural way. We become aware of the spirit concretely active within us, the spirit that is the seed of future worlds.

With what can we compare this finding? We cannot compare it with what our senses tell us of external nature. We can compare it only with a communication made to us by another human being through speech. It is indeed more than a comparison when we say of that which takes place in us, when moral and anti-moral impulses unite with the chaos inside us, that it *speaks* to us. There we have something that is no mere allegory or symbol, but actual fact. What we can hear externally with our ear is a speech toned down for the earth-world, but within us a speech is spoken that goes out beyond the earth, for it speaks out of that which contains the seeds

of future worlds. There we penetrate into what we must call the "inner word." In the words that we speak or hear in intercourse with other people, hearing and speaking are separate and distinct, but in our inner selves, when we dive down below the memory-mirror into the inner chaos, we are in a region of being where speaking and hearing go on at the same time. Hearing and speaking are once more united. The "inner word" speaks to us, and is heard in us.

We have, in fact, entered a realm where it is meaningless to speak of subjective and objective. When you listen to your fellow man, when he speaks words to you that you perceive with your sense of hearing, then you know that his being is outside you, but that you have to give yourself up, to surrender yourself, in order that you may perceive his being in what you hear him saying. On the other hand, you know that the actual word, the audible word, is not merely subjective, but is something placed into the world. Hence we find that even with the toned-down words that we hear and speak in our intercourse with other men, the distinction between subjective and objective loses meaning. We stand with our subjectivity in objectivity; and objectivity works in us when we perceive. It is the same when we dive down to the inner word. It is not only an inner word; it is at the same time something objective. It is not our inner being that speaks: our being is merely the stage whereon speaks *the world*.

It is similar for one who has insight to see behind the tapestry of the senses a spiritual world, a world wherein spiritual Beings of higher Hierarchies work and weave. To begin with, he perceives these Beings by means of Imagination; but for his vision they become permeated with inward life when he hears the "word", apparently sounding to him through himself, but in reality from out of the world.

By means of love and devotion and surrender, accordingly, man presses his way through the tapestry of the senses and sees beyond; and the Beings who reveal themselves to him when he thus offers up his own being in full surrender—these Beings he comes to perceive with the help of what he recognises as "inner word." The world without begins powerfully to resound when the inner word is awakened.

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What I have been describing exists to-day in every human being. Only, he has no knowledge of it and so he gives no thought to it. He must grow into this knowledge; must learn to have it in thought and remembrance. When we learn to know the world with the ordinary consciousness that provides us with our intellectual concepts, we really come to know only the passing and the past. What our intellect gives us, if we are able to look at it in the right light, is really a survey of a world in process of passing away. But we know that with the intellect—as I have said—we can find the

Father God. What sort of consciousness, then, relates us to the Father God? The consciousness that the Father God is at the foundation of a world which reveals itself to our intellectuality is in course of wearing away.

Yes, it is indeed so—since the middle of the 15th century man has developed through his intellect a special faculty for studying and observing all that is dying in the world. We analyse and test the world-corpse with our intellectual scientific knowledge. And theologians such as Adolph Harnack, who hold by the Father God alone, are really expounders of that part of the world which is going down and will pass away with the earth and disappear. They are backward-pointing men.

How is it then, in the last resort, with a man who has completely absorbed the modern natural science way of thinking? How is it for him, when this way of thinking has been grafted on to him from early childhood? He learns that out there in the world are phenomena which arise and pass away, but that matter persists, matter is the indestructible thing. The earth may come to an end, but matter will never be destroyed. Certainly (he is told) a time will come when the earth will be one vast cemetery, but the cemetery will be composed of the very same atoms as are already there to-day. A man thus trained in thought centres all his attention on what is passing away, and even when he studies that which is coming into life, he really only studies how the dying plays into it.

An Oriental could never do this; we can see this even in the East of Europe, in the subdued philosophical feeling of Solovieff. He does not bring it to expression as clearly as it will have to be expressed in the future, but he shows unmistakably that he has still enough of the Oriental in him to see everywhere, within what is passing away and crumbling into chaos, the springing up of the new, the birth of what shall be in the future.

If we would understand how this really is, we must envisage it in the following way. All that we see of our fellow men with our senses will one day no longer exist; whatever makes itself known to eye, ear, and so on, will at some time in the future cease to be. Heaven and earth will pass away. For what we see of the stars by means of our senses—that too belongs to the things that are transient. But the "inner word" that is formed in the inner chaos of man, in the centre of destruction—that will live on after heaven and earth are no longer there; it will live on even as the seed of this year's plant will live on the plant of next year. Within man are the seeds of world-futures. And if into these seeds men receive the Christ, then heaven and earth may pass away, but the Logos, the Christ, cannot pass away. Man bears within him that which will one day be, when all he sees around him will have ceased to be.

We must put it to ourselves in this way. I look up to the Father God. The Father God is at the foundation of the world I can see with my senses. The world of the senses is a revelation of Him;

but it is none the less a dying, sinking world, and it will drag man down with it if he is completely absorbed in it, if he is able to develop only a consciousness of the Father God. Man would then go back to the Father God; he would not be able to evolve any further. But there is also a new world arising, and it takes its beginning from man himself. When man ennoble his moral ideals through coming to a Christ-consciousness and receiving the Christ Impulse, when he forms and fashions them as they should be formed and fashioned through the fact that the Christ has come to earth, then something comes to life in the chaos within him, seed is sown for the future, a new world dawns within him.

We need to develop a keen and sensitive perception for these two worlds—the setting and the rising world. We must feel how there is in nature a perpetual dying. Nature wears, so to speak, a deathlike hue. But over against this there is also in nature a continual glow of new life, a continual coming to birth. This does not reveal itself in any hue visible to the senses; yet if we open our hearts to nature, it can be perceived.

We look out into nature and see the colours, all the colours of the spectrum, from the red at one end to the violet at the other, with all the shades between. But if we were now to mix these colours in a certain way — make them "colour" one another — they would receive life. They would together become the so-called flesh colour, *Inkarnat*, the colour that speaks out of man. When we look at nature, we are looking in a certain sense at the spread-out colours of the rainbow, the sign and symbol of the Father God. But if we look at man, it is the *Inkarnat* that speaks out of the inner being of man, for in man all the colours interpenetrate, and in such a way as to become alive. But when we turn to a corpse, this power to take on life is entirely absent. There, that which is man is thrown back again into the rainbow, into the creation of the Father God. But for the source of that which makes the rainbow into the *Inkarnat*, makes it into a living unity, we must look within ourselves.

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I have tried to lead you, by what may have been at times a rather difficult path, to an understanding of this inner centre of man in its true significance. I have shown you how external matter is thrown back into nothingness, into chaos, so that the spirit may be able to create anew. Let us look at the whole process. The Father God works in matter, bringing it to completion. Matter confronts us in the external world in a great variety of ways, manifesting itself visibly to our senses. But within ourselves this matter is thrown back into nothingness and then permeated with pure spiritual being, filled through and through with our moral or anti-moral ideals. There is the upspringing of new life.

We have to see the world in this double aspect. We see first the Father God, creating what is outwardly visible; we see how this

outwardly visible comes to an end inside man, and is thrown back into chaos. We need to feel quite intensely how this world, the world of the Father God comes to its end; only then we shall be able to reach an inner understanding of the Mystery of Golgotha. It will become clear to us how the very thing that comes to an end, in the sense of the creation of the Father God, is endowed with life once more by God the Son; a new beginning is made.

Everywhere in the Western world we can see how since the 15th century there has been a tendency to study and investigate only the corpse-like part of nature, only what is "setting" and passing away. In truth, this is all that is accessible to the pure intellect on its own account. All our so-called education and culture has been developed under the influence of a science that concerns itself only with what is dead. This kind of culture is directly opposed to real Christianity. Real Christianity must have a perceptive feeling for what is living, and for the distinction between everything that is springing into life and everything that is on the way down. Hence the idea most important for us to connect with the Mystery of Golgotha is the idea of the Risen Christ, the Christ who has vanquished death. Much depends on this. Christianity is not merely a religion of salvation; the Oriental religions were also that. Christianity is a religion of resurrection, a religion that awakens again to life that which would otherwise be nothing but matter crumbling away into nothingness.

Out in the cosmos we have the crumbling away of matter in the moon, and in the sun we have a perpetual coming into being, forever new and fresh. When we get beyond ordinary sense-perception and reach the point where Imagination is active, then we can see in the moon something that is for ever splitting up and scattering itself abroad. There, where the moon is situated, its matter splits up and disperses like dust into the world. The matter of the moon is perpetually being collected from its environment and then split up and scattered. If you look at the moon in the consciousness of Imagination, you have a perpetual convergence of matter to the place where the moon is; it collects there, and then it splits up and is scattered like dust into the cosmos. You see the moon like this: first a circle, then a smaller, closer circle, until the circle becomes the moon itself. Then it falls to pieces; it is strewn out over the cosmos. In the moon, matter cannot endure a centre. It concentrates towards the centre of the moon, but cannot endure it; it stops short there and disperses like cosmic dust. It is only to ordinary sense-perception that the moon appears quiet. It is not quiet. It is for ever compressing matter together and scattering it.

When we come to the sun, there we find it is all quite different. Through Imagination we are able to see how matter does not collect in this way at all; true, it does approach the centre, but then it begins to receive life in the rays of the sun that stream out from the centre. It does not split up and disperse; it becomes living, and

spreads out life from the centre in every direction. And together with this life it develops astrality. In the moon there is no astrality; there is nothing; the astrality is destroyed. But in the sun astrality unites itself with all that streams out. The sun is in reality permeated through and through with inner life. The centre-point is not tolerated, any more than in the moon, but it has a fructifying influence. In the centre of the sun lives the fructifying activity of our cosmos. Thus in the contrast between sun and moon we can see a cosmic manifestation of the two opposite processes: in the moon matter is thrown back into chaos, while in the sun it is perpetually springing and welling up with life renewed.

When we dive down into our selves, then we look first into our own inner chaos, into our "moon." That is the inner moon. Matter is destroyed there, as in the external world it is destroyed at one spot alone—where the moon is. But then comes the influence of the sun, entering through our senses; the sun penetrates into our inner "moon." The matter which is dissolving there into dust is renewed by the sun. Here, within us, matter is constantly falling under the moon influence, and as constantly absorbing the activity of the sun. Such is the relationship in which we stand to the cosmos. We must become aware of these two opposite activities in the cosmos: the moon-nature directed towards pulverising and scattering, and the quickening, life-giving nature of the sun.

In this way we come to behold in that which is dispersing and crumbling to dust the world of the Father God, which had to be there until such times as the world changed into the world of God the Son. The world of God the Son has its physical source in the Sun-nature of the cosmos. Moon-nature and Sun-nature are related to one another as Father Godhead is to Son Godhead.

During the early Christian centuries these things were instinctively perceived. Now they must be known again with full consciousness and clarity of thought, if man wants to say of himself in all truth and honesty: I am a Christian.

"The Battle for the Spirit"

THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE, 869 A.D.

A. P. Shepherd

IN his exposition of the evolution of human consciousness Rudolf Steiner often spoke of the critical importance of the Council of Constantinople in 869, at which the Western Church officially renounced the ancient conception of man as a threefold being, of body, soul and spirit, by asserting that he is a duality of body and soul only. This article is an attempt to set out the historical background and spiritual significance of this Council. It will be seen to be a closely woven pattern of events which led up to the spiritual crisis of the ninth century.

It is impossible to understand this historical background unless we grasp clearly the ecclesiastical atmosphere of Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire. If Rome might be considered as the head of the Christian Church, and Antioch and Alexandria as its brain, Constantinople was its heart. Built in the first enthusiasm of Imperial Christianity as a Christian city, in which no pagan worship was to be allowed, it presented a real organic unity of Church and State. The famous Code of Justinian, by which the Empire was governed for centuries, began with an invocation of the Blessed Trinity, and was declared to be enacted in order to establish more firmly the practice of the Christian Faith. The Patriarch ranked next to the Emperor.

Another point to be borne in mind is the complete contrast between the Byzantine Empire and Western Europe, and, consequently, between Eastern and Western Christianity. The Byzantine Empire was for nearly a thousand years one of the most civilised, cultured and effectively ordered States the world has seen, while Western Europe was a welter of struggling tribal settlements, and later of rising and falling semi-barbarian kingdoms, encircling and often overwhelming the ever-diminishing remnant, in the centre of Italy, of what had once been the glory of Rome. Moreover, the Eastern Empire was in direct contact with the Persian and, from the seventh century, with the Arabian empires, in which the Aristotelian wisdom of Greece had taken root, and was manifesting itself in the most advanced forms of science, medicine and astronomy. It was, in consequence, Eastern Christendom that was, for the most part, the home of theological learning. It was in Alexandria, Antioch and Syria that nearly all the heresies arose, and it was in Councils held at Constantinople or its neighbouring cities, under the presidency of the Emperor, that they had been settled. In these Councils the Bishops of the West were a minority.

We must have very clearly in mind one important result of the heresy disputes of the fourth to the seventh centuries, for it had a profound effect upon the life of the Byzantine Empire and on the subsequent spiritual evolution of Christendom. The main subject of dispute in the Church in those centuries was the attempt to explain the two-fold nature of Christ, as both human and divine. The dispute was divided between three points of view, that of the Nestorians—so-called after their founder, Nestorius—who so emphasised the humanity of Christ as to accord Him two wholly separate natures; the Monophysites, who so exalted Christ's divine nature as completely to absorb His human nature into His divinity; and the Orthodox point of view which insisted on the presence of both natures in their fullness, united in Christ in one person.

The imperial demand for religious uniformity persecuted with varying rigour the two heretical Churches. The Nestorians were driven into Persia, where at Nisibis and Jundi-shapur they became a centre of Aristotelian philosophy and theological learning. The Monophysites of Antioch and Alexandria enjoyed occasional spells of imperial toleration, but, for the most part, preserved a precarious existence in the deserts of Egypt and Syria.

With the rise of the Saracen Empire, early in the seventh century, both these Churches passed under Arab rule, where they enjoyed a freedom of thought and worship which the Church of Constantinople had never tolerated. Under this tolerant Islamic rule the Monophysite Church spread, and in its monasteries there developed a deeper and less secular wisdom than that of the Nestorians, which tended to ally itself with Arabism. This Monophysite wisdom was to be the counter to the spiritual rigidity, both of Byzantine imperialism and, later, of Roman papacy.

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These facts give the general background of the events of 869, but we must bring the picture into closer focus. The Council of Constantinople of 869 was the aftermath of a century of the domination of Constantinople by a new heresy, one less of belief than of practice. The seventh century had ended in a welter of political confusion and intrigue. Moreover, it was not only the State which was corrupt but also the Church. While Constantinople was a city of intense religious observance, it was not itself a centre of religious learning. Its monastic orders did not give themselves to study, like those of the Nestorian and Monophysite Churches. The spiritual and philosophical interpretation of Christianity of the first three centuries, as it had found expression in Clement and Origen, had been abolished by Justinian in the sixth century, and had been replaced by a cult of the Liturgy, intensified by pilgrimages to holy places, especially those of Palestine. But the Saracen conquest of Syria and Palestine had closed Jerusalem to Constantinople. In place of the sacred pilgrimages there had grown up a veneration of

images and relics, and this developed into superstition and charlatany among both monks and people. The better-educated classes and the leading hierarchy were opposed to these practices, but they made little headway against them.

In 717 a distinguished general, Leo the Isaurian, seized the imperial throne. He came from the mountainous country of Isauria in southern Asia Minor, a land of hardy warriors, that had known the spiritually intellectual impact of the Monophysite Church and, for a century the neighbourhood of Islam, both of them opposed to the use of images in worship. With his reform of the army and the civil administration, Leo also ordered the immediate removal of all images from the city and its churches. There was a popular outcry and violent opposition from the monks, but the Emperor retaliated with persecution and banishment, and the suppression of many monasteries. The situation was parallel to the Puritan and Catholic strife in England in the 16th and 17th centuries. Leo was supported by the better-educated classes and by many of the more learned hierarchy.

Another result of the rise of the new dynasty, and one of the greatest consequence, was the gradual flow-back from the East of Aristotelian learning, and a revival in Constantinople itself of the Greek culture which Justinian had banished from the Empire two centuries before.

This iconoclastic tyranny, with varying rigour or leniency, continued for 60 years till 779, when the Dowager Empress Irene, herself an "image-worshipper,"* seized the power from her young son and reversed the Imperial policy. The violence of the iconoclasts had outrun their first reforming zeal, and amounted to opposition not only to the veneration of images, but to all external expressions of piety and even to monasticism itself. Moreover, in their persecution they had ruthlessly destroyed works of art and had banished Byzantine artists. All this had provoked a reaction which allied itself with the recovery of Greek culture and created amongst the moderates of both parties a desire for "economia," a policy of freedom of conscience. The Empress did not commit the city to monastic reaction. She restored the worship of images, but she had appointed, as Patriarch, Tarasius, a layman and a moderate, who was President of the Imperial Chancellery.

There immediately followed an event of the greatest importance. A Synod of the whole Church was called at Nicaea in 787, at which iconoclasm was declared a heresy and, at the same time, the permissible use of images in worship was defined. This Synod is of

* "Image-worshippers" ("iconodouloi") was the name given by the iconoclasts (image-destroyers) to those who used images in worship. The latter declared that the accusation was false, and that they only venerated images and relics because of their sacred associations. While this was for the most part true, the iconoclastic mind drew no distinction between veneration and worship.

importance to our present study because reference to it occurs frequently in the conflict between Rome and Constantinople that raged round the Council of 869. But it has an even greater importance for the spiritual understanding of the Council, yet one to which I have found no reference by any historian. The second canon of the Synod of Nicaea in 787 laid upon all bishops and clergy the essential duty of deep and constant study of the scriptures, and concluded with these words. "For the essence of our hierarchy is the divinely transmitted oracles, that is, the true knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, as the great Dionysius has declared it; and should anyone doubt this and not find his pleasure in thus acting and teaching, let him not be ordained."

How did it come to pass that this official acknowledgment of the authority of Dionysius' teaching is found in a Council of the whole Church, to which the Pope of that time set his seal, only 80 years before the Council of Constantinople of 869 abolished the Dionysian belief in the threefold nature of man as body, soul and spirit? How had this teaching established itself at orthodox Constantinople, where it had been rejected two centuries earlier, in the condemnation of Origen?

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Every student of Anthroposophy knows how often and with what emphasis Rudolf Steiner spoke of the mysterious figure, Dionysius the Areopagite, who retained and taught the ancient Mystery teaching about the spiritual being of man in the light of Christianity, which teaching, though banned by the Roman Church, continued in subterranean currents, bursting up again and again in the mystic life of European Christendom. The writings of Dionysius appeared in Greek in the last 20 years of the fifth century in Egypt. They were deeply coloured with Neo-Platonism, and were associated with a revival in Egypt at that time of the teaching of Origen. The fact that the claim that the author of the writings was the New Testament Dionysius the Areopagite has been rejected by scholars is of little importance. It was quite traditional to publish writings under a famous name of the past, and in any case occult teaching was preserved in secret oral tradition long before it was made public. The important fact is the great part which these writings played in the subsequent history of the Church, in the west as well as in the east. Evelyn Underhill considered that the influence of Augustine on the history of mysticism was as nothing compared with that of Dionysius the Areopagite. Nevertheless, how did this teaching win such authoritative approval at the Council of Nicaea in 787?

A clue to this problem is to be found in the fact that there was also a Syriac source of this teaching, as early as and possibly earlier than the Greek text. This affords us a definite and most important link with its appearance at Constantinople in the eighth century.

We have already spoken of the scholarly Monophysite monas-

teries. One of the most famous of these was set up in the fifth century at Edessa in northern Syria, from which the Nestorians had lately fled before the Catholic persecution. In the late part of the century a Monophysite monk of Edessa, Stephen bar Sudhaili, made a pilgrimage to Egypt, where, we are told, he met Monophysite monks who had secretly revived the teaching of Origen. Stephen returned to Edessa and produced a work in Syriac on these lines. Thus the writings appeared, both in Greek and Syriac, at the end of the fifth century, through the activity of the Monophysite Church, and continued to be much used by the Monophysites.

The next link in our research is the fact that the Monophysite monastery of Edessa, while not an academy, had become a centre of learning as distinguished as the Persian University at Jundishapur or that of the Nestorians at Nisibis, and was specially famous in the seventh century for the teaching of Greek. Here we have a direct connection with the influx of Greek culture into Constantinople with the coming of the Isaurian dynasty in 717. With this Christian Greek culture would come the knowledge of the Dionysian teaching, acting as a counter to the merely wordly learning of the more violent iconoclasts, and to the superstition of the more fanatical image-worshippers.

Meanwhile the leniency of the Synod of Nicaea towards the recanting iconoclastic bishops and priests aroused the resentment of the fanatical image-worshipping monks, and, relying on the support of the Empress, they gave way to violence and disorder. The result was that when Irene was supplanted by one of the State officials, she and her extremist party were so unpopular that imperial iconoclastic persecution broke out afresh and continued, with the exception of two short periods, until 843.

One of these periods adds another item to our knowledge of the Dionysian stream, and a most interesting one. In 820 Michael the Stammerer, a native of Phrygia, came to the throne, and he instantly ordered complete freedom of thought for all his subjects. During his short reign of nine years a Frankish Embassy came to Constantinople, seeking the imperial approval of the Pope's appointment of Louis the Pious, king of the Franks, as Emperor of the West. Together with his consent, Michael sent to Louis a Greek copy of the works of Dionysius. It is significant that a teacher in the Schools of Paris at that time was the Irish monk, Scotus Erigena, whose subsequent translation of Dionysius into Latin deeply influenced the later mysticism of Western Christianity.

At last, in 843, the Dowager Empress Theodora, like the former Empress Irene, an "image-worshipper," succeeded to the regency during the minority of her infant son, and immediately the images were restored. From this time the issue was no longer between iconoclasts and "image-worshippers," but between the extremist party who desired the suppression of the former iconoclasts and the moderate party who sought for unity and peace. Theodora herself

realised that the policy of "economia" was now a necessity, and she appointed to the patriarchate Methodius, a bishop of the moderate party, and to the imperial chancellery Photius, the nephew of Tarasius. Immediately the extremist monks, opposed alike to learning and to freedom of conscience, broke out into insurrection and violence. In 847 Methodius died, and Theodora, anxious to offend neither party, appointed as Patriarch a pious, but unfanatical, monk named Ignatius. It was from this point that the events took place that led up to the Council of 869.

In 856 the young Emperor, Michael III, came of age, a pleasure-loving, but able, ruler, who had little sympathy with monkish extremism. He moved away from his mother's control and associated himself with his uncle Bardas, who had been co-regent with Theodora. A plot was laid against Bardas and Ignatius allowed himself to be involved in it. The insurrection was suppressed, Theodora was immured in a convent, and Ignatius was arrested and banished. To save deprivation, and almost certainly under some constraint, Ignatius resigned the patriarchate. In appointing his successor the young emperor determined to avoid the conflict between the moderates and the extremists by disregarding the bishops of both parties. He turned to a layman, Photius, the President of the Imperial Chancellery. Within a week Photius had been ordained deacon and priest, consecrated as bishop, and installed as Patriarch. There was precedent for this. It had happened to his uncle Tarasius and to Nicephorus, both of whom had also been President of the Imperial Chancellery.

Now Photius is one of the two protagonists in this great conflict of the spirit, and we must pause to consider his personality. In the Western Church he has been constantly maligned as the author of the great schism between the East and the West. He was depicted as the bastard child of an escaped nun by a soldier of the Imperial Guard, and all kinds of defamatory legends were attached to him. In Eastern Christendom, on the other hand, he has always been lauded as a great saint and the champion of the Orthodox Church. A recent brilliant historical survey by Francis Dvornik justifies the Eastern viewpoint.

Photius belonged, in fact, to one of the great families of Constantinople. He was a Greek and not an iconoclast. Both he and his father had been persecuted as "image worshippers." But above everything else he was one of the most famous scholars of the Middle Ages, and was regarded by post-Renaissance philosophers and philologists as the one most responsible for making available to Western Europe the knowledge of Greek and Hellenistic culture. He was spoken of by the Emperor Michael as "a man of colossal industry and 'almost universal knowledge, which he had received from no masters.'" This reputation, together with his name Photius, the Enlightened One, would seem to point in him to the intuitive knowledge of the Initiate. In him the Dionysian teaching, which

his uncle Tarasius had embodied in the canons of the Synod of Nicaea, had reached a still higher level of expression. A man of high moral rectitude and spiritual insight, his own letters reveal how deeply he felt the wrench of leaving the calm fields of university scholarship and mystical meditation for the notoriously turbulent arena of religious party strife, for which, he declared, he felt the utmost contempt. Having, however, once accepted the patriarchate, he became the indomitable champion of the domestic independence of the Patriarchate of Constantinople against the growing claims of papal primacy and its political plotting against the Byzantine Empire.

This Roman policy was especially embodied in Pope Nicholas I, who was the counter-protagonist to Photius in this conflict, and before we resume the course of events we must consider also the personality of Nicholas. Although he was Pope for only nine years, from 858 to 867, he was the leading figure in events which had a permanent effect on the history of Christendom, both in the west and in the east. Rudolf Steiner spoke of him as a great figure faced by difficult decisions at a critical moment. Since the division of the Empire in the fourth century, the influence of the Pope of Rome had gradually increased. Successive waves of barbarian conquest from the north had restricted the authority of the Byzantine Emperor in Italy almost to the exarchy of Ravenna. But most of the invaders were nominally Christian and venerated the person of the Pope, who, especially in the case of strong men like Gregory I, came to wield, not only spiritual, but also secular power, and felt themselves to be the focal point of the Western Empire. In 801 Leo III had consecrated Charlemagne as Emperor of the West, and when, after his death, the Frankish Kingdom began to break up, the Pope came to hold the position of king-maker. This, together with the traditional spiritual primacy of Rome, gave the Pope an independence of the authority of the Byzantine Emperor such as no other Christian patriarch possessed, and also set up a rivalry with the patriarchate of Constantinople that sowed the seed of an inevitable split between Eastern and Western Christendom.

This position had just matured when Nicholas, a man of great ability and spiritual perspicacity, came to the papal throne. He was immediately confronted with two decisions. In the first place the kingdom of Bulgaria, on the north side of the Adriatic, had recently been converted to Christianity by Frankish missionaries, and Nicholas saw it as an invaluable addition to the Roman Patriarchate, and a check to the western influence of Constantinople. On the other hand it was contiguous with the Byzantine frontier, and the Emperor regarded its possession and inclusion in the patriarchate of Constantinople as an invaluable protection against the growing thrust of the invading north. This political issue played a great part in the conflict between East and West that centred on the Council of 869.

But a deeper problem confronted Nicholas, a purely spiritual issue that was not manifest in surface events. It escapes the notice of most historians, although it found central expression in the Council of Constantinople. Rudolf Steiner expounded it in detail.* Nicholas was concerned, not only with the political unity of the West, but with the spiritual unity of Western Christendom. He was aware of three spiritual streams that were spreading westward from the East, under the pressure of the Islamic conquest. The first stream was the mystical interpretation of Christianity that had developed in the first three centuries of Christendom among those who still possessed some of the occult perception that flowed from ancient Mystery knowledge, and which had ripened again in Neo-Platonism. It had found expression in Clement and Origen, and although, through Justinian, the Church had officially condemned it in the sixth century, it still survived among the Monophysites and was already raising its head in the Eastern Church under the name of Dionysius the Areopagite. Nicholas could not but be aware of the significance of the second canon of the Council of Nicaea in 787.

The second stream was a cult of spiritual imagination, originating in Persia, which had spread along North Africa and was penetrating the West through Spain. It was the cult centred round the Mystery of the Graal.

The third stream was one which had developed in Constantinople, after the gradual disappearance of the stream of direct spiritual apprehension. It was a cult of the Liturgy, which provided worshippers with a direct experience of spiritual exaltation and a consciousness of supersensible reality.

These three streams were contrary to the spirit of Roman Christianity. Ever since the fourth century Rome had tended to express Christianity along the lines of traditional Roman thinking. The Roman conception of man as essentially a political unit in the Empire militated against the ancient conception of him as a spirit-being, which lay at the heart of the Greek ideal of liberty. The Papacy saw itself as the spiritual transformation of the Roman Empire, and conceived of Christendom as a spiritual empire held together by a legal system of dogma, in which the part of the individual was only that of unquestioning faith and absolute obedience. Any direct individual spirit-perception was suspect, and any organisation based on such a viewpoint must be suppressed as a heresy. Ever since the fourth century this spiritual policy had been organised in Italy and there stood behind Nicholas, and also behind his predecessor and successor, the figure of Anastasius the Librarian, a man of profound intellect and spiritual knowledge, who had made for himself a Latin translation of the works of Dionysius.

* See *Building Stones for the Understanding of the Mystery of Golgotha; and Supersensible Influences in the History of Mankind.*

For all this Nicholas is not to be blamed. He was a man of great ability and far-seeing insight into what he conceived as the spiritual needs of Western Christendom. Rudolf Steiner emphasises this and speaks of "the necessity of Europeanised Christianity setting aside, from the concept of man, the idea of the spirit." It was the path that would lead to the evolution of European ego-consciousness, that has been the basis of western civilisation. But it must not be regarded as its ultimate goal.

Thus through a series of political and ecclesiastical circumstances, the spiritual issue was joined between Nicholas, the Pope of Rome, and Photius, the Initiate Patriarch of Constantinople.

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To resume the narrative of events, in 857 Ignatius fell and Photius was appointed Patriarch. A Synod was held in Constantinople confirming this. In 859 Ignatius appealed to Pope Nicholas against his deposition and against Photius' uncanonical appointment. In 860 the Emperor Michael invited Nicholas to send legates to attend a General Council,* which he was summoning for a final elucidation of the Catholic doctrine about images. Nicholas consented on condition that his legates should at the same time examine the issue between Ignatius and Photius and report to him for his final decision. When the legates presented their letters, the Emperor objected that the issue between Ignatius and Photius was a domestic concern of Constantinople which was already settled, but, as a concession, he consented to a re-trial of Ignatius by the legates, provided that they came to an immediate decision, without further reference to Rome. This was agreed. Ignatius was condemned and Photius' appointment was ratified, and the legates returned to Rome to report their decision to the Pope. For a while Nicholas took no action, except to send letters to the Emperor and to Photius demanding the return of the ancient province of Illyricum, which included Bulgaria. The dispute at Constantinople appeared to be an excellent opportunity for the exercise of power politics. But to his letters he received no reply.

Meanwhile, in 863, the representatives of the extremist party in Constantinople arrived in Rome, asking for a re-trial of Ignatius and secretly promising their support in the matter of Bulgaria. Immediately Nicholas summoned a Synod at Rome, rejected the decision of his legates, annulled Ignatius' deposition, and vilified and

*A *Synod* was a gathering of bishops, summoned and presided over by a patriarch.

A *General Council* was a gathering of bishops, summoned and presided over by the Emperor. In the West the decline of imperial authority transferred this power to the Pope. Although Nicholas claimed this power as of right, his successor called upon the Emperor to summon the General Council of 869.

An *Oecumenical Council* is a status given to a previous Synod or General Council by a subsequent General Council. The Canons of an Oecumenical Council are binding upon the whole Church.

deposed Photius. Letters to this effect were sent to the Emperor and to Photius.

In 864 Michael conquered Bulgaria. The Bulgarian king was baptized and applied to Photius for a patriarch of his own. Photius replied that at present that was impossible. In 865 the Emperor sent a scathing reply to Nicholas, denying his right to interfere in the domestic affairs of the patriarchy of Constantinople, for which, as the New Rome, he claimed equal status with Old Rome. He made no reference to Bulgaria, but demanded the immediate return of the extremist Byzantines under threat of military action. This letter found Nicholas seriously ill, and the reply was drafted by Anastasius, in no less strong terms than Michael's letter. It made, for the first time, an explicit claim, not only to the primacy of Rome, but to its complete authority over the whole Church. It declared that the Pope alone had authority to summon a General Council—a complete disregard of all historical precedent. It also refused to send back the dissident Byzantines.

Suddenly an unexpected move by King Boris of Bulgaria gave a new turn to the crisis. In 866 he sent envoys to the Pope, making the same request which Photius had refused. Nicholas immediately dispatched two bishops to Bulgaria, with orders to expel the Greek priests. He also sent legates with further peremptory letters to Michael and Photius. When the legates arrived they were kept waiting six weeks at the port. Meanwhile, the expelled Greek priests arrived from Bulgaria and reported that the Romans were tolerating the heretical practices of the Frankish missionaries, the eating of milk and cheese in Lent, the enforcement of clerical celibacy, the restriction of the right to confirm to bishops only, and, finally, the inclusion of the word "filioque" in the Creed, contrary to the credal form authorised by the first Oecumenical Council of Nicaea 500 years previously.

Photius immediately called a Synod and then, in 867, a Council, which was attended, not only by the Eastern bishops, but by a number of Western bishops who were opposed to Nicholas. The Council passed canons, condemning the Frankish heresies, condemning Pope Nicholas and demanding his deposition, declaring Louis II Emperor of the West—a bid for lay support—and finally declaring the Synod of Nicaea of 787 to be the Seventh Oecumenical Council, and so binding on the whole Church.

This was the first occasion on which the "filioque" dispute, which caused the final split between the Eastern and Western Churches, had been made an official issue, and for this reason Photius was always condemned by the West as the author of the schism. But Photius did not accuse Pope Nicholas of holding this heretical view, but only of tolerating its propagation by the Franks. The issue was not yet a theological one, but a question of credal orthodoxy. The Franks had claimed at the beginning of the eighth century that the "filioque" clause was part of the original Creed.

The East replied that it was not in the Creed adopted in the First Oecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325. Pope Leo III agreed with this view and had the Nicene Creed engraved on silver plates and stored at Rome. Also the "libellus," or declaration of orthodoxy used at all Synods and Councils, contained the Creed in the Nicene form. It was not until the *eleventh* century that a German pope forced the Italians to insert into the Creed the "filioque" clause, and it was not discussed as a theological issue until the Council of Florence in 1439. The theological question about the nature of the Holy Spirit did not arise in this dispute, and is in any case a quite different issue to the denial by the Western Church of the threefold nature of man.

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The Emperor and Photius were deeply angered by the papal letters and by the Roman intrigue with Bulgaria, and felt themselves to be in a very strong position. But the public condemnation of Nicholas was impetuous and illjudged. Unknown to Photius, Nicholas had already died, and his successor Hadrian, no admirer of Nicholas, was hesitating as to what line he should take. A more conciliatory action might have won him over.

At that moment an unexpected act of political treachery wrecked Photius' position and entirely altered the course of events. Basil, a friend of Michael, having already secured, in the spring of 867, the assassination of Bardas, Michael's uncle, in the autumn murdered the young Emperor himself and seized the throne, probably encouraged in this by Rome and the extremist party. To secure his position, Basil immediately reversed the Imperial policy. He wrote to Pope Hadrian, accepting Nicholas' decision of 863, deposing Photius. Photius immediately resigned and Ignatius was restored. Basil's letter decided Hadrian and the arrival in Rome of the Acts of the Photian Council of 867 confirmed his resolution. He immediately summoned a Synod in Rome, and condemned Photius to deprivation and excommunication without hearing his defence. The canons of the Council of 867 were revoked and its Acts publicly burned. The primacy and supreme authority of the Pope were confirmed.

Immediately a demand was sent to Basil to summon a General Council, which was to meet under the presidency of the papal legates, in order to ratify and carry out the Pope's sentence. The Emperor was in no position to refuse and the Council met in Constantinople in 869. But Basil in his own capital was not in the same mood as the suppliant to Rome. He insisted on presiding in the person of his own representative, Baanes, and, to the indignation of the legates, he also insisted on their presenting their credentials and signing the usual declaration of orthodoxy. Moreover, he decreed that Photius must be heard in his own defence.

The legates took a very arrogant line, that there was nothing for the Council to debate. All that was to be done was to confirm the

resolutions passed at Rome. The Byzantines were humiliated, with the exception of Photius himself, who, with true Initiate understanding of the rigged situation, refused to utter a word in his own defence, except that, at one point, he urged the legates to do penance! Finally, on the proposal of the legates, Photius was excommunicated.

Among the canons of the Council was the one to which Rudolf Steiner specifically refers as banishing the spirit from the constitution of man. It must be remembered that the wording of this canon presented an entirely Roman point of view, for all the canons had been drawn up by Anastasius at Rome and passed at the Roman Synod, and were only mechanically confirmed by the Council at Constantinople. This canon is hardly noticed by commentators. Dvornik does not mention it in his actual account of the Council, but only refers to it in another context as an instance of a fabricated charge against Photius. "Photius," he declares, "could not have been guilty of so crude a heretical utterance."

It is clear that Dvornik does not relate the canon to the demand for the oecumenicity of the Council of 787, with its recognition of the authority of Dionysius the Areopagite. It is in this light, however, that the reference to "two souls" is comprehensible. In point of fact, the charges in the canon are set out at considerable length, and its fierce denunciatory tone and detailed anathemas show that Anastasius was aware here of the deep spiritual issue between Rome and Constantinople of which Rudolf Steiner speaks.

The following is a literal translation of the canon.

Although the Old and New Testaments both teach that man has one rational and intellectual soul, and all the divinely-inspired Fathers and teachers of the Church express the same opinion, certain men, given over to the pursuit of evil, have reached such a pitch of impiety as to enunciate the dogma that a man has two souls, and, by a certain irrational exploitation of a wisdom, which has already been made folly¹, seek to establish this heresy. Therefore this holy and Catholic Synod, hastening to root out, like utterly evil tares, this worthless belief, holding in its right hand the winnowing fan of truth, that it may cast out this chaff to the unquenchable flame, and present the world as the field of Christ, anathematizes with a loud voice the inventors and perpetrators of such an impiety, together with those who share their views, and decrees that no one shall pay any regard or obedience to the decrees of the author of this impiety.² And if anyone dares to act contrary to the decrees of this holy and great Synod, let him be anathema, and an outcast from the faith and fellowship of Christians."

To those who are aware of the Dionysian background, the reference here to man as possessing two souls is clear. The Dionysian teaching was linked up with Origenism and Neo-Platonism, and, through that, with Neo-Pythagoreanism. Pythagoras (555 B.C.) had had direct access to Mystery knowledge and he taught that the

¹ The denunciation of Origenism in 555.

² A clear reference to Photius.

being of man has three parts: "Nous" (Thinking), "Thumos" (Feeling and Desire), and "Phrenes" (Bodily Instinct). "Nous" is the sphere of the activity of spirit, "Thumos" that of the soul, "Phrenes" that of the body. Of these the first only is sinless and immortal. By the ordinary man this is naturally understood as saying that "man has two souls, one of which is sinless." This would be anathema to the Roman conception of man as totally corrupt. In the thirteenth century the Scholastics justified their holding of "the double truth" on the ground that man's thinking had shared in the consequence of the Fall. This Thomas Aquinas could not accept, although at that very time it was in process of becoming true!

We must note carefully the words in the canon, "man has one rational and intellectual soul." Steiner tells us that previously the phrase had been "one imaginative and spiritual soul," thus avoiding any separate mention of spirit. In the words of the canon there is a deliberate denial that man's "thinking and rational" faculty is anything more than a *soul* quality, and there is a deliberate *exclusion of spirit*.

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The defeat of Photius did not last long. In 870 Hadrian died and was succeeded as Pope by John VIII. In 873 Photius was recalled from banishment and restored to communion, and in 876 was reconciled to Ignatius. In 877 Ignatius died and immediately the clergy of Constantinople elected Photius as Patriarch, and this was finally accepted by the Pope as a *fait accompli*. In 879 Basil summoned a General Council to ratify the existing situation in Constantinople and to rehabilitate Photius, and asked the Pope to send legates. The Emperor, owing to his own absence on account of the sudden death of his son, appointed Photius himself to preside. All anti-Photian Synods were suppressed, the Acts of the Council of 869 were reversed, and, finally, the Council of Nicaea of 787 was declared once more to be the Seventh Oecumenical Council, under threat of excommunication of all who dissented. The resolutions embodying the Council's decisions were actually proposed by one of the papal legates, and were carried unanimously.

For the moment the conflict was at an end, but the seed had been sown which could only result in the ultimate division between Eastern and Western Christendom. From that time their paths diverged.

In the West the Council of Nicaea of 787 was not accepted as Oecumenical for some centuries. Meanwhile there was established under absolute papal authority a body of clearly defined dogma and ritual, to be accepted unquestionably by faith alone. Moreover, the Western Church adhered to the decision of the Council of 869 in regard to the twofold being of man, as soul and body. Aristotelian in origin, it fitted into the Roman framework of Grammar and Rhetoric in which the clergy expressed their theological con-

cepts, and also into the evolving individual self-consciousness of man, in which his thinking appeared to him to arise out of himself. Through its exposition by Scotus Erigena the teaching of Dionysius spread into monastic studies, but it centred almost entirely upon the understanding of the Being of God. It had no effect on the official western concept of the being of man.

Meanwhile among the early Scholastics there awoke the query as to the real nature and the reliability of man-derived concepts, a doubt fanned by the invading pantheism of Arabism. It began to penetrate even into the sacred realm of dogma. For a while Thomas Aquinas stemmed the rising tide of doubt by drawing from sources of earlier wisdom an understanding of the deeper activities of thought within man himself. Thereby he reconciled philosophy and theology up to the point beyond which, he said, human reason had no authority. But within a generation the doubt returned, to be gradually strengthened by scientific discovery into a sole reliance upon human sense-derived thinking, which has to a great extent captured many fields of religious thought.

But the deeper Dionysian teaching of the pathway to direct spirit knowledge by-passed the orthodox rigidity of Rome. It reached the West through the now independent patriarchate of Bulgaria, and during the deepening doubt from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries, it inspired a succession of mystical thinkers in South Germany and England.

For Eastern Christendom, on the other hand, the triumph of Photius was the beginning of an era of learning and spiritual culture in the Church of Constantinople, that lasted for over 500 years. The use of images in worship which had been restored was strictly controlled under ecclesiastical regulations. No three-dimensional image was allowed in any Orthodox church, but only the two-dimensional icon, or else mosaic. Strict rules also governed the painting of the icons, which were Imaginations, rather than the physical representations found in Western sacred art. They expressed and evoked the spirit behind the physical. They were the meeting in art of the "two paths" of Dionysius; the Greek representation of the physical and the Monophysite apprehension of the spiritual.

Perhaps the contrast between the Western and Eastern Churches is most clearly seen in the comparison of their Eucharistic worship. The Western Mass became a doctrinally-defined, hierarchically enacted, divine miracle, which the worshippers, convinced of their inherent sinfulness, partook of or beheld in hope of forgiveness and future immortality. The Eastern Liturgy was an undefined rite of Initiation, in which each worshipper participated, and experienced anew each time the transformation and renewal of his being as spirit. The earthly man became the receptacle of the suprasensible reality and was transformed into the heavenly man. The Dionysian vision of the threefold being of man has always remained as the

essence of the mystical thinking and teaching of the Orthodox Church. The long subjugation of the Orthodox Church to Turkish rule kept its outlook from being influenced by Western evolution.

To-day the greatest need of mankind is the recovery of the knowledge of man's true eternal self as spirit, and that knowledge must develop above all in the Christian Church itself. It was with surprise and delight that recently I heard an Oxford theologian say in a Convocation debate, "Theologians are beginning to turn away from the Western idea of twofold man, back to the Eastern idea of man as spirit, soul and body."

Water's Forming Forces

Olive Whicher

A tribute to the book, '*Das Sensible Chaos*,' by Theodor Schwenk

"*Das Ruhende geht ursprünglich aus dem Bewegten hervor.*"

—Rudolf Steiner

THE perception that movement originally underlies form is of great value for the development, in particular, of the organic sciences. The finished forms produced by nature in such abundance and variety—even the rigid and crystalline forms of the mineral kingdom—appear in a new light if they are contemplated from this point of view.

It is one thing to study a form in all its completeness and perhaps complication, to learn to know it in detail once it is there, but quite another to gain a true insight into the way it came into being.

In apprehending something of the various formative processes which work together to create a form, it becomes evident that the resting state is not the first, but rather the last. Not the form is there first, with life or movement resulting from it, but the other way round. First there is movement, and only afterwards do the forms arise, created—crystallised out—from an ever-moving, flowing ocean of possibilities. This is clearly revealed, for instance, in embryonic development; Spiritual Science teaches that even the Earth as we know it came into being in this way.¹

The contemplation of flowing water leads directly to this kind of insight into the creation of organic and also of inorganic forms. It is indeed like a first class—a preliminary mode of training—whereby the powers of observation and of thinking are schooled by the very processes inherent in the flowing medium itself. In time, a perception may be reached which, going beyond the mere contemplation of a form from outside, sinks deeper into the mode of its creation. (Just the same can be said for the form-creative processes in Modern Projective Geometry).

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The book, *Das Sensible Chaos*,² by Theodor Schwenk, published in 1961 by the Verlag Freies Geistesleben in Stuttgart, with illustrations in the text by Walter Roggenkamp and 88 beautiful photo-

¹ See for example references to the workings of the Spirits of Movement and of Form in Chapter IV of Rudolf Steiner's *Occult Science*.

² The title, *Das Sensible Chaos*, derives from a quotation from Novalis, where he calls water a "sensitive chaos", likening it in other words to a receptive matrix or womb. The subtitle, *Strömendes Formenschaffen in Wasser und Luft*, indicates that the book is a study of the flowing forms created by water and air.

graphs from nature, is a valuable and very original contribution to the science of hydrodynamics. Further, it provides the interested layman with a wonderful introduction on the one hand to known and also as yet little or even unknown facts of hydrodynamics, and on the other to a whole variety of natural phenomena taken from the kingdoms of nature and of man. These, when set side by side in the competent and imaginative way in which the author presents his material, afford a unique approach to the study of water and air, and to the formative processes inherent in these media. As Schwenk himself says in his introduction, through the contemplation of the phenomena created by water and air, our thinking is itself transformed and becomes more suited to encompass the creative laws whereby the finished forms of life have at one time come into being.

The reader finds himself in a realm of great beauty. It is a world of potentialities, whose secrets are caught and held for a passing moment, like footsteps on a sandy shore, before the waves return to wash them away again. In the transient world of coming into being and fading away, revealed by the flowing water or the streaming air, we learn to see the finished forms as secondary things. They are like the letters of an alphabet, but not yet the words; or footprints, but not the being who created them. Wisdom lies in the created forms; yet they are final, thrust out momentarily, as it were, into the world of finite things; like eddies on the surface of moving water, they are carried by, to disappear again out of space and time. What underlies the created forms is the broad, deep stream of creation, the great tide of boundless possibilities, in whose depths are hidden the secrets of becoming.

Trained in aero- and hydrodynamics, Schwenk, whose work as an experimenter has been fertilized by long years of acquaintance with the teachings of Rudolf Steiner, has with great skill found ways of showing, both in nature and in the laboratory, the close kinship between forms made by moving water and air and many forms in other kingdoms of nature. The gestures of moving forms brought about in the flowing media speak to the imagination and reveal how intimate is their relationship with organic growth and development. That water, the very source of life itself, reveals in its own processes the gestures of living forms becomes self-evident.

It is characteristic of this book that it is so ideally balanced between science and art; the thoughtful integrity of the trained scientific investigator is never absent from the artistic perception, presentation and interpretation of the phenomena. This is no doubt due in great measure to the fact that experience and understanding derived from the art of Eurythmy—the art of the human form in movement—is brought to bear upon the phenomena of hydrodynamics. For this work rests to a large extent upon years of co-operation between Theodor Schwenk and his assistant, Helga

Brasch, whose great help he acknowledges in his preface and who is a trained eurythmist.

Such an approach is certainly unique in the history of hydrodynamics, for the theories hitherto applied in this branch of science have been largely borrowed from mechanics, a science which derived its thought-forms originally from experiments with rigid bodies subject to the gravitational force. Thus it is that the aspect of water whereby it behaves like a heavy body, seeking to run earthward, downward to a lower level, figures predominantly in the science of hydrodynamics and also in the uses to which water is put nowadays. The tremendous force generated by water when given over to gravity has become a main source of power in industry and technics. Water has come to be regarded largely as a useful commodity and source of physical power. That this way of thinking about water is one-sided and by no means exhaustive is revealed beyond doubt to the reader of this book.

The book starts by describing the natural meander of a river or stream, which, when left to itself, flows in undulating curves, the volumes of water moving in circling paths and spiralling surfaces. Typically, water is continually being drawn downward, always seeking a lower level. Equally typically, it tends towards the rounded form of the drop and is always striving to create a sphere, be it the spherical form of the separate drop or the vast sphere created by the waters of the whole Earth.

A sphere is an organic whole, and water, when separated off into drops or seas or oceans, tends continually to unite and to create a whole. This it does through manifold rhythmical and circulatory processes; for example, it is constantly rising in mists and clouds, to be caught into the great circulating currents of the atmosphere around the earth, thence to return to the earth again in dew, rain, snow or hail. In these rhythmical, circulating processes Schwenk sees the waters of the earth constantly striving to maintain a balance between the downward pull of gravity and this tendency of water to form organic spheres of its own. Water behaves essentially like a circulatory system within a whole, maintaining a balance similar to that maintained by the circulatory systems of living organisms. Water is indeed the life-blood of the Earth.

When water flows in a river bed, it not only runs down the valley under the influence of the force of gravity, but also swings from side to side, forming meanders. Each river or stream has its own meandering rhythm, according to the terrain through which it flows, and sometimes this rhythm can be a very definite one. If we study in detail the behaviour of the water as it moves along, we learn that the meandering stream is woven through with a play of inner movements. Within the body of moving water there are finer streamings, currents of water spiralling round one another, and, according to the direction of the spiralling movement, so creating

the curves of the river. Rounded off into a flowing whole and creating its bed as it goes along, the river is an individuality, an organism with its own inner rhythms, as though living and moving within its own skin. The example of the Gulf Stream shows that even currents of water flowing through water may retain their identity in this way. Indeed, we may regard any stream of flowing water as a totality, within which there is a complex system of inner streamings, with surfaces of water gliding and spiralling past one another in manifold and often very regular rhythms.

With imaginative insight, Schwenk sees how the forms of many unicellular water animals, often hardly departing from the fluid state, picture in their more fixed form the delicate inner spiralling movements of flowing water. But not only these; also animal organs through which water streams, often reveal the same kind of twisted spiralling surfaces.

Once the eye is opened to these spiralling surfaces, they are to be seen everywhere in nature: in the forms of bones, in muscle fibres, in animal horns, in shells, in plants. Forms which can be seen in flowing water—sometimes made more clearly visible by ingenious manipulations in the laboratory—are seen again in the fixed and finished natural forms of the kingdoms of nature. The first illustration reproduced here shows, for example, forms which may arise and flow away with the water when it passes a submerged stone. These forms are made visible when the current stirs up finely powdered clay which has been introduced into the water. The spiral form of the shell in the second illustration is very reminiscent of this transient water form.

In a chapter devoted in detail to the formation of waves, a close comparison is drawn between the rhythmical action of waves and the movements, for example, of fishes' fins or of the whole body of a moving snake. A wonderful photograph of a swimming grass-snake reveals how the waves created in the water by the rhythmical movement of the animal's body merge with the moving form of the body itself as though into a single organism.

With great ingenuity in the laboratory, Schwenk has been able to make visible and to photograph the delicate inner currents which appear as rhythmically moving, developing forms when, for example, a stream of water penetrates still water, or the like. The results are indeed astonishing. Hidden within the fluid element itself are to be found the same highly complicated rhythmical movements and processes which take place in the bodily development of a living organism. For instance, when waves of different lengths interpenetrate, structures appear which are simply the result of an interplay of different rhythmical streaming movements. This is an important principle in all embryological processes.

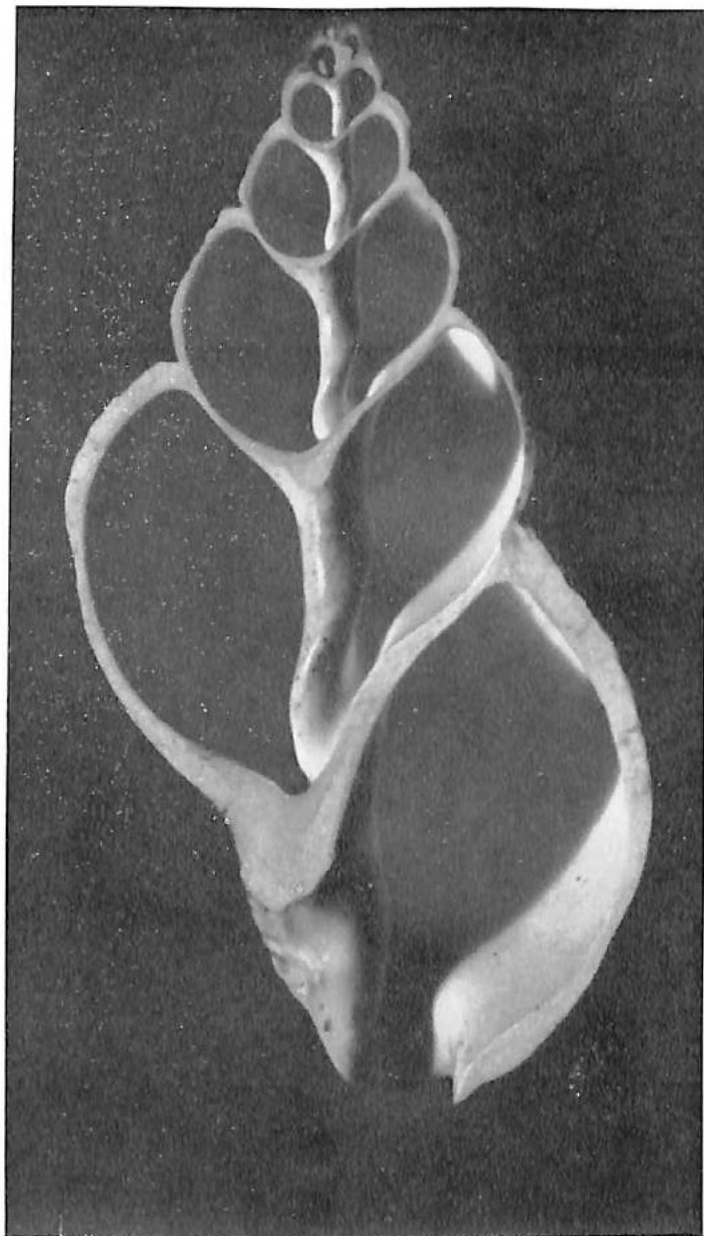
An essential part of the book is the description of vortices and vortex rings. These often highly intricate forms arise when the

Plate I



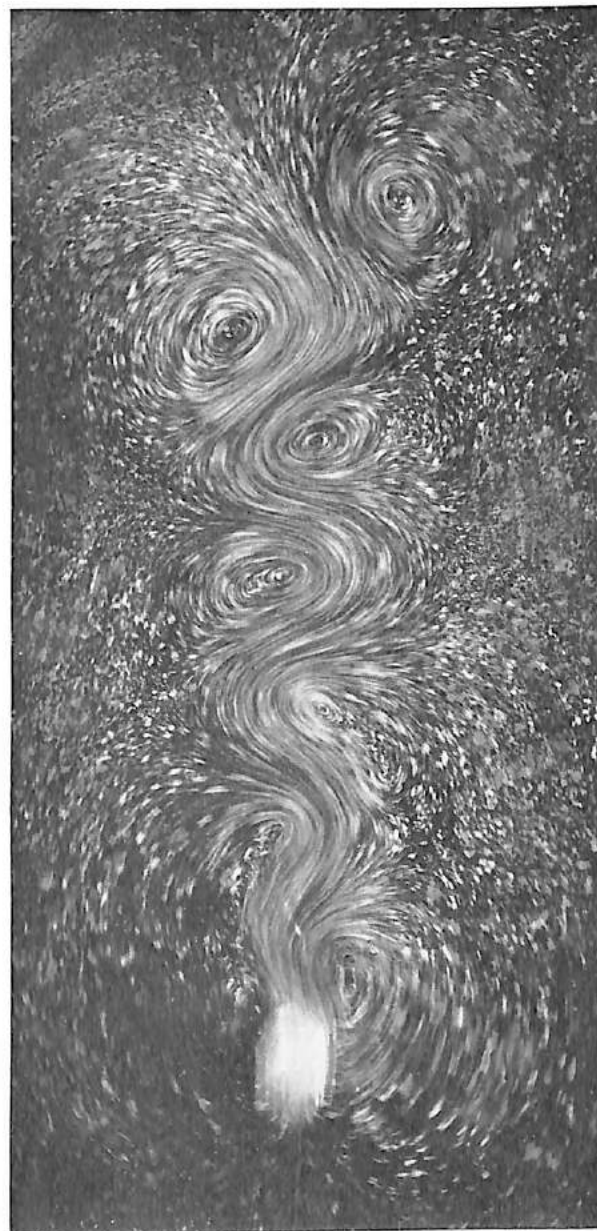
Forms in flowing water as it passes a submerged stone.

Plate II



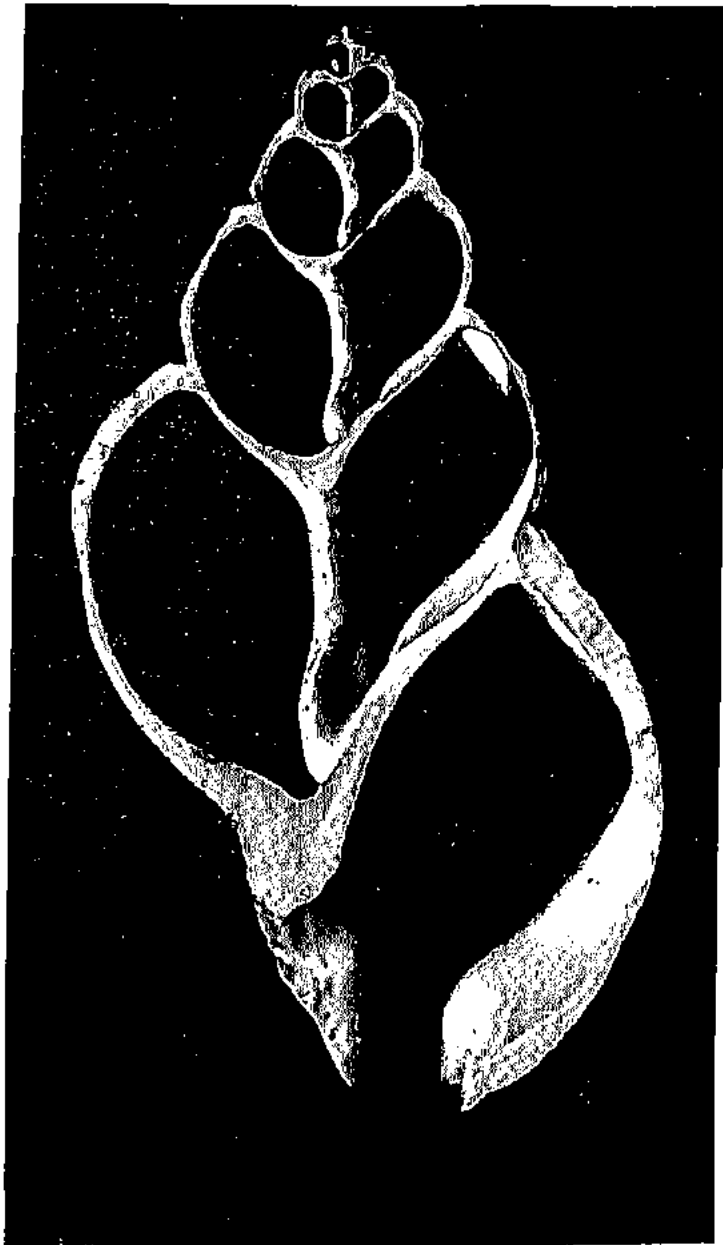
The dynamic of the vortex expressed in a shell.

Plate III



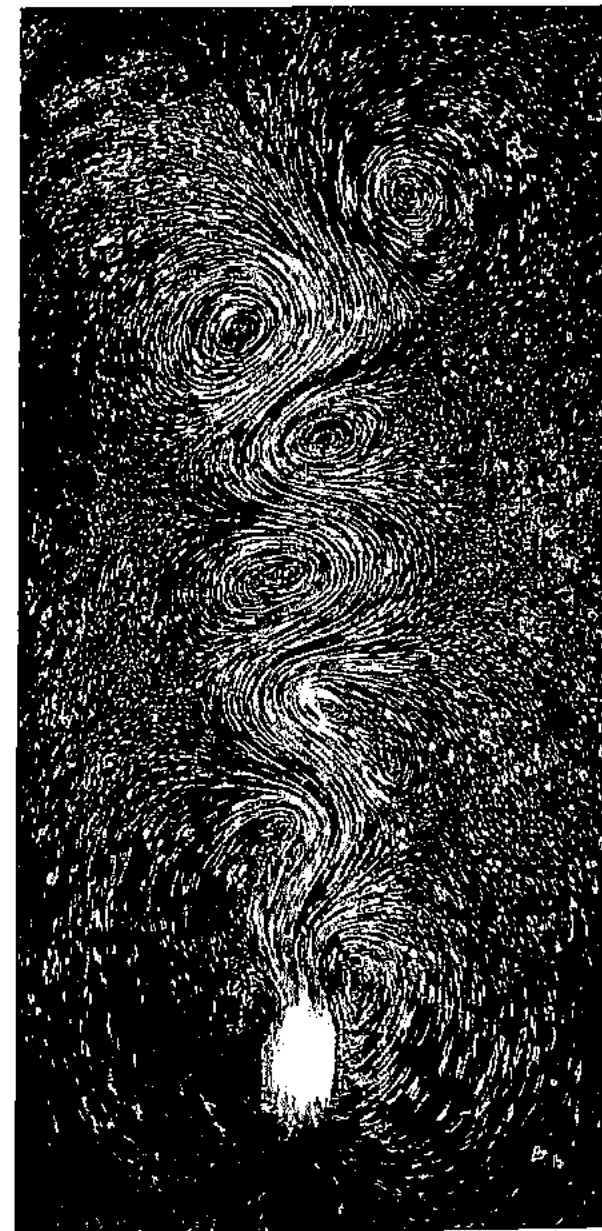
A train of vortices.

Plate II



The dynamic of the vortex expressed in a shell.

Plate III



A train of vortices.



A Greek tombstone.
(Archaeological Museum, Athens)

simple rhythmical movement of the wave overreaches itself; the two adjacent elements—for example, water and air—separated by a surface of contact, still remain distinct, but the surfaces turn in upon themselves, forming hollow spaces. Wherever these hollow spaces arise—when one layer of water, moving faster, overtakes another slower layer—the water is drawn into circling movements not of pressure, but of suction.¹ Such a space, void of water and exerting suctional forces, is at the centre of the spiralling vortex. The Sun itself corresponds to the centre of the vortex.

To quote from *Das Sensible Chaos*: “The vortex is a moving part within a moving whole. It has its own rhythms, forms its own surfaces and creates a connection with cosmic distances. These are qualities which belong to an organic formative process. The vortex is a separate entity in a flowing whole, much as an organ is an individualized part of the whole organism, while at the same time being closely integrated with it. The organ, too, receives its orientation from the entire organism and is also related to the cosmic surroundings. It has its own rhythm and its own inner surfaces give it its distinct form.”

In considerable detail, yet with simple eloquence, Schwenk describes manipulations with flowing water, whereby forms created by these sensitive surfaces arise in the water. He calls them forms of balance, for they are created in the interplay of the streaming forces at work in the water and change their shapes sensitively not only in response to changes in these streaming movements, but also—as experiment shows—to external stimuli even of a distant cosmic nature. Resting forms, capable of an inner individual movement of their own, they come about purely in the interplay of different rhythmical movements in the water. In so doing, they are reminiscent again and again of finished forms in the kingdoms of nature; furthermore, in revealing the formative processes whereby they come into being, they suggest the type of structural development which may well underlie such forms.

A great part of the book is given over to descriptions concerning the reaction of these water surfaces to outer stimuli and to comparisons between these water forms and forms and formative processes in living nature. Among these figure largely organs, especially sense-organs, in animal and man; in particular the eye, the ear, the digestive tract and the heart. The beautiful photographs and the illustrations to the text give an artistic ease of interpretation to what would otherwise be a highly technical work. Though on the biological side many questions remain open and a

¹ Reference has repeatedly been made to this arresting and from the purely physical point of view difficult concept put forward by Rudolf Steiner, always with insistence on the fact that it is indispensable for the understanding of the living kingdoms of nature and man. A note at the end of this article gives references to publications relating to this subject.

great deal still remains to be discovered and taken beyond the stage of mere comparisons, yet these comparisons between the hidden worlds of water and of life are very stimulating and give the reader much food for thought.

*

The behaviour of air in relation to water and in its own element, and also in relation to warmth or fire, inspires in Schwenk a grand picture of atmospheric and meteorological phenomena, in which he sees again, on a gigantic scale, the creation of "organs" within the great breathing organism of the earth and her surrounding atmosphere, by means of which cosmic forces enter into the sphere of earth.

Behind each leaf, each twig in the forest, the wind spirals in vortices; over the oceans and land masses are formed the meteorological zones of high and low pressure. The earth turns on its axis, and in rhythmic interplay with cosmic influences, between day and night, between wet and dry, warm and cold, between expansion and contraction, the meteorological events—like changing moods—take place about its surface and in its atmosphere. It is a vast breathing process. Here, too, the forms which arise do so as a result of the streaming movements, and what we have learned to see in water we see again here.

With the air there comes sound, and from the relatively silent worlds of water we emerge into the singing, sounding element of air and contemplate the forms and movements of birds and insects which live in the worlds of light and colour around the earth. In the sensitive streaming of air, sounds are created, whether in the mighty sounding forth of the earth in wind and storm, in the sighing of the wind in the trees, or in the sounds emitted by ensouled beings.

In this connection, Schwenk reproduces photographs taken by Paul Eugen Schiller when experimenting in the Goetheanum laboratories with sensitive flames—a further development of Tyndall's famous work on "singing flames". It was at Rudolf Steiner's suggestion that these experiments were made, and Schiller shows, among other things, the different rhythms and plastic forms engendered by the flame when responding to the vowel sounds of human speech or the notes produced by the violin and other musical instruments.

In his last chapter, Schwenk returns once more to the theme of creative movements; he likens the formative movements to the tools or instruments whereby forms are created in the elements; or to the hands of a potter, with their inherent creative possibilities, moulding the vessel from within and from without, and then, when it is finished, withdrawing into obscurity. He describes the human

larynx, showing how, having been once created through movement, it is now itself capable of all possible variations of movement, and by means of these movements can form and mould the stream of air into the great variety of sounds and tones which we hear emerging from it. Unformed, the air streams from the lungs into the larynx, where it is finely structured into waves, vibrations, vortices, thence coming forth in ever-changing forms from the organs of speech. Rich indeed is the possibility of form-creation as the word emerges. Every time man speaks, says Rudolf Steiner,¹ he reaches back to the time of the creation.

Here we come to the inner connection of this world of moving forms with the new art of Eurythmy; for in Eurythmy the archetypal movements underlying all creation are made visible by the moving human form.

Schwenk concludes with the words: "Whether we speak of streaming water or moving air; of the formation of organs or the movements of the human form; of speech; of Eurythmy, or of the ordering movements of the stars, it is all the same. We speak of the archetypal gestures of the cosmic Alphabet—the gestures of the Word of Worlds, which makes use of the element of movement in order to bring forth nature and man."

In a short afterword, Schwenk shows how the knowledge of the secrets of the creative word, always hidden in the Mystery Temples and now forgotten, still remains like a memory reflected in a few ancient works of art—stone carvings, for example, from ancient Greece or Celtic Ireland. As illustrations he has gathered some beautiful examples (among them the fourth illustration reproduced here—a Greek tombstone), showing how again and again the forms revealed by the flowing media of water and air appear in them.

* * * *

The contemplation of flowing water leads not only to a deeper insight into the creation of forms; it will also lead to a fuller understanding of movement itself. We apprehend only one aspect of movement if we simply think of it as it takes place in the fixed dimensions of three-dimensional physical space. Incarnated as we are into the space of the earth, we experience this physical aspect of movement in a very real way. To take an example from water itself: a moving column of water emitted at force from a hosepipe makes a powerful impact and can remove at speed obstacles with which it comes into contact. The moving stream embodies a physical force which engenders physical material movement.

We have, however, also learned of gentler, even imperceptible movements in water and have related them to an aspect of the water which is less physical and comes nearer to life. But to regard these

¹ Lecture of June 24, 1924.

simply as very refined physical movements, like those taking place in rigid three-dimensional space, would still only lead to half-truths in our researches into the essential nature of water and of life.

We must here make the great effort required in order to begin to understand what Rudolf Steiner really meant when (as mentioned above) he spoke so urgently about the true aspect of the Sun in relation to the Earth. For just as there is a fundamental polarity between the three-dimensional space of the earth and the space of the sun, so does a like polarity express itself in movement.

Movement arises in the working together of the forces of earth substance, the interior of the sun is void of matter and exerts forces, resulting in the formation of vortices. This can happen not only when the dividing surface is between air and water, but also, for instance, when it is between water and water, when two currents flow together or when a single current is parted by an obstruction. (The same applies to currents of air.) The surfaces, moving past one another at differing speeds, roll in upon one another, creating circling, spiralling formations within the single medium, whereby a whole string of vortices may arise.

The third illustration reproduced here shows one among the many ways in which a train of vortices has been made visible in the laboratory as it appears on the surface of the water. Below the surface the vortices—hollow conical forms created by the inward spiralling surfaces, here very shallow, though they may also be quite deep—reach down more or less vertically into the water. Here also the rhythmical element in flowing water is revealed in the rhythmical repetition of the vortices one beyond the other. This type of rhythmical repetition occurs again and again in natural forms; for instance, in shells (plate II), in the twisted horns of animals such as the African Kudu-antelope, and in countless forms of the plant kingdom.

Schwenk attaches great significance to the surfaces which so finely and intimately interpenetrate flowing water. Invisible for the most part in clear running water, they occur everywhere, for example, where sticks or stones or the pillars of a bridge disturb the smooth flow.

Inwardly permeated by these delicate and very extensive spiralling surfaces, the water is as though alive with moving, changing forms and rhythmical processes. To these formative surfaces Schwenk attributes an actual quality of sensitiveness; he considers them to be sensitive regions in the water. Water, he says, is not just the inert mass we usually regard it to be; it is an inherently impressionable medium, traced through with innumerable sensitive membranes—organs with which it receives influences not only from its nearby surroundings, but from the planetary spheres. This is a far-reaching statement; yet experiments already undertaken show it to be true.

A vortex is an entity within the water which retains its own characteristics of form, rhythm and movement. Its properties are such that it is a microcosmic picture of the macrocosmic processes relating to Kepler's Second Law. The further the planets are from the sun, the more slowly they move; the nearer they are, the faster. The same applies to the way water moves in a vortex. But for the fact that it is a physical impossibility, water at the centre of a vortex would be moving infinitely fast. In actual fact, it simply withdraws from that region, leaving a hollow space within the water.

Schwenk quotes from a lecture by Rudolf Steiner (June 24, 1921) in which he describes how the Sun is in all respects in entire contrast to the Earth. Instead of being densely filled with material in the sphere of gravity and forces of another character—as yet unknown to science—related rather to the surrounding cosmos. Movements may be imbued more with one or with the other type of force. The quality and gestures of movements, and also of forms, clearly reveal, once the eye has been educated to perceive it, the interplay between gravitational forces and the anti-gravitational or "levitational" forces. In contrast to the centric, gravitational forces, the forces of levity are peripheral and planar, working in towards the living entities on earth from universal space. We see the gestures of these forces most simply in the plant world, where the root belongs more to the earth, while the shoot reveals the planar gestures and movements of the ethereal spaces and forces of the sun.¹ We see them too in the forms and movement of the human body, so wonderfully poised between the two worlds.² Particularly in the movements of Eurythmy we learn to experience the planar quality of this other aspect of movement.

Human movement is a manifestation of rhythmic man; it arises in the interplay of the forces of gravity and those of levity. So, too, the movements of water. And when we learn to apprehend in water that aspect whereby it rises above and reaches beyond the physical world, we begin to look—as we do when we look into the growing point of a plant or the heart of a flower—into the sun spaces of the universe. For the spiralling vortex of water, caught into the cosmic movement, and the spiralling plane upon plane of the leaves in the quiet space of a growing shoot, are sister forms; both speak of the working of cosmic powers into the living organs of the earth.

Men have often expressed these truths in art. The Greek who depicted upright man in stone (plate IV) knew of them. We see the human form supported by the radial forces of earth from below; upborn by ether-spheres above; standing in the plane of the ethereal-astral forces, wherein are depicted the spiralling curves of life, in the heart of each a tiny flower.

¹ See *The Plant between Sun and Earth*, by George Adams and Olive Whicher.

² See the two articles on Human Movement in the *Golden Blade*, 1960 and 1961, by Olive Whicher.

In our day these truths must not only be experienced through art, but sought in science. Following Rudolf Steiner's indications, in cultivating a new mathematics and deriving new scientific concepts from it, thence applying these concepts to the phenomena of hydrodynamics, we look towards a future time when mankind, like Peter, seemingly surrounded by a sinking world, will experience the Being who walks upon the Waters. Then the science of hydrodynamics will once more accord to Water its high place in the life of the earth and of man and will learn to deal with it according to its true nature.

REFERENCES TO THE SUN AND COSMIC FORCES

- Rudolf Steiner, in lectures: April 16, 1920; June 24, 1921; Jan. 18, 1921; April 9, 1922.
 Rudolf Steiner and Dr. Ita Wegman: *Fundamentals of Therapy*.
 George Adams: 'Physical and Ethereal Spaces' in *Anthroposophy*, 1933.
 Prof. Louis Locher-Ernst: *Raum und Gegenraum*.
 Ernst Lehrs: *Man or Matter*, Ch. XII.
 George Adams and Olive Whicher: *The Plant between Sun and Earth*.
Die Pflanze in Raum und Gegenraum.

An English translation of *Das Sensible Chaos* is in preparation and will be brought out by the Rudolf Steiner Press, probably next year. The German volume is available from the Rudolf Steiner Bookshop, price 56/-; postage 2/9.

Human Relationships in a Divided World

Adam Bittleston

SINCE the end of the Second World War there has been in Britain a marked swing of interest away from political and economic problems and towards personal and family affairs, the arts, and history. That there has been such a change is not just a general impression; it is revealed in the subjects chosen for adult education (by the students themselves), and in the predominant themes among paper-backed books.

Against this view might be urged the high proportion of voters at Parliamentary elections, and the fairly extensive treatment of international affairs on television. The swing is by no means an absolute one. But it can be maintained that voting and viewing are much influenced by a deep desire to be allowed to get on, oneself, with the tasks and opportunities of personal living, without too much interference from above, and to find out whether other people are being allowed to get on with their own affairs, too.

This tendency is sometimes put down flatly to materialism and selfishness; everyone, it is said, just wants to enjoy his own improved standard of living. But it could also be put down partly to a certain disillusionment about the results of this improved standard. A fervent interest in economics which existed in the twenties and thirties looked towards full employment and the overcoming of poverty as the great goals; they are now claimed as basic rights, and yet life is evidently incomplete. And for this reason interest turns, for example, towards psychology or art.

It may be, too, that after a certain point the study of political and economic questions has been found particularly baffling and unsatisfying, because there seems to be no convincing wider framework into which the details can be fitted. Since the idea of general, automatic progress has been so thoroughly shaken there is no ready-made way of fitting present-day events into the stream of time; and so we set off into the past for guidance; and perhaps may not return. We can easily become fascinated by some past civilisation, and yet find that it does not provide us with any unambiguous lessons for the present.

Passing events can only really make sense before a vision which penetrates into the fundamental purposes of human existence—which must mean in the end Divine purposes for man. (Hence the great hopes with which a wide public turned towards the writings of Teilhard de Chardin.) Yet it is not enough to conceive these purposes only in a universal, abstract way; we need insight into the heavenly purpose for this particular time.

The work of Rudolf Steiner showed that such insight is possible. He showed in specific detail how the course of history is guided by

individuals who work out in their lives purposes which they have made their own in the spiritual world before their physical birth. He could give this comprehensive picture only because he possessed capacities for supersensory experience, trained and tested in the most exact, conscientious way. But others can examine the validity of his statements by using ordinary powers of observation and judgment.

He spoke often, for example, of differences in consciousness at the flowering-time of Greek and Roman civilisation and in the present. He spoke of a turning point in this respect about the beginning of the fifteenth century. Many ways of thinking and feeling natural to the Greek and Roman were continued up to the end of the Middle Ages. And then, through slow stages, a radically new kind of consciousness developed, which has become predominant today.

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It is a mark of this new consciousness that human relationships are in some ways much more difficult today than they were in the past. Once human beings found quickly and almost effortlessly what they were to one another; whether as allies or opponents, they were confident of knowing how to deal with one another. Today people find one another limitlessly mysterious; mutual understanding and trust may come into being over long years with many setbacks. And as we come to know one another well, we begin to recognise the relationship as between spiritual entities not confined between the limits of birth and death. From deep in our hearts there rise up purposes connected with other lives on earth. On neither side, indeed, may they be recognised as such; and yet a friendship may well have at its heart such a mutual recognition, which remains below the level of full consciousness. Gradually, in the course of centuries, such experiences will become much more conscious and familiar. We shall know each other as immortal beings.

But this development can be hindered or frustrated. Wherever an institution has preserved marked characteristics, in its ways of thinking and behaviour, of the Greek, Roman, or Medieval civilisation, it will make this subtle and delicate path of understanding more difficult. Churches and nations, racial organisations and political movements may all throw dark shadows into the lives of the individual, obscuring that kind of clear and steady friendship within which such understanding can best mature.

In the West we are accustomed to look at Marxism, for example, as a doctrine which threatens the most disastrous political cleavage in the world. But to consider the tension between the Communist world and the West only on the political and economic levels has proved extraordinarily barren. It is not really irrelevant, even to questions of war and peace, to ask about the significance of Marxism for the development of human consciousness.

The intellectual and emotional roots of Marxism can be traced back to the Greek philosophers and the Hebrew prophets. But the result is a closed system of extraordinary tightness. It has what Koestler has described as the special mark of such closed systems: the possession of built-in replies to all possible criticisms. It sees individuals essentially and only as representatives of social conflicts. Thus in Communist countries, at the present time, a kind of double world comes into being—the description of people and events in terms of the ruling formulae, and the actual personal relationships. The ruling public opinion must appear to condemn the uniqueness of a personal relationship as a distracting irrelevance, a hindrance to the achievement of social goals.

Is there anything *within* Marxism which could lead it further, into greater harmony with the needs of the individual? Or can we only hope that Marxist countries will develop other interests side by side with this ideology, as the nations of Western Europe gradually paid less regard to theological controversy, though still giving their allegiance to Roman Catholicism or Protestantism, from the last years of the seventeenth century onwards?

The crucial unresolved question within Marxism is the problem of power. Marx looked forward on his level to a blessed community not dissimilar to that contemplated by the Hebrew prophets on theirs—a brotherhood where no human being exercises power over another, but each serves in freedom the common purpose. The criticism directed by Djilas against Communist parties or individuals that have become too attached to their own power is in harmony with genuine Marxism. There are thus two conceivable ways out, as it were, of a tyrannical Communist system without disastrous war: through a diversion of interest to new problems and factors in the social situation, or through a rekindling of the prophetic fire which is at the core of Marxism, however greatly misunderstood. On either way human individuality, and genuine personal relationships, would begin to find release.

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Marxism, though proclaiming itself the enemy of all religions, has many of the qualities of a dogmatic religion. And it is significant to observe its difficult contacts not only with Christianity, but with the other world religions as well. We see Islam putting up a particularly vigorous and effective resistance to Marxism; and yet, in spite of the obvious contrast between a religion which everywhere proclaims the omnipotence of God and an atheist philosophy of history, there are spiritual affinities as well. It is as if Islam and Marxism had divided between them impulses inherited from the Hebrew prophets, while rejecting everything that leads directly into Christianity. They have in common an intense preoccupation with man as an earthly being; and although Islam teaches an existence after death, it is in pictures which strongly reflect earthly conditions.

The disciple of Islam is given a sense of his individual duty and responsibility, yet he is encompassed by a revelation which he is taught to regard as finished and complete. This revelation emphasises his origin in physical human seed; there is no doorway back through birth into the spiritual world. It is again in a sense a closed system, utterly rejecting its opponents—which are, in the Koran itself, Judaism and Christianity.

And yet in this rejection there is a mysterious, unmistakable note of disappointed love. We need not look for expressions of this only in the past; only a few months ago Turkish students brought great gifts of flowers to Christian churches, after a mosque in Cyprus had been damaged by Christians, as their quiet and patient answer. And it looks as if Moslems in Algeria will prove more forgiving than many peoples have done who called themselves Christian.

The Koran proclaims the greatness of Abraham, of Moses, and of Jesus. Nevertheless, in its words about Jesus the greatest barrier between Islam and Christianity is erected. For the Koran, as generally understood, denies Christ's death upon the Cross. Among the wrongdoings of the Jews, the Koran numbers

Their saying, 'We slew the Messiah,
Jesus, son of Mary, the Messenger of God'—
yet they did not slay him, neither crucified him,
only a likeness of that was shown to them.

Fifty years ago it might have seemed likely that Christians and Moslems could come nearer to one another in a common acceptance of Jesus as *teacher* of the one God. Today there is a strong re-assertion among Christians of Christ's Divinity and Resurrection. Is there then less hope than ever of mutual understanding between Moslem and Christian?

For countless human souls, in centuries to come, when the heritage of previous incarnations begins to stir within them, it will be of the greatest significance if they can form a steady inner picture of the Crucifixion. For that part of us, which is trying to awaken, is not born of the generations; it is born of what stands on the other side of death, which shines through to us on this side from the Cross. Souls deeply influenced by Islam may be deeply hindered in this experience, unless perhaps the Koran can be understood in another way; that the error of the Jews lay in their belief that they had won a victory over Christ Jesus, at the moment of His eternal triumph.

and they slew him not of a certainty—
no indeed; God raised him up to Him; God is
All-mighty, All-wise.

Liberation from what seems enclosed and finished in Islam can conceivably come from within—through a willingness to learn in detail and concretely about the relations to Islam of those other revelations, the reality of which it does acknowledge. More

externally, and yet with far-reaching promise for the future, Islam is learning from the social needs of modern States, and the difficulties of choice among methods of government which have all proved dangerous.

In particular, we see Moslem countries struggling with the problems of the party system, which in the West has appeared as an inseparable adjunct of freedom and democracy. And yet even where it is long established, it is not everywhere looking entirely healthy. The party system appears to work best when it expresses deep-rooted but not irreconcilable differences among social groups and classes; it is by no means easy simply to *invent* a party system, as was attempted in Turkey. It is as if a genuinely democratic alternative to the party system should by this time have been devised by the West—and the West has been unable to do this.

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Countries with a Hindu or Buddhist tradition are perhaps rather more adaptable to present-day conditions. Hinduism and Buddhism have a better record of mutual tolerance among different theological schools than either Islam or Christianity. And they are not in principle closed intellectual systems, but have long welcomed a great variety of thought, belief and practice.

Are they then favourably placed, both for the political development of the countries in which they flourish, and for that tranquil individual growth through which the consequences of earlier incarnations can come to right consciousness?

The gulf between belief in reincarnation in general, and a right understanding of individual karma in the sense described by Rudolf Steiner, is a very great one. And the teaching of reincarnation, as it is usually cultivated in the Hindu or Buddhist tradition, generally emphasises overwhelmingly the tragic aspect of karma. What is individual—this tradition holds—is what separates man from universal Reality. And yet individualism has grown so strong that it is inescapable; as the Dalai Lama has said, it is present even in our dreams. And thus some who stand in these traditions, particularly those who feel a strong call towards practical service in the present world, may come very close to Christianity—as did, for example, Sri Aurobindo—without losing contact with the greatness of the Hindu tradition. For it is the Christ Who makes of individual characteristics uniting bonds, instead of barriers, between us and universal Reality.

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Christianity itself was not originally a closed system. The New Testament everywhere proclaims a growing spiritual life, and a rich variety among the early congregations. But immense intellectual and practical ability has been used with the purpose of transforming Christianity into a closed theological and ecclesiastical system. It is not only those standing in the Roman tradition who have done

this; it has happened to some degree almost everywhere. But the Roman Catholic Church can be taken as the most significant example in the modern world; and in many, many of its methods and activities we see the shadow of ancient Rome projected into the modern world. The emphasis on the Latin language is not just an externality; it expresses an attachment to ways of feeling about the individual human being which belong to an earlier time, and a resistance against the struggling modern consciousness. And yet most impressive examples can be found of faithful Roman Catholics, who contemplate the present world with all the agony and objectivity which it demands. The consequences of such an attitude of mind can be studied in Professor Hans Küng's *The Council and Reunion*. His theme is everywhere the responsibility of the individual in the Christian community, wherever he may stand; Pope, Bishop, priest, layman—Catholic, Orthodox or Protestant.

Professor Küng speaks appreciatively of the work of the World Council of Churches, in which Roman Catholics have not hitherto taken part, though official contacts now exist. It is here perhaps that we may particularly look for signs that Christian organisations are prepared to overcome their limitations and their rigidities. And we do indeed find, for example, in the reports from New Delhi, the development of a language which is not simply an echo from the past, and which speaks in terms of Christ as a Being, and the particular needs of men, and hardly ever of conflicting doctrines.

All the more clearly, however, certain basic weaknesses of Christianity in our time become evident. The report of the section on Service, for example, touches on nature, science and technology:

The nature that scientists investigate is part of God's creation; the truth they discover is part of God's truth; the abilities they use are God-given. The Christian should welcome scientific discoveries as new steps in man's dominion over nature.

We must recognize, however, that many, within and without the Christian Church, are puzzled about the relationships between God, man and nature. There is urgent need for the development of a theology of nature (as part of an inclusive theology) and its statement in language that can be understood by the men in the pew or laboratory.

We should not fear scientific discovery, but we should be deeply concerned about its applications. Science and technology are instruments in the hands of man. They can be used for good or evil purposes. The use of nuclear power for war or peace, the abuse or conservation of natural resources, the application of automation, are examples. But a decision about the use to be made of a particular scientific discovery is not a *scientific* decision; it is an *ethical* decision. It will be intelligent only if based on sound scientific and technological understanding; it will be *good* only if motivated by the will to serve man.

Should it not be evident, by the nineteen-sixties, that this is very much too simple? Ethical problems and scientific problems cannot really be separated in this way. In the use of a new drug, or in the decision to develop the use of atomic energy at a particular

moment, ethical and scientific problems are inextricably mixed. It is not enough to develop a theology of nature *after* the sciences and technology; for these depend at every step, though generally unconsciously, on particular moral and spiritual attitudes to nature. The report itself seems to slip into one of the disastrous preconceptions of technological practice in speaking of a decision as good "if motivated by the will to serve man". Has not modern man a growing, uneasy sense that the universe may have some interest in the fates of other creatures, and not exclusively in *him*? This is indeed a crucial problem for many of those who are puzzled in the way the report describes; and an explicit answer can be found in St. Paul, when he speaks of nature in travail, waiting for man's help.

If Christians really face this problem, and think it out to the end, two far-reaching consequences will follow. They will no longer be able to leave the idea of reincarnation as the hobby of a few within Christianity, a serious teaching only outside it. For the redemption of Nature is clearly a long-term task, not to be learned completely within a single life. And a flood of light will be thrown upon all the difficulties that arise in connection with human *work*.

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One of Rudolf Steiner's most puzzling statements was that a great obstacle to the recognition of reincarnation in its true form lay in the wage system. Perhaps the line of thought taken here can help a little with this. For an understanding of the innermost purposes of an individual can grow up best where a group of people work together steadily at a common task. If they are held together only by money relationships and forced into relentless competition in order to achieve status or security, the atmosphere for a deeper mutual understanding will be continually poisoned.

Such a statement may sound both banal and theoretical; and yet the conflict it attempts to describe is deep and pervasive in modern life. That a firm or an industry should be *concerned* about redundancy, for example, and not simply pass on the responsibility to the State, springs from a moral feeling of the connection between men working on a shared task. "We have sought one another to transform a life on earth in a particular way, and to learn a feeling of kinship to some of its creatures; blind monetary forces should not separate us again." So might part of an unconscious protest be expressed—while the conscious protest is phrased in terms of wages and security.

Since the time when Rudolf Steiner wrote, very much has been done to raise human livelihood into the sphere of Rights, and to protect it from the incalculable shifts of the market. But much more will be needed; we are still far from the kind of brotherly Associations of producers and consumers in particular branches of industry which Rudolf Steiner advocated.

If the Common Market grows, to include Britain and other

countries, it will become more and more plainly a giant in need of a soul. If the tasks of Christianity in the *quality* of scientific thinking and in the shaping of economic co-operation begin to be more effectively recognised, the soul will grow. Such efforts would be of evident value for the world as a whole; they would help to dispel the impression, which seems to be strong in Africa and in the East (and can we say that it is without foundation?), that there is a certain amount of selfishness and European pride about the whole plan.

That pooling of capabilities, which the Treaty of Rome envisages, is really needed by the world as a whole. Those who can work as doctors, or teachers, or architects, for example, should be able to work wherever in the world they find like-minded people with whom to co-operate. It is often in such encounters that the most significant relationships of destiny in our time begin to come to light.

Where the positive human relationships on which the future depends are frustrated, a spiritual void can come about, which gives an opportunity to the forces which bring about war. It is not enough to desire peace; this, after all, may mean little more than a desire to be left undisturbed. Genuine peace depends upon overcoming the habits of thought and life which prevent human beings from recognising and loving each other as they truly are, and can become.

Goddess into Saint: The Foster-Mother of Christ

Isabel Wyatt

(Though both goddess and saint are known as BRIDGHE in Gaelic, and in English as BRIDE or BRIGIT, for the sake of clarity BRIDGHE is here used solely for the goddess, and BRIDE and BRIGIT for the saint.)

I

GAELIC legend tells how, when St. Bride was a child so young that she could neither speak nor walk, she was cast adrift with her foster-father in a frail coracle, which bore them from their native Ireland to *Innis nan Druidhneach*, the Isle of the Druids, that small Atlantic island now famous as Iona, whose very rock goes back to the springtime of the Earth. And as they landed (in that same Cove of the Coracle where St. Columba was to land a century later), Bride suddenly walked and talked; and the words she spoke were these:

"I am but a little child,
Yet my mantle shall be laid
On the Lord of the World.
The King of the Elements Himself
Shall rest upon my heart,
And I will give Him peace."

The legend tells how the Druids of Iona brought her up, preparing her for a high destiny, for they recognised in her the fulfilment of a prophecy that to them would come a child in whom dwelt an Immortal. One day she was led by a white dove through a grove of rowans beside a mountain lake to a distant rain-parched land; and there, within a stable, she assisted as "aid-woman" (midwife) at the birth of the Holy Child, and upon his brow put the three drops of pure water which united him with the Earth. Because of the drought, there was no milk to give the new-born Babe; but Bride sang runes of Paradise to the cow which stood beside the manger, and the milk flowed miraculously. So it was wrapped in Bride's blue mantle and held against Bride's heart that the Child first tasted earthly nourishment and was received into the community of men; therefore is Bride known as *Muime Chriosda*, the Foster-mother of Christ, and as *Ban-chuideachaidh Moire*, Aid-woman of Mary, and as *Bana-ghoistidh Mhic De*, Godmother of the Son of God.

As the fig-tree was the Jewish and the juniper the German, so was the rowan the Celtic tree of Initiation; and groves of it are even today frequently to be found mingling with the oak-groves near ancient Druid stone-circles. Through such a rowan-grove, the white dove, always a heavenly messenger, leads Bride out of earthly life into those super-earthly realms where cosmic memory still lives in

mighty pictures, there to participate retrospectively in that tremendous happening which ushered in the turning-point of time. So we can see this experience as an Initiation. In its personal aspect it can become transparent for a step in Bride's own spiritual development—the birth of the spirit-child in her own soul. But with human beings of special stature or peculiar grace it may sometimes happen that an experience is at one and the same time fraught both with personal and with super-personal significance. So we ask ourselves: Had Bride's Initiation such a super-personal significance? And if so, along what paths and in what spheres is this to be found?

II

Bride's setting is the Ireland of the late fifth and early sixth centuries, an Ireland where for the most part Christianity and Druidism peaceably share one house, even the menhirs often bearing a Christian cross on one side, a pre-Christian symbol on the other. Strange and wonderful things are recorded of this saint. When, at the age of fourteen she took the veil, a column of fire was seen above her head; and as she knelt and kissed the wooden feet of the altar, they burgeoned into leaf and flower. Pious maidens flocked to her in her cell under an oak tree at Kildare; and the church she built there—on the site of an earlier temple, and, like the temple, enclosed by a brushwood fence within which no man might pass—was known as the House of Fire; for here for seven centuries (until, in 1220, the Archbishop of London caused it to be extinguished), the fire upon the altar, which was tended nightly by each of her nuns in turn and which might not be breathed upon by human breath, never went out.

The story is told of a King and Queen who came to inquire of a Druid where their child should be born, and the Druid made answer: "Happy is the child who is born neither in the house nor out of the house." Now at that moment Brotseach, the Druid's bond-maid, who had been sold to him by the Prince of Ulster at his jealous wife's insistence, reached the doorway of the house with her pitcher of new milk, and, feeling her moment come, sank down on her right knee in labour, as the women of the Gael still do today. So Bride was born on the threshold, and, Brotseach's pitcher overturning, was bathed in still-warm milk.

And all her life, the Irish peasants still aver, "all the food she used was the milk of a white, red-eared cow set apart for her by a Druid." They say that it was angels who baptised her and gave her her name of Brigit. At night, when they cover the glowing peat with ashes "to save the seed of the fire for the morning", they think of her as they pronounce this blessing:

"I save this fire as Christ saved everyone—
Brigit beneath it, the Son of Mary within it."

And they say that "it is on her day the first of the birds begin

to make their nests, for the death of the year is done with and the birthday of the year is come."

Concerning her day the Gael of Scotland say also:

"Brigit put her finger in the river on the feast-day of Brigit,
And away went the hatching-mother of the cold."

And again:

"On the day of Bride of the white hills,
The snake comes forth from the hollow."

And they tell how "when Mary went up to the Temple for purification, Bride walked before her with a lighted candle in each hand. The wind was strong on the Temple heights, but the candles did not flicker. So she is called Bride of brightness, and her day, the feast-day of Bride of the candles."

For her day, February the first, the first day of the Celtic spring, is Candlemas Eve, when both candles and the fire in the thurible used to be blessed by the Celtic Church in readiness for the morrow's Feast of Purification. (By Rome the blessing of the fire was omitted.) From this fire was also kindled the Candlemas Brand, a portion of which was preserved throughout the year with which to light the Christmas Yule-log. In this custom, as in the legend of Bride as Foster-mother, a mystery is delicately indicated—the mystery of Bride's connection with the descent of Christ into earthly incarnation.

To the Gael "all beauty beneath the sky and beneath the sea" belongs to Bride. Healing belongs to Bride—"May she win for us battles over every disease", says the old Gaelic hymn. And she who was the Aid-woman of Mary is heavenly aid-woman still to the Gaelic mother in child-birth. In the Scottish Isles the earthly aid-woman comes to the threshold when the labour-pains begin, and, making a cross of her body with her arms outstretched to the jambs, calls softly:

"Bride! Bride! Come in!
Thy welcome is truly made.
Give thou relief to the woman,
And give the conception to the Trinity."

And the mother-to-be herself, clasping a Kidney of Mary (an Atlantic nut mounted in silver and grown into the form of a cross) calls also on Bride:

"As Christ was conceived of Mary
Full perfect on every hand,
Assist thou me, Foster-mother,
The conception to bring from the bone.
And as thou didst aid the Virgin of joy,
Without gold, without corn, without kine,
Aid thou me—great is my sickness—
Aid me, O Bride!"

In those holy incantations with which the Gaelic Islander, right up to our own time, was wont to consecrate each action of his day, a portrait of Bride emerges which is a very epitome of Celtic sainthood as opposed to Roman. Thus, in the *Bed Blessing*:

"Who are they by my bed?
The lovely Bride and her Fosterling."

Or in *The Sleep Shielding* :

"May Bride the fair, the tender,
Watch and ward this house,
Her hue like the cottongrass,
Rich-tressed maiden with ringlets of gold."

Or in the *Reaping Blessing* :

"God, bless Thou Thyself my reaping
For the sake of Michael, head of hosts,
And Bride, smooth-white with ringleted locks."

In the *Milking Blessing* :

"The calm Bride of the white combs
Will give to my loved heifer the lustre of the swan.
The melodious Bride will give thee offspring and young."

In the *Herding Blessing* :

"Bride of the fair palms, guard thou my flocks."

In the *Churn Charm* :

"Come, thou beauteous Bride,
And bless the substance of my kine."

In the *Figwort Charm* :

"O Bride, of women beneficent,
Put fruitage in the kine."

And in the *Womanhood of Brigit* :

"Brigit of the mantles, Brigit of the peat-heap,
Brigit of the twining hair, Brigit of the augury,
Brigit of the white feet,
Brigit of the white palms, Brigit of the kine—
Brigit is my comrade-woman, my maker of song,
My choicest of women, my woman of guidance;
My companion beloved is Brigit!"

"Calm Bride the generous; Bride, maiden of graces; Bride of the blessings; Bride of the fairy swan; Virgin of a thousand charms; the holy maiden Bride, radiant flame of gold; thou Bride, fair, charming, pleasant to me the breath of thy mouth; noble is Bride the gentle fair on her knee; great Bride, milkmaid of Christ; Brigit the Nurse; Brigit the loved; womanly Brigit of gentleness; the quiet Brigit's guarding be shielding me, be aiding me"—the worshipping phrases flow together to reveal a Christian saint who is a being of enchantment. Something of the Graces has gone into her making; she wields the wholesome magic of a wise-woman; her beauty, her graciousness, her golden locks are those of a fairy princess. A more than human greatness breathes from her, as from beings in a myth. In her there does indeed dwell an Immortal.

III

In the Celtica of the ancient world, which included most of Central and Western Europe, a certain goddess was most widely worshipped. As Brigantia she gave her name to the Spanish town of

Brigantia and to the Brigantes, the largest of the Celtic tribes, who carved out of England her largest county, Yorkshire, whom Ptolemy's map shows also inhabiting south-eastern Ireland, and whose occupation of the shores of Lake Constance gave to it its Latin name, Lacus Brigantinus, and to Brienzi its Latin name, Brigantium. In Gaul this goddess was known as Brigindo, and inscriptions to her under this name still exist in Eastern France. In other parts of the Continent she was known as Brigan and Brig. In Ireland she was known as Bridghe.

Bridghe was the goddess of *dán*, knowledge, and of quickening in every sphere, both of ponderables and of imponderables. She was drawn through the fields in her chariot in spring, and was seen as a virgin bearing a child in her arms. Cattle were sacred to her, and a libation of milk was poured daily on her altars. She was "protectress of women, keeper of dreams and prophecies, watcher of destinies, guardian of the future." The Celtic reflection of the Logos—in Ireland Ogma, god of language and literature, in Gaul Ogmios, god of eloquence—was her son. Hers was that original House of Fire which had preceded St. Bride's at Kildare; there nobly born virgin priestesses known as Daughters of Fire, the predecessors of St. Bride's nuns, like them tended a perpetual flame. A perpetual flame was Bridghe's symbol.

The rowan, the quicken-tree, the tree of quickening, was sacred to Bridghe, together with the Celtic Rowan Month (mid-January to mid-February), the mid-point of which (February the first) was held to mark the quickening of the year. Cormac, the tenth-century Christian King-Archbishop of Cashel, who with loving pains collected and preserved much pagan Celtic lore, tells us: "This Bridghe is a poetess, a goddess whom poets worshipped on account of the great and illustrious protection afforded them by her." The Irish *Ollumh*, the master-poet who had passed through the highest bardic Initiation, carried a branch of chiming golden bells in her honour. She was invoked as Bridghe of the Holy Fire, Bridghe of the Golden Hair, Bridghe of the White Feet, Bridghe of the White Hills, Bridghe the White Swan, Mother of the King of Glory, Daughter of the Sun, Woman of Healing.

If we regard Bridghe merely as an abstraction such as might spring from our intellectual consciousness today, we shall go fatally astray. The Celtic world-conception flowed out of a quite different consciousness—a consciousness based on vision into other worlds than those visible only to the purely physical eye. Bridghe was a living form to be met with in those worlds by the Celtic seer, a manifestation of one of those divine spiritual beings who, incarnated in a fleshly body, exist and work behind that tapestry of the sense-world which is of their own weaving.

The correspondences between Bridghe, Celtic goddess, and Bride, Celtic saint, are inescapable. The one is heir to the other's nature, powers, attributes and rites; there are epithets handed down from

goddess to saint completely unchanged. But merely to dismiss St. Bride, as current scholarship does, as "a disguised Celtic deity", or, in the phrasing of *The Golden Bough*, "a pagan goddess in a threadbare Christian cloak", is to miss the whole spiritual significance of the deep connection between them. For events of spiritual history, before they descend to earth to be lived out by men, are first lived out by higher beings in a higher world. Thus, St. George comes to earth as earthly counterpart of the Archangel Michael, performing in the realm of matter those dragon-conquests already performed by Michael in the War in Heaven; and the slaying of Siegfried re-enacts on the physical plane the slaying of Baldur the Sun-god in aerial Asgard. So in Bridghe the goddess certain aspects of Celtic destiny hover still in the heights which in Bride the saint are brought fully into incarnation. Bridghe yields place to Bride when a deed of the most solemn significance for all future evolution has occurred—when the Christ-Being has united Himself with the Being of the Earth.

IV

Of the Celtic Mysteries the sixth-century Celtic Bard-Initiate, Taliesin, sings: "Christ, the Word from the beginning, was from the beginning our Teacher, and we never lost His teaching. Christianity was in Asia a new thing; but there never was a time when the Druids of Britain held not its doctrines."

Of what grounds have we knowledge today for so stupendous a claim?

The faculty known as "second-sight", still found frequently among the Gael today, points back to a state of consciousness and method of cognition which characterised the Celts in earlier times. Theirs was a world most livingly and closely interpenetrated by the elements, whose interplay they saw not merely as wind-driven cloud and drifting sea-mist and sunlight uniting with spray flung against the cliffs, but also quite factually as an interweaving of activity of those spiritual beings whose garments the elements are. Less closely shuttered in the physical body than we are today, they were able to stream forth and mingle with the ensouled elements, living over into the sphere of the ether-forces which surround our planet, spreading their beings abroad and looking down, as it were, towards Earth from spaces nearer Heaven.

The Druids in particular cultivated this gift, raising it into an enhanced and accurate perception of what took place behind the veils of matter; and among the Celtic saints were some who inherited it in a pure form if to a diminishing degree. "Heaven has granted to some," said St. Columba, "to see on occasion in their mind, clearly and surely, the whole of Earth and sea and sky." And that St. Columba himself was one who had this faculty is attested by Adamnan, his seventh-century biographer: "St. Columba, as he himself did not deny, in some contemplations of divine grace beheld

even the whole world as if gathered together in one ray of the sun, gazing on it as manifested before him, while his inmost soul was enlarged in a wonderful manner."

In the Hibernian Mysteries, the neophyte was prepared for Initiation by being plunged deep into the doubts and difficulties of knowledge. At the moment when tension reached the limits of endurance, it was resolved by the appearance, between the two immense statues round which the enigmas revolved, of an ineffably exalted Cosmic Being as Uniter, Answerer, Harmoniser. Of this Cosmic Being's centuries-long descent towards earthly incarnation the Druids, through their ability to flow out into spheres beyond the Earth, were aware: where other Mysteries were sadly cognisant only of His departure from that Sun of which He was the informing Spirit, the Celtic seers, before He achieved physical incarnation, already saw Him quite concretely as King of the Elements on that last stage of His long journey which traversed the etheric mantlings of the Earth.

An echo of this experience reverberates on even today in Gaelic carols. For example:

"A time ere came the Son of God,
The earth was a black morass,
Without star, without sun, without moon,
Without body, without heart, without form.
Illumined plains, illumined hills,
Illumined the great green sea;
Illumined the whole globe together,
When His foot was come to Earth."

Or again:

"I behold mansions, I behold shores,
I behold angels floating.
I behold the shapely rounded column
Coming landwards in friendship to us.
Glowed to Him wood and tree,
Glowed to Him mount and sea,
Glowed to Him land and plain
When the Son of God came to Earth."

Such, indeed, was the sensitiveness of the Celtic seership that later, at that very moment when, in the East, the Crucifixion on Golgotha was taking place, the Druids away in the West were able to perceive it with direct spiritual vision, and to perceive it not only in its outer physical manifestation, but also in all the changes which it wrought in the kingdom of the elements.

Memories of this Mystery-experience even today gleam here and there through the stories of the Red Branch Cycle, that portion of the Irish Mythological Cycle which deals with the doings of the heroes of Ulster at the time of the birth of Christ. It tells, for example, how the slain hero Cuchulain and Laeg, his charioteer, journeying through the air to the Land of the Living Dead, pause over Emain Macha, Ulster's royal city, and prophesy the coming world-reign of the King of the Elements. It tells how the Red

Branch hero, Conaill of the Victories, is "present" at the Crucifixion. It tells how Conchubar mac Nessa, Ulster's king, saw "unusual changes in the creation, the eclipse of the sun and the moon at the full," and, seeking a reason of his Chief Druid, was told of "a hill in a distant land whereon stand three crosses, and on each cross a human form, and one thereof is like to the Immortals"; and how Conchubar, driven into battle-frenzy in the Immortal's defence, attacks with his sword the oak-grove in which they are walking, bursts open an old strange head-wound, and so comes to his own death.

Nor are these intimations confined to the heroes and Druids of Ulster. At Tara, in Meath, also, soon to succeed Emain Macha as Ireland's paramount royal *dun*, a giant comes in immense splendour to the great council gathered there. He gives his name as Trefuilngid Tre-Eochair (the Triple Bearer of the Triple Key), and in his hand he bears a branch from the Lebanon from which hang three ripe fruits—hazel nuts, acorns and apples. He is asked what ails the sun that day in the East, and he replies that in the land from which comes his fruiting bough the King of the Sun is that day being crucified. From the fruit which fell as he spoke, five trees sprang up, and he left the council with the prophecy that these five trees would remain until the King of the Sun should come into His own again.

That the "pagan" Druids could perceive this divine Event half the round world away, and that they could perceive it not only in its outer physical manifestation but also in all its impact on Earth and Earth's ether-aura, lays the foundation for Celtic Christianity's experience of the Cosmic Nature of the Christ-Being. In those regions where the Celtic Mysteries had remained pure and had not degenerated into dark and magical practices, there was no need for "conversion"—in Christianity these Mysteries found their own glorious and inevitable fulfilment. Celtic Christianity was unique in that it was a kind of spontaneous birth, flowering out of and heir to all the supersensibly-perceived Christ-knowledge of the Druids. Druid and Bard of the old religion became quite naturally the first priests of the new.

V

Bridghe, the historians tell us, was the culture-goddess of the Celts. Since all ancient cultures sprang and were shaped and nourished from one source—the Mysteries—we can see Bridghe as connected in a quite special way with the Celtic Mystery-Wisdom—that Mystery-Wisdom whose tree of Initiation was her tree; whose Initiation took place through the pangs of that knowledge which belonged to her domain; whose culture-heroes went forth far and wide, as far north as Iceland, as far south as Italy; and whose task it was to educate and civilise a pagan Europe. Their experiencing of the living interplay of the elements and of the weaving and eddy-

ing currents of the ether-forces of the Earth led the Druids to choose as the sites of their culture-temples regions where the veils between sensible and supersensible worlds were most transparent, and where the natural life-forces were so abundant that the images impressed from the cosmos upon the Earth's elemental mantle did not pass away but themselves became living. And it was precisely in these same centres (round Bridghe's Lake Constance, for example) that after the coming of Christianity, the Irish monks established their communities and built their wooden churches. With unerring steps, because guided by the same etheric knowledge, Celtic Christian missionary followed the same routes to the same journey's end as pre-Christian Celtic Druid, settling in what seemed often an outwardly inauspicious region, and by force of his own innocent holiness taming its wild soul-life into gentleness.

In the Celtic mythological hierarchy Bridghe belonged to the Tuatha De Danaan, those gracious and beneficent Gods of Light who, the ancient manuscripts record, came to Ireland "out of heaven, wafted on a magic cloud." And to this realm of heaven and magic cloud belongs each attribute and epithet by which we know this being. She is the shimmering guardian of those pure life-forces in which both Celtic soul and Celtic world were so radiantly abounding, and which work in birth and growth and nourishment, so that she protects human motherhood and creaturely fruitfulness and bestows milk, that unfallen food which is barely yet of Earth. This is her sphere of holy fire, radiating microcosmically within man's blood and macrocosmically in the mantle of warmth which embraces and interpenetrates the airy atmosphere of the Earth, and feeding that cloud of brightness which even outer eyes in earlier times saw permeating and surrounding the objects of sense-perception, so that the whole world seemed aflame.

So she is Woman of Healing and Protectress of Poets, for it is out of this sphere of abundant life-forces that both healing and poetry flow. Dreams, destinies, prophecies were in her care, for this is the sphere in which pictures of past and future live, giving knowledge of destiny to those who, from the earth's periphery, can read their script, and giving the gift of dreams to those who can find their way into this sphere in sleep. To this sphere belong the golden hair of spiritual wisdom; white feet still unsullied, for they have not yet trodden Earth; white hills whose uplifted peaks border on heavenly realms; the white swan that is the pure pre-natal being of man. She is the Daughter of the Sun, for from the sun this realm receives its being, and it is into the place in cosmic space where the sun has been that Earth moves in spring and rejoices in its warmth. And she is Mother of the King of Glory, for this is the realm which received the Cosmic Image of the descending Christ, so that it was as King of the Elements that He was taken into the Celtic heart. Thus Bridghe did in sober fact enwrap the Christ in her mantle even before He had taken to Himself an earthly one. In Bridghe, even

before Christ reaches Earth, we can already see the divine and cosmic archetypal Foster-mother of the Christ.

VI

All these attributes of Bridghe has St. Bride, translated into terms of a saintly—and, because Celtic, still half-heavenly—earthly human incarnation. Well does she say, "I am but a little child," for her forces, like those of the Celtic Church and of the Celtic race itself, are the bright, abounding life-forces of birth and childhood. Truly she is born neither in the house nor out of the house, for she hovers on that threshold where Earth and Heaven meet. Bridghe's realm of holy fire is Bride's realm, also; here she received from angelic hands the name and the mission both inherited from Bridghe. So her house also is a House of Fire and she herself is "Bride, radiant flame of gold"; so she also is "Bride, of women beneficent, Brigit of the augury, Brigit of the kine, Bride of the white feet, Bride of the white hills, Bride of the fairy swan, rich-tressed maiden with ringlets of gold"; and the rowan-grove of her Initiation stands beside a mountain lake, for where there is tranquil fresh water, fed from heaven by rain, there the life-forces work especially strongly.

She is "melodious Bride, Bride my maker of song", for she, like her divine prototype, has access to the well-springs of poetry in this sphere of holy fire; and so filled with holy enchantment are her paradisaal runes that she can charm celestial nourishment to flow even when Earth herself has grown dried-up and barren. In this celestial nourishment she herself is bathed at birth; such nourishment sustains her all her earthly life, and has its source, as her childhood's shaping for her Christian destiny has its source, in a Druidic wisdom.

All that is lovely in the sphere of the elements belongs to her—"all beauty beneath the sky and beneath the sea." Healing belongs to her, for out of the wild surging of the elemental forces within she has brought about a serenely ordered and harmonious soul-life; so she is "Bride of calmness", and the "peace, deep peace of Bride" is invoked in many a healing rune. Because of this inner tranquil holiness, though the wind is strong on the Temple heights, her candles do not flicker as she bears them before Mary. In the Irish Hearth-Blessing, she enwraps and nurses the seed of earthly fire as once she enwrapped and nursed the heavenly; and in the lighting of Yule-log from Candlemas Brand that divine Life which came into her sphere of the elements on her feast day is safely carried at Christmas right down into earthly incarnation. When, on "the birthday of the year", she puts her finger in the river of life-forces, her warmth overcomes winter's coldness; and all the torpid creatures which have slept withdrawn through "the death of the year" come out again into the blessing of the new-born sun. Indeed, so strong and pure in her are the forces of life and of springtime that at the touch of her lips the dead wood of the altar feet breaks into leaf and flower.

A perpetual flame is her symbol, as it is Bridghe's—flame, which also is born neither in the house nor out of the house, for it is that element in which substance passes over into the insubstantial, and its very nature unites sensible world with supersensible. Bridghe's mantle falls quite literally on Bride; Bride's mantle is even blue, as Bridghe's atmospheric mantle is when viewed from the Earth, within its embrace. That Druidic prophecy spoke truth which foretold that in Bride should dwell one of the Immortals; for her being is overshadowed and permeated by her divine archetype, that heavenly being who, with the descent of Christ into her sphere of the elements, had ceased to ray forth her own light into the spiritual evolution of Man and of the Earth, but had made of herself a chalice which might be filled with and henceforth reflect the light of Christ Himself. In Bridghe is upgathered the task of pagan Celtdom. The task of Christian Celtdom is gathered up in Bride.

THE BIRD ON THE HARP

ALL music spent, the harper sat, harp upon knee;
A Heavy the heart he leaned upon the harp, impotent, numb.
With a life's skill, with a life's artistry,
His imploring fingers swept the sullen strings,
Seeking to pluck from them secreted melody;
But still the strings were dumb.
Till, between heart-beats, curving, a bright bird came
And rested on the harp's dead wood as on a living tree.
Whiter than snow on winter branches were his wings,
And on his breast each feather was a flame;
And such a song sang he—
That blissful bird—
As harper never played or harper heard.

"Bird! Bird!" the harper cried, bowed head upflung.
"How came the constellations on your breath to float?
How came all heaven to issue from your lung?
The sun to bubble golden in each note?
How came the Milky Way to ripple from your tongue?
The moon to move so sweetly in your throat?"

"Thus is Earth blessed," the bird sang. "See! See! See!
See how my slender voice is yet so strong
That on it all the firmament's lights,
At my heart's pull fallen in honey-flights,
In glad homegoing upthrong!

See the Earth's need rise with them to God's gate!
 See how God meets it in this heavenly to-and-fro,
 Sending my singing streaming into the furthest blue
 That it, returning, may fall again with the dew
 To quicken, to re-create!

Play, harper! Each created thing
 Thus to bless Earth its song must sing.
 Harvest would never ripen if there were no song."

The harper touched his tongue-tied harp; and lo,
 From each mute string
 Celestial songs began to flow,
 Sank to embrace the Earth, and so,
 Bird-like, took Godward wing.

* * * *

This was a thousand years ago.

* * * *

Harpers are grown small today.
 Mine is so small that it can creep
 Inside my heart, and hide away,
 And never stir from its slack sleep
 Save when some bird of fire and snow
 Curves singing from the stars to rest
 One breath-beat on my breast.
 Then heart-strings, shaken awake, tremble and leap;
 All is bright swirling chaos and pregnant pain,
 Until that beneficent bird's outpourings cease,
 The fire-mists clear, and in a pent-up peace
 My small harp sings again.

Into its faint heart-music is woven this prayer:
 Now may some eavesdropping angel, passing by,
 Hear my small song; as at a child's lilt smile;
 And midway of his high errand pause awhile,
 Upon his Paradise viol to play its air
 In through the welcoming windows of the sky,
 That thence it may drop dewlike on the Earth
 And gently, in some dark and desolate place,
 Re-ignite, of that most courteous angel's grace,
 A small green blade of birth.

ISABEL WYATT.



This figure of an Irish harper, with a bird perched on his harp, is part of a reliquary known as the Breac Moedóic, connected by repute with St. Moedóc, first Bishop of Ferns and patron saint of the Kings of Leinster, who was born in Co. Cavan about 555 A.D. The figure is thought to represent King David and dates probably from about 1,100 A.D.

National Museum of Ireland.

Thinking About Knowing

Alan Howard

KNOWLEDGE is what happens when our percept-experience of the world is illuminated by the appropriate concepts. The percept-experience itself is given. With its coming into being we have no more to do than to confront the world with our naturally endowed senses, and let it act on us. The concept, however, is not given in this way. It *arises* as a result of Thinking; and this result does not occur simultaneously with the application of Thinking, but appears after a longer or shorter time. Indeed, it is just this delay which gives us the opportunity to observe our share in the coming into being of the concept. We are conscious of our own effort in its production. "Think hard!" said our teachers when they wanted us as children to identify an unfamiliar object, and they would wait patiently for the result; but in order to draw our attention to the object itself they simply said, "Look here!" and expected an immediate response.

This is elementary and obvious; but what is not so obvious is that in saying this we have not necessarily got any nearer to the nature of knowledge as such. Only when we realize that in talking about the percept as a factor in knowledge we are not perceiving, but thinking about it, and when we talk about Thinking as the other factor we are not thinking in the ordinary way, but thinking about Thinking itself, do we begin to see what is involved. In short, all the foregoing has taken place entirely in the conceptual sphere; and in order to understand what knowledge itself is, it is only in this conceptual sphere that we can hope for any success. Whatever researches we undertake, we must carry them out entirely within this field.

This takes us at once into an activity which, while it grows out of our ordinary consciousness, is also beyond it. It can be called Pure Thinking, where, if anything is to happen, Thinking must undertake the dual role of observing and thinking. In the world of concepts there is no other means of observation than this of Thinking; and if we want to study further what our Thinking there observes, then we must once again think about it. This dual role, however, can give us confidence in the kind of Thinking required to understand knowledge; for while in the world of objects our thoughts about things may seem insufficient unless they are confirmed by sight, here, in the conceptual world where Thinking is also 'seeing', the 'objects' can be observed *only* by Thinking.

It is this Pure Thinking which enables us to make the distinction between percept and concept referred to above, and from which we conclude that these two are, in the first place, separate factors, which it is the task of knowledge to unite; but it must not be forgotten that this is a result of Thinking. We cannot perceive perception; nor can

we make any kind of statement about perception without passing over simultaneously to Thinking, which is not perception; and whatever kind of consciousness we may imagine the consciousness of pure perception to be, it cannot be our ordinary consciousness, because this is a consciousness that thinks. This begins only when we ask "What?" of something; and both asking the question and comprehending the answer are again not perception, but Thinking.

Therefore it is impossible to give an example of a pure percept so that we may study it for ourselves, and henceforth 'know' what a percept is. In the very act of studying it, its perceptual character vanishes. We cannot perceive and at the same time *know* what we are perceiving as percept. We cannot make statements about a particular percept, and keep within the perceptual sphere. We can explain a percept only in the conceptual sphere.

Knowledge, therefore, is the cancellation, the utter obliteration of the pure percept; and though we sometimes refer to familiar objects as percepts from the way they enter the field of observation, they are really known objects we are 'perceiving', not pure percepts. The pure percept is entirely *unknown*, and remains so until Thinking has raised it to the status of the known, when its original (pure) perceptual character merges indistinguishably in the thing known.

In every act of knowledge we rise by means of Thinking out of the undifferentiated consciousness of perception into the differentiated (human) consciousness of knowing. In every act of knowledge we accomplish the re-creation of the world and ourselves in consciousness.

Once we have grasped this, many things which may have seemed obscure become clearer. Notably the fact that the separation of percept and concept, which is cancelled in knowledge, is something not existing in the object, but in us. The object, the world which we perceive, *is*; it exists as an entirely independent, undivided content of being. It does not ask questions of us; we ask questions of it. We are the petitioners, the world is the respondent; and just as there is no limit to the number and variety of questions we may ask, so there is no indication in the nature of the world as such why we should be denied the answers.

True, we may ask the wrong question and thereby be led into doubt and error, or our Thinking may be inadequate *at the time* to find the answer; but these impediments are again not in the world, but in us, and must just as surely be overcome by us. The world does not hide itself from us. It is there, in and around us—indeed, in so far as we are perceiving beings, who take no part in the coming into being of perception, but only recognise it at a point where it becomes a question for us, the world *is* us. But when we ask a question, when we think, something else comes into play—something entirely different from perception, something which originates in us and is identified with us.

It is just because it is we ourselves who ask the questions, and not the world, that we can have that confidence in Thinking already referred to. When we ask, "What is that?", the question arises in *us*, and is wholly contained in the activity of our Thinking. But we ask, none the less, about a perfectly definite some *thing* which perception, not Thinking, has first brought to our notice; but about which perception itself will tell us nothing further, but hands it over to Thinking. We do not ask questions in a vacuum. Perception *has* detected something; and it is this something 'outside' us which prompts the question 'within' us.

Now, the products of Thinking are concepts and ideas. Therefore, that 'something' which perception detects can be no other than the idea itself which our Questioning/Thinking activity tries to bring into focus. The idea, in other words, is already active in the question; and perception is none other than *the very first intimation we receive that there is an idea to be grasped*. It is the idea-content of the world which announces itself in perception. Perception, in other words, is the world's way of thinking its ideas in us; Thinking is our way of finding the ideas in the world.

When a stranger knocks at my door, his knock tells me nothing whatsoever at first about *him*, nor has it any other effect upon me than that I hear it. But if I get up and open the door—an act which is entirely mine—a whole host of possibilities become available to me which the knock by itself could never have revealed.

The implication of this is very far-reaching. It means that there are virtually no insoluble problems, no unanswerable questions, no riddles of existence as absolute realities. Ideas are not arbitrary, we do not invent them somewhere inside us (in our brain, for instance, as is commonly supposed) and then attach them to 'things' out there in space. The ideas *are* the things; they are what the world is made of; and our Thinking is the means whereby we apprehend them. The thoughts are 'in' the object, not in us. We think the world-thoughts; and by thinking them in response to and in conjunction with perception, we obtain that kind of relationship to the world which we call knowledge. The initial isolation is thereby cancelled; the world unity is re-established; we have answered the knock.

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It is a fundamental requirement of Thinking to learn to put the right questions; that is, to learn to direct our Thinking to the precise origin of the perception. This can be done only by an attentiveness to all that the world has to offer, quite independently of any pre-conceived notions of what we think it ought to offer, or what we would like it to offer. We must just quietly allow it to act upon us, carefully selecting out from the complexity of any single experience all that which is part of our knowledge already, so that what is absolutely new in the experience may make the strongest possible impression on us.

If we can do this, we come eventually to understand why it is that percept and concept can unite in knowledge at all. A too-rigid concept of percept and concept could lead us to imagine that they are irreconcilable opposites; and the problem for knowledge would have to be: How can two such fundamentally different things be made one? On closer consideration, however, this problem disappears. They are already one and the same thing, only given in one way to perception, and in another to Thinking.

Why, then, do they appear as separate at all? Could not the Creator have saved Himself and us a lot of trouble by making us creatures in which both happened simultaneously—like someone who comes into our room and makes himself known to us without the formality of knocking? Undoubtedly, He could; and according to Rudolf Steiner there was a time when this actually happened, when Thinking and perception were united in man, only to be separated later in order that consciousness—modern consciousness—might arise. To have remained in their undivided state would have inhibited the rise of that consciousness, which is a consciousness of itself as thinker—modern self-consciousness. Man could not have become the man he is today if that separation had not taken place—for man becomes conscious of himself only by Thinking; and the first knowledge of self—true self-consciousness—is just this inner activity of Thinking, thinking about itself as percept.

This is just the peculiar nature of Thinking—that we ourselves are wholly identified with it. In perception something *happens to us*; in Thinking, *we act*; and in thinking about Thinking—the *Ur-Reflexivum*, as Carl Unger calls it in his essay on “The Ego and the Nature of Man”—man determines himself as man. Were he only a perceiving being, he would be entirely unconscious of himself. The world process would take place in him and he would be entirely unaware of it—a mere sentient apparatus in which the world—not he—would be the conscious agent. But by this separation into two of what was originally one, man becomes able to know not only the world but also himself.

Knowledge then is primarily and wholly a concern of man. There is no knowledge pre-existing ‘out there’ which man is under some cosmic mandate to acquire. The world leaves him free; and respects both his freedom and him, so much so that he may pile error upon error to his own destruction, without some *deus ex machina* ever once intervening to save him. What kind of ‘outer-ness’ knowledge may seem to have, is only so in the sense in which we speak of the accumulation of human knowledge. But this is not knowledge in the sense in which we are speaking of it here, but only the results of knowledge: information; the dried fruits of the tree of knowledge which have been gathered in the course of human evolution. We mean by knowledge that conscious relationship of the self-conscious human spirit with the surrounding cosmos as it is experienced in the act of knowing. It is something entirely

new in every single instance, no matter in how many human beings it takes place at different times. Man as knower becomes something different from what he was before; and because he is also part of the cosmos, and not outside it, it is a cosmic event, too. In knowing we become a co-creator with God; and that decision of the Elohim to make man in their own image can have meaning only as a decision to make a being who, though part of the created world, would also have the power to re-create it in knowledge.

*

Knowledge, therefore, is the coming into being of man; and, conversely, the coming into being of man must be the end and aim of all knowledge. Here knowledge finds its identity with education, for education also can be nothing less than this coming into being of man. Whatever value knowledge as information may have in human affairs, it refers only to what has become, not to what is ‘becoming’; and it is this ‘becoming’ which should be the sole concern of education.

In the fourth chapter of his “Philosophy of Spiritual Activity”, Rudolf Steiner helps us to understand this ‘coming into being of man’ by inviting us to imagine “that a being with fully developed human intelligence originated out of nothing and confronted the world. *All that it there perceived, before its thinking began to act, would be the pure content of observation.* The world so far would appear to this being as a mere chaotic aggregate of objects of sensation—colours, sounds, sensations of pressure, of warmth, of taste, of smell, and, further feelings of pleasure and pain. This aggregation constitutes *the world of pure unthinking observation.* Over it stands thinking, ready to begin its activity as soon as it can find a point of attack.”

Students of Steiner’s “Philosophy of Spiritual Activity” have probably spent many hours—and, no doubt, in vain—trying to imagine just what kind of creature that could be. Once again, it would be so helpful to be able to point to an example—a specimen, as it were, for demonstration purposes. Such a specimen is, of course, not forthcoming; and yet there come into the world every day—indeed, every hour—beings who, while they may not entirely fill the bill of what Steiner meant by “fully developed human intelligences”, are none the less such potentially, and are sufficiently human in every other respect to pass. We refer to new-born babies.

In every new-born baby we have potentially a “fully developed human intelligence” which, in being born, confronts the world for the first time. That being so, it can only do so entirely as perceiving being. The world will be for it a “mere chaotic aggregate of objects of sensation”; but because it is also human, and therefore a thinking being, Thinking soon begins its activity.

But we must not be pedantic about Thinking. The baby certainly does not think in the sense that it immediately begins con-

structing syllogisms and drawing conclusions, for those are only the specialised forms of adult thought. Thinking is there in its primary character, and as such must be considered as already having got to work.

Where then does it most obviously show itself? Where and how does the little child begin to think?

It thinks first in its will, in all that manifests as bodily activity.

We have described knowledge as that by which man relates himself to the world, and Thinking as the instrument in that process. The little child, as soon as it is born, also begins to relate itself to the world; and it does so to begin with by handling it, tasting it, smelling it, banging it, tearing it, throwing it about—all those activities of infancy which, for us more reflective adults, are both our despair and delight. This is the way the little child ‘thinks’—in its will; and if we want to ensure that the child who thinks thus in its will shall also think later ‘in his head’, we shall not give him at this time all kinds of intellectual exercises to bring this about. We shall just let him go on exercising his will—directing and controlling it no more than is necessary to bring it gradually into harmony with what is the current practice in the world. For while the child plays, while it exercises its limbs, it is all the time building up its body—and, what is more important (at least for us as knowers)—building up its brain, too; for brain is part of the body.

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This brings us to the point where we can attempt an understanding of the relation of Thinking to the brain in which it is supposed to take place. Everybody knows that there is a connection between the two; though most people simply imagine it as cause and effect: we think because we have a brain. But how if the other possibility should be more correct: Because we think we have a brain? It certainly fits the facts. It is obvious that Nature did not evolve a light-sensing eye in her creatures, and then look round for a medium in which this organ could be used—light. The light must have been there first, and, acting upon the sensitive living creature, gradually evolved an organ reciprocal to itself. No less must Thinking, in its universal primary character, have evolved the human brain, so that it could subsequently reflect its own activity, and become conscious of itself in the reflection.

“Only”, says Rudolf Steiner (again in his “Philosophy of Spiritual Activity”) “if one wins through, by means of unprejudiced observation, to the recognition of this truth of the intuitive essence of thinking will one succeed in clearing the way for a conception of the psycho-physical organisation of man. One recognises that *this organisation can produce no effect whatever on the essential nature of thinking*.... Once we perceive this, we can no longer misapprehend the significance for thinking of this physical counterpart. When we walk over soft ground, our feet leave impressions in the

soil. We shall not be tempted to say that the forces of the ground from below have formed these footprints. We shall not attribute to these forces any share in the production of the footprints. Just so, if without prejudice we observe the essential nature of thinking, *we shall not attribute any share in that nature to the traces in the physical organisation which thinking produces in preparing its manifestation through the human body.*”

Thinking, then, is the activity of the creative spirit which lives in all things. As pure creative spirit it can, and no doubt does, exist in its own right and essence. As our human thinking, however, there must first be created out of that same spirit a means, an organ, in which it can manifest. That organ is the whole human being, with its crown in the human brain; and in so far as the little human being, the child, in its early years is shaping and consolidating that organ in its bodily activity and play, we can say that the child ‘thinks’ to begin with in its will. In just those bodily activities it is already preparing that subsequent ‘manifestation of thinking’.

But the child grows; and this will-activity which plays such a large part in the early years in building up the body/brain, sinks deeper, as it were, into the total psycho-physical organisation. It becomes more inward, more conscious of itself. *Feeling* of self and *feeling* for the world begin to predominate more and more. The child begins to see himself in other people, situations, activities. He lives their story in the fantasy of his self, and he identifies himself with them inwardly.

This feeling life is what must now be taken hold of if education is to assist in the coming into being of man. The child should now be gradually introduced to the whole wealth of human knowledge, in so far as it can be an experience for him on which he can exercise his imagination to the full. But the emphasis must be on this exercise of the imagination. It must not matter a bit what the child retains. Retain something he will—and invariably what he *likes*; and the important thing is just this matter of liking, enjoyment, for joy is the very essence of Thinking and knowledge. This joy can—and it alone can—awaken him still further inwardly; and as he becomes more active within, this activity is not only the prerequisite of all subsequent thought; it is Thinking itself on the path of its descent from the spirit in the universe to the spirit in man.

But the child continues to grow; and this life of feeling attains a certain climax when adolescence is reached. The child—now no longer a child—attains to a full inner life of his own. He has to this extent fully related himself to the world. He has become a person.

This is a major crisis in the coming into being of man. Just as the will-activity in the little child does not cease when it has reached a certain climax about the age of seven, so this inner life of feeling does not cease when the child at last begins to call his soul his own about the age of fourteen. But he has in the meantime matured a

capacity which would lead this feeling into one channel only, if a new impulse, a new direction were not given to the young human being; for sexual maturity, with all it involves, has now set in, and if this feeling life is not to be left to exhaust itself in eroticism, it must be led into new channels of knowledge-experience.

This can be provided only by the intensification of the joy of Thinking in as many spheres of human science and culture as a generous curriculum, and people with the capacity and inspiration to handle it, can allow.

But not just with the aim of a competitive examination in view! We ignore—solely for the purposes of this article—what moral and practical issues may be argued in the use of competitive examinations, and refer only to the concept of knowledge implicit in them, which is the direct opposite of what has been discussed here. Knowledge is not just the tool by which the powers of Nature may be exploited for our animal and sentient needs; it is also the voice by which Nature herself calls to the human spirit, and with which she would fain draw him into intimate communion with herself.

Everything that denies the human spirit, that thrusts its bearer back to the animal, takes its start from the prostitution of the concept of knowledge to merely materialistic ends. Even the greatest achievements of human science can, if knowing itself is not understood, work back upon man, limiting him and degrading him; and while it may be true that "Knowledge is power", it is a terrible thing when knowledge becomes a power, tyrannising over man and binding him in dogmatic fetters. What 'power' knowledge possesses it takes entirely from the knower himself, not from the thing known; and if knowledge is seen as the creative activity of him who knows, and not the blind or enforced acceptance of what is known, it can have no power to restrict but only to liberate and ennoble. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

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All knowledge is ultimately self-knowledge. Whenever a man makes a statement about himself, he invariably does so in terms of what is at first not himself but part of the world in which he finds himself. The simplest, no less than the most exalted descriptions of the self, are all alike in this respect. "I am a beggar" is the same kind of statement as "I am a king" or "I am a professor". They link the 'I' who makes them with events and facts in the world outside him; and while the sum of all such statements that a man could make about himself would certainly be a description of the man, it would also be a description of the kind of world in which he lived—incorporating the sum of his knowledge of the world. Man and world condition each other at this level reciprocally.

But embedded in this kind of self-knowledge is a more intimate and more subtle percept of self which *calls out of the being of the knower himself*; and whenever, to the kind of self-knowledge

described above, is added the question, "Who then is this 'I' that comes into every kind of statement I make about myself?", self-knowledge begins to be sought on a far, far deeper level than ever before. And when this happens, one cannot just begin all over again by saying, "I am a..." One must now exclude from one's sphere of observation all that which has no direct bearing on the enquiry, all that which is Not-I, which belongs to the world; for I "am not of this world." One must sacrifice one's own world-orientated personality, one's self in so far as it is 'mine', belonging to me, but not me.

But what is left when everything of self expressible in terms of the world has been discarded? Nothing; nothing but the pure concept of 'I' sustained by its own being, the "I am that I am"; the 'no thing' which is the ultimate concept of man as knowing subject, and the pure percept of man as known object.

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Is this, then, all our knowledge leads us to—this isolation in apparent conceptual abstraction? No; this is not the end, but the beginning. This is the point at which knowing accomplishes its own apotheosis, and transforms itself into *being*. This is where it carries that self-consciousness which it won in the activity of knowing, back to that sphere where the possibility of knowing first took its rise in the undifferentiated consciousness of perception. But this is not just a return to the starting point. We come back not to the point from which we set out, but to one above it—spiral-wise, not circular-wise. We have ascended in the process.

Perception is an activity of *being* in which our own being is embedded. What happened in the beginning—perception—without our volition, and was the starting point of our knowledge, did not, however, happen without *any* volition. Just as we have to be consciously active, so that Thinking may grasp the concept in consciousness, so other Beings had to be active so that the percept, from which all knowledge starts, might take place in us. But the nature of those Beings who bring about perception in us lies beyond the simple knowledge, the natural science, of the phenomena they sustain. The stranger who knocks at my door is not the knock; nor can a knowledge, however elaborate, which confines itself to the laws of the phenomenon as such tell me anything about him. Only when I also perceive in the knock the will of a Being who seeks my attention, do I really begin to know what is happening.

We stand, then, on the threshold of a new 'world', a world from which we ourselves originated and to which we still belong, a world of whose existence we should not have become aware but for the experience of knowing; but a world which, for all our knowledge, remains inaccessible to us until knowledge itself has found the organ of perception for it.

Rudolf Steiner called this world the spiritual world, and

knowledge of that world he called Spiritual Science, or Anthroposophy. Knowledge of the sense-world is what happens when our percept-experience is illuminated by the appropriate concepts; knowledge of that spiritual world is what happens when our *concept*-experience is illuminated by percepts—spiritual percepts. Concept and percept are no less separated for spiritual science than they are for natural science; but in spiritual science the concept comes first, the percept illuminates it later. The world of the senses makes itself accessible to us in the activity of those Beings who bring about perception in us; we make *ourselves* accessible to the spiritual world in the activity of the fully conscious act of Thinking. Knowledge of the one arises as a gift of nature; knowledge of the other is a gift of grace. But both are knowledge, and both are available to man; for man as knower is the ever-evolving image of all that may be known —“...now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”

And just as earlier we have tried to show that knowledge and education are really one, so ultimately the act of knowledge must find its identity with the highest spiritual striving of man. When Parsifal stood before the mystery of the Holy Grail, everything depended on his doing what we have to do every day if we would advance from a mere staring at the world to knowledge of it—he had to ask a question. Likewise when the world makes contact with us in the act of perception, God Himself whispers to the heart and mind of each one of us:

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.”

Melancholy in our Modern Age

Rudolf Treichler, M.D.*

I

IT quite often happens that an experience someone undergoes weighs so heavily on him that it literally “depresses” him. He feels that he is unable to cope with it properly. It sinks into his soul and is forgotten—and yet it will rise up time and again from what might be called the “deep-sea” regions of the soul, still as strong and as menacing as ever.

Once an experience has been properly dealt with, it will fade into a memory-picture that can be called up again at will, and we may develop certain thoughts, feelings and will impulses in relation to it. But the “undigested” experience has its own way of pushing itself up into our conscious life of soul, thereby drawing on our thoughts, feelings and will-impulses whether we want it or not.

It is the Ego of man, as we shall see later, that seeks to “digest” every experience of the soul, somewhat as food is digested on the physical plane. It is through the Ego that every experience can become a kind of nourishment from which new forces will flow into and help the development of the soul.

An experience that does not nourish the soul will tend to burden it. The soul-forces, becoming bound to the depressing experience, are themselves weighed down. They fall into gravity, in both senses of the word. And in this process the soul becomes more or less consciously tied up with the past. It is not only this particular experience that preoccupies the soul, but all the events that led up to it. Especially the forces of will, which shape the future, are no longer free and are now employed to delve into the past. That is why a depressed person may seem as if paralysed with regard to the future. The question, “What shall I do?”, begins to haunt him.

If an otherwise fairly well-balanced person reacts to a problematic experience with this kind of depression, we can expect that after a matter of days or weeks he will have dealt with it sufficiently for him to emerge from his heavy mood. There is, however, another kind of sadness which, while resembling in its symptoms the “reactive depression” described so far, differs from it in the way it comes about.

Many people will be familiar with the following situation. Without any apparent reason you find it difficult to wake up in the morning. Your head is sore, your limbs feel heavy. The day with

* This abridged translation is published by permission of Dr. Treichler and the editors of *Wetada Nachrichten*, where the article first appeared (Michaelmas, 1957).

its demands stands before you like a mountain. Nothing you can think of gives you any pleasure. Once having made the effort to get up, your general condition may brighten gradually and give way to your usual frame of mind.

But it can also happen that this morning "shadow" deepens, and extends in both directions of time. The phase of waking up may become a very long one by eventually starting as early as 3 a.m. and lasting more or less throughout the day. Such a person cannot sleep well after about 3 a.m., nor is he able to wake up properly during the day. Only in the evenings he may, at best, feel a little brighter. General heaviness and a slight feeling of sickness may be added symptoms. To fight against the inner lethargy seems hopeless. The patient cannot summon his energy for the smallest activity. His feet drag along; so do his thoughts. Everything stagnates. The past alone, set and unalterable, looms over him and he feels fettered to it. Whatever might be done now is bound to be imperfect, while every thought of the past becomes a self-reproach. At last the whole of life seems one great sin. The future offers no hope; the soul feels imprisoned in anxiety; extinction seems to threaten the Ego.

This process of intensifying can lead to the power of will flaring up once more by turning against itself in a last and desperate attempt. The Ego-feeling as it dwindles is activated by a negative will-force. The wish to die and lose the self becomes a powerful urge towards suicide.

This is a brief sketch of the psychological situation in the case of so-called endogenous depression.

The name indicates that this kind of depression originates from within, not from an experience connected with the outer world. What is this "within"? It is not our conscious soul-life, which is open to the world. Neither is it the subconscious regions, in so far as our outer experiences are "digested" there. They come into the picture here only through the influences that play into them from the physical body and its organs. We penetrate further if we seek out that soul-force which is least conscious to us—the force of will. We become aware of a disturbance of the will as a kind of inner paralysis, and the perception of this leads back into the more conscious realm of feeling. Will-power itself leads us into the unconscious depths, whence it springs as the actual force of our soul-centre or Ego. No proper soul-impulse is possible, no line of thought or trend of feeling, without this Ego-force. This is expressed whenever we say "I think" and "I feel". The fundamental fact of endogenous depression is the experience that will-power is paralysed. The life of feeling then responds with a mood of wretchedness, rather like it does to a problematic experience that comes from outside.

The central organ of the human metabolic system is the liver, which is at the same time the physical foundation through which the will, as the central soul-force of the metabolism, can work. In the case of a disturbed life of will we must therefore expect that liver disorders will occur. This is indeed so in cases of endogenous depression. Very briefly, it can be said that the activity of the liver is hemmed in, which may lead to a thickening of the bile. The ancient designation "melancholy"—i.e., "black bile"—is a token of this fact.

The anthroposophical knowledge of man attributes to the soul an independent realm of existence, although in the waking state this is closely interwoven with the physical realm. We can therefore arrive at the following conception. An illness can first start on the level of the soul and then take effect fully on the physical level. On the other hand, it can work upon the soul from the physical realm—i.e., from the diseased organs—and cause serious psychological disturbance, while at the same time the physical symptoms recede both in extent and significance.

Thus we recognise two opposite poles in the diagnosis of depression. Of course, they act on each other all the time, so that we can never say of cases of depression, "This is a purely psychological illness" or, "This is purely physical." If we learn to look upon our bodily organs as instruments of our life of soul, we realise that with every experience that weighs us down in our will, it is our liver that, so to speak, vibrates in resonance. On the other hand, every liver disturbance affects the soul.

But what about an innate disposition towards depression, present even before conscious experiences have occurred? It is at this point that a vista opens up through the teaching of the reincarnation of the human Ego. For the Ego's relationship to the world may have been disturbed already in an earlier earth-life. Also congenital physical complaints can thus be seen as resulting from an unfulfilled process in the realm of soul and spirit. Here we can only indicate these laws of destiny, which must be studied in detail in the relevant books by Rudolf Steiner (e.g., *An Outline of Occult Science*).

It is essential to note that in the depressed patient's feeling of guilt there is some reality. But the feeling derives not from whatever "sins" the patient reports, which are mostly imaginary, but from the failure of the Ego to cope with its experiences, which mean a failure to further the development of the soul. It is fundamentally this failure of the Ego which is experienced as paralysed will, and is then reflected from the body into the soul-life.

But is it reasonable to speak here of "guilt"? Are not the experiences very often such that they cannot, to begin with, be properly "digested"? Are we not facing perhaps a problem of our time, a problem of humanity at large?

Melancholy as a complaint is on the increase, according to reports by the Viennese psychiatrist Professor H. Hoff. Statistics show that it has become an illness of our time. But there are surely not more people nowadays who take things deeply than there used to be. On the contrary, the reverse may be assumed. It is the world that makes life more difficult for man. In former times his environment was not only familiar to him but intimate and friendly; he could even feel devotion and reverence for it. To-day, by contrast, he is confronted with a world that is foreign to his soul. Our technological civilisation, the product of one-sided materialistic thinking, leaves the soul no breathing-space.

That is why people nowadays often seek to plunge into any kind of intoxicating pleasure where the soul can find fulfilment of its hopes and wishes for a brief spell. But if this amounts to no more than letting loose the dammed-up inner life, then the alien nature of the world around us will afterwards seem all the more painful. Man to-day feels his Ego incarcerated in a world that is foreign to him. Anxiety arises, and this is the first symptom of a depressive paralysis of will.

So it happens that many people, though by nature they are not inclined to take things hard, fail nowadays to assimilate their impressions. It is the impressions which are hard and intractable, and thus sink like undigested food into the soul. And such a process can indeed have a depressing effect, right into the metabolism of the liver. Because of the one-sided burdening of the head with passive concepts, life in the lower man, in the metabolic system, grows slow and sluggish; the will-activity of the Ego becomes bogged down.

If such a "civilization-depression" overtakes a person whose general constitution is dominated by the nervous system, then the depression will have neurasthenic characteristics. He is not merely depressed, but also irritable and easily tired. This can become as serious as any endogenous depression, the difference being, e.g., that the patient feels at his worst in the evening, when he is exhausted from the day. In such cases we are dealing not only with a cramp in the liver-organization, but also with exhaustion of its vital forces. (The fact that other organs can also play a part in cases of depression may be mentioned here in passing).

With many people, fear of loneliness is predominant. This experience of isolation is particularly difficult to handle, for it springs from an inner emptiness of soul. Boredom takes hold of a person. In many cases of suicide, it is extreme boredom that leads up to the fatal act. People in this condition have already become incapable of feeling sadness.

A genuine depression seems a more tolerable suffering by comparison, although the struggle may appear hopeless to begin with. And it is here that we have the best possibility of approaching what can be called the meaning, or even the mission, of depression.

Every symptom of illness points to a healthy archetype. The person who takes everything seriously is deepening his soul in the process. A depression that leads to increased inner activity can waken new forces in the soul. Many patients will speak of this after they have lived in the right way through a difficult phase of depression—"I feel as if newly born", "I feel a new person, with new possibilities", or "Now I can experience certain things much more deeply than I did before". Statements of this kind throw light upon depression as a phenomenon of our time and are a guide also for those who have to treat it.

If we do not want to cut off personal development and cause human development in general to regress, we shall certainly not try always to save people from difficult experiences liable to cause suffering, or teach them to flee from the harmful effects of civilisation, simply in order to avoid depression. The task will be to strengthen those soul-forces that partake in all the experiences, so that man, with enhanced Ego-activity, can deal with them properly. It will be found that just in grappling with the impressions connected with our modern civilization, a new faculty may grow within: the power of wakefulness. Armed with this power, a person can take hold of the deeper problems of life and the world, although they are more difficult for him than they were in a less self-conscious age.

With regard to the senses, there are many ways of observing nature, in the Goethean manner, which can have a prophylactic effect. If, for example, the characteristic leaf-forms of the various trees are again and again carefully observed during country walks, the perceptive faculty is made more active and will stand up better to the experiences encountered in modern towns. A similar effect can be achieved through all sorts of artistic activities, which help the soul to enter fully again into sense-perceptions. And as regards the various machines which tend to make us inactive, we can rouse our thinking by developing a keen interest in technical achievements; by making a point, e.g., of understanding (or inquiring) how a train works and how an electric current is produced. In Rudolf Steiner schools, practical and technical teaching is considered essential for this very reason.

It is, however, important not only to establish an active contact with the world around us, but also to be able actively to disengage ourselves from it again. This is helped, for example, by the exercise of the daily retrospect. To let the day's events pass in mental reverie before going to sleep, but in reverse order (i.e., starting with the evening and ending with the morning), and thereby looking at oneself as in a picture—this will increasingly help a person to keep at a better distance from his impressions during the day-time also.

Civilization to-day has an autumnal character. There is evidence on all sides of a weakening of creative powers. The whole of mankind lives in the shadow of a great depression, and in the individual human being this can become an illness. Fear of the future looms over humanity, threatened by the unrestrained power of technology with death in various forms.

An image of this threat can be seen in the picture of the dragon lurking in its rocky cave. But there is more to it than that: the picture can become one of hope. Michael, the Archangel of the autumn season, battles with the dragon and frees the way for the experience of a new birth that springs from the death of winter. Rudolf Steiner described Michael as the spiritual Power who calls on us to overcome anxiety; to face the world with initiative and to make good use, with courage and wakeful thinking, of the help he offers. This is not a question of light-heartedness: the Archangel is shown wearing armour of iron. But no mood of heaviness is indicated, either: in the battle with the dragon the weight of the armour is lifted away.

If we follow the voice that speaks to us through this picture, courage will grow in us: courage to seek the light of the spirit in the depths of our bodies and souls.

Translated by Siegfried Rudel.

The Work of Alice A. Bailey: 1880-1949

Frances Banks

As we said last year in introducing Mrs. Katharine Trevelyan's article on Subud, we believe that students of Anthroposophy should know something of other esoteric movements which are concerned with the inner life of the spirit in the world to-day. For this issue, accordingly, we have asked Miss Frances Banks, whose autobiographical volume, *Frontiers of Revelation*, was published by Max Parrish recently, to describe the life and work of the late Alice Bailey.—*The Editors*.

IN the following account of the teaching put out by Mrs. Alice A. Bailey I do not consider myself competent to draw close parallels with the teaching of Rudolf Steiner, nor to define possible divergencies. My aim is simply to introduce her life-work and body of teaching, for which incidentally, and doubtless of intent, no comprehensive title is available.

Mrs. Bailey (née La Trobe-Bateman), daughter of a successful engineer-inventor, was brought up in England in an affluent Christian environment. A turning-point in her turbulent and orphaned girlhood came at the age of 15, when she received an admonitory visit from her Master, Koot Hoomi. From his turbaned appearance she assumed that he must be Jesus Christ. For a period he revisited her at seven-year intervals, and later more frequently, by which time she had learnt his identity and had discovered that she was a member of his ashram.

Her inherent piety and Christian devotion led her in her early twenties to forsake society life to become an evangelist to the British Forces in India. A subsequently unhappy marriage took her to the United States. It was only after the dissolution of this marriage in 1915, when she was working in a sardine factory to support her three small girls, that she came upon Theosophy and sat at the feet of two elderly ladies who had been H. P. Blavatsky's personal pupils.

Her first direct contact with the Tibetan Teacher who was to write through her, the same who had already inspired Mme. Blavatsky, was made in November, 1919. Sitting outside her house one morning, she heard a note of music followed by a voice saying, "There are some books which it is desired should be written for the public. You can write them. Will you do so?" Her immediate answer was: "Certainly not. I'm not a darned psychic and I don't want to be drawn into anything like that." Given three weeks to think it over, she was eventually persuaded to try the work for a month, and began with the opening chapters of *Initiation, Human and Solar*.

For 30 years she was to labour in this way, yet without loss of consciousness or independence. For many years she rose at 4 a.m.

and wrote to a definite telepathic dictation, which later developed into a less restricted rapport. Her communicator, as was later inadvertently revealed to her readers, was himself a Master, while belonging to the ashram of Koot Hoomi; the last to attain to the status of Master, he had been endowed with the function of secretary and teacher to the outer world. Thus, while living in a Tibetan monastery, he served the wider mission of the Christ.

With exceptionally high intelligence, A.A.B. (as she has come to be known) spared herself no pains in the study of current occult literature, yet she frankly declares, "I have no knowledge such as that possessed by the Tibetan". She persistently repudiated any claim to personal seership or initiate authority. "I am", she writes in her *Unfinished Autobiography*, "only a pen or pencil, a stenographer and a transmitter of teaching from one whom I revere and honour and have been happy to serve." And again, "I simply listen and take down the words that I hear and register the thoughts which are dropped one by one into my brain. I make no changes in what I give out to the public from that which has been given to me except that I smooth the English or replace an unusual word with one that is clearer, taking care to preserve the sense as given. I have never changed anything that the Tibetan has ever given me. If I once did so, He would never dictate to me again." Writing of a later stage, she testifies, "To-day as the result of 26 years' work I can snap into telepathic relation with Him without the slightest trouble. . . . I am not a medium, but I have been a kind of 'middle-man' between the Hierarchy and the general public."

Thus the books were written, nearly 20 of them, including six which had to be edited posthumously from her notes by her friend, Regina Keller, a work completed only in this decade. In addition Mrs. Bailey wrote five books in her own right, thus demonstrating her own compatible cultural level.

A brief classification of the books may be of value. There are three directly concerned with meditation: *Letters on Occult Meditation* came direct from the Tibetan; *From Intellect to Intuition* was A.A.B.'s own composition; in *The Light of the Soul* the Tibetan translated the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, and A.A.B., who knew no Sanscrit, wrote the commentary upon them. Two significant books by the Tibetan, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vols. I & II*, give both general rules and individual direction to a group of 45 disciples engaged in the work of meditation.

Two of Mrs. Bailey's own books deal with the inner energies and techniques: *The Consciousness of the Atom*, and *The Soul and its Mechanism*. The Tibetan is responsible for *Telepathy and the Etheric Vehicle*; and all except one of the remaining books. There is a large volume on astral training and control, entitled *A Treatise on White Magic*. Perhaps most difficult and esoterically advanced of all is *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, which A.A.B. herself described as a psychological key to *The Secret Doctrine*.

From another aspect, the application of inner understanding to world affairs has played an important part in the writings, as in *The Destiny of the Nations* and *The Problems of Humanity*. Further constructive hope for the future is given in *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy*, a process regarded as preparatory to the Second Coming presaged in *The Reappearance of the Christ* (recently issued in a paper edition).

Mrs. Bailey's own endeavour to reconcile a deeper esoteric interpretation of the Gospel with the Ageless Wisdom is expressed in *From Bethlehem to Calvary*, in which she traces the five great initiations of Birth, Baptism, Transfiguration, Crucifixion and Resurrection in their significance for humanity.

The largest work consists of five volumes of *The Treatise on the Seven Rays*, beginning with two volumes of a new spiritual psychology based on the Seven Rays of Divine Energy in relation to Man. These are followed by volumes on Esoteric Astrology, Esoteric Healing, and the Initiations.

Mrs. Bailey (who was content with four hours' sleep out of the 24, in spite of increasing tiredness) made relatively light of this gigantic task of amanuensis. A volume on *Glamour: a World Problem* must have been especially dear to her heart. For she had a horror of all claim-making, attitudinising or eccentricity, and never minimised housewifely and maternal duties, nor ceased to inveigh against escapist devotees and spiritual philanderers.

There is certainly nothing glamorous about these sturdy navy-blue volumes, strongly bound to last, clear, categorical and shorn of all anecdotal illustration; hence stiff enough to furnish their own protection against frivolous application of once hidden doctrine. The Lucis Press which issues them ploughs back the profits, so that the translations are ever extending and reaching new territories.

With the books, and beyond them, has spread one further New Age word, *The Great Invocation*, now in over 50 languages dispersed in a million or more copies. Translated into English by the Tibetan from an ancient form, and received by A.A.B. with great joy, it is an utterance which must powerfully affect the subjective life of our day in the passage from supplication to invocation, from personal petition to universal realisation, and from anthropomorphic to planetary and cosmic concepts of Divinity. It may already have a familiar ring to the reader, who may nevertheless have been ignorant of its origin:

From the point of Light within the Mind of God
Let light stream forth into the minds of men.
Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the Heart of God
Let love stream forth into the minds of men.
May Christ return to Earth.

From the centre where the will of God is known
Let purpose guide the little wills of men—
The purpose which the Master(s) know(s) and serve(s).

From the centre which we call the race of men
Let the Plan of Love and Light work out
And may it seal the door where evil dwells.
Let Light and Love and Power restore the Plan on Earth.

*

A good deal more than these tasks of publication was, however, to be laid upon Mrs. Bailey's shoulders. In 1921, she and Foster Bailey, her second husband and indomitable helper, began to sit in meditation with a group of five others, and while on holiday in the following year A.A.B. kept in touch with the members by a weekly circular letter; this she presently found herself duplicating for the benefit of an increasing number who applied to her for meditation instruction on the strength of her books. Thus from small beginnings there arose a correspondence school of meditation which soon occupied her from morning till night, with the drawing up of graded courses from the Tibetan's teaching, the interviewing of enquirers, and the endless secretarial work (in one year, she declares, she dictated 10,000 letters).

Tens of thousands have passed through her Arcane School and the subsequent School for Esoteric Studies, and past and present students are to be found absorbed into many branches of spiritual and practical work in the world, yet sounding the authentic note of the Tibetan's teaching to the ear attuned to hear it. By policy, no exclusive affiliation is demanded for students, nor is it possible. In her statement of principles, Mrs. Bailey declares: "We have no lodges, centres or meetings which we expect them to attend; we leave them free to work in any group, Church, organisation or social and welfare activity which may appeal to them". And again, in italics, "*Our students are free to work in other organisations and are not expected to owe allegiance to anyone in the Arcane School.*"

An excellent speaker and lecturer herself, Mrs. Bailey deliberately avoided all cultus, ceremonial, vestment, or initiation ritual, as no part of her accepted programme. She sought also to avoid personality cult, and preferred the mentally polarised to the devotee, without condemnation of the latter. She regarded her school as training for "accepted discipleship", hence "for those who could be trained to act directly and consciously under the Masters of the Wisdom". Yet there was to be no talk of obedience to this or that Master, in recognition of "the occult law that no Master ever gives a command or expects obedience."

Thus nothing was to be taken on authority even from the Tibetan, but only what each student could assimilate for himself. No special beliefs were to be required on entry, no belief in reincarnation, nor even in the Spiritual Hierarchy except as a working hypothesis. Incidentally no fees were to be charged, and nearly all the work was to be on a voluntary or subsistence basis, senior students servicing the work of those below in degree.

Mrs. Bailey regarded her school as occupying an intermediate level, with study and meditation as the keynotes. The student must be brought first in contact with his own soul, and pass from an integrated personality to a soul-infused one. In the higher grades he should rise to further spiritual heights under the all-inclusive objective of "*the revelation of divinity in man and in the universe*", leading "*to the acknowledgment of God Transcendent, and of God Immanent*".

At a later stage, so it was prophesied as far back as 1920, there would arise a different type of esoteric school, in a small way at first. When the present schools would have sufficiently coloured the subjective life of politicians, scientists and educators, there might emerge "the founding in exoteric fashion of the true esoteric school". Some of these, near urban centres, would be of a preparatory sort; a few, situated more remotely, would come to give advanced training.

This development is envisaged as more or less coincident with the externalisation of the Hierarchy, or the visible manifestation of the Masters of the Wisdom on the human scene, which would precede the Second Coming of the Christ on earth. This reappearance of the Christ, as the Head of the Hierarchy, would draw people of all religions to a new recognition and synthesis within the higher consciousness of the Fifth Kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven. It would come, *not* by an incarnate rebirth, but by as yet unpredictable methods of over-shadowment and revelation.

*

It is indeed possible that the vast postal phase of all this work, at any rate in this country and in the States, may have passed its peak; but that will not be because of its sterility. Much seed has been sown in the subjective life of mankind through this agency; but the time of fructification may well lie ahead. The knowledge has been set out in printed form and a halt has now been called to fresh issue. As Mr. Foster Bailey declared in 1950, after his wife's death: "Both A.A.B. and the Tibetan have definitely stated that after she died he would not continue to function through any other channel as He did with her". "*As he did with her*" seem to be significant words. For the knowledge, inasmuch as it speaks truth to Twentieth Century man, has been released through this particular form and instrument. But it still has to win through to practical expression in the affairs of human life; and it seems unlikely that the Tibetan Teacher who sponsored the tuition will fail to aid his struggling servers in the Plan.

Alice Bailey's life-work is nearly a quarter-of-a-century later than Rudolf Steiner's and like a wave of the sea it has followed his in extending revelation of the Higher worlds: but it has not yet had time to emerge so fully into practical expression. Nor will it ever do so under its own specific designation, for it has disclaimed that

by fixed intent. But these two expressions of the Ageless Wisdom brought up-to-date for western Christendom must by their own inherent freedoms inevitably reinforce one another, and the students of one be the fellow-students of the other.

For myself, the first impact upon my Anglo-Catholic "orthodoxy" was coloured by anthroposophical works, especially *Christ and the Human Soul* and Rittelmeyer's *Meditation* (on the Great Affirmations of St. John's Gospel). But when it came to commitment to a meditation school, I chose Mrs. Bailey's, partly because it was non-compromising to one still in a religious habit. Still more cogently I was motivated by her pamphlet, *The Next Three Years*, which seemed to transport me from being an erring and lonely straggler to finding myself inwardly a member of an articulate group in a charted country.

I believe the choice was justified. After a period "in the wilderness", it is a great joy to me to apply heart, mind and soul to aid in a deeper reconciliation between this extended interpretation of Christ's teaching and our institutional Christianity, so that the future may see a new creative union of Eastern mysticism and Western theology, to hasten the day when "the earth shall be full of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea". For the overplus of a "Nameless Faith" need give no offence to orthodox brethren who are often searching no less arduously for ways of spiritual renewal for this atomic age. And I am happy to say that from time to time the platform of such a forward-looking movement as the Churches' Fellowship for Psychical Study can be shared with Anthroposophists, lay and even clerical, speaking unequivocally on the same deep issues.

No doubt we are all more closely knit than we know, and the day is approaching when the following "Mantram of Unification" (given out by A.A.B.) will become as true for an objective majority as it already is for a host of subjective minorities:

The souls of men are one and I am one with them.
I seek to love, not hate;
I seek to serve and not exact due service;
I seek to heal, not hurt.
Let pain bring due reward of light and love.
Let the soul control the outer form
And life and all events,
And bring to light the Love
That underlies the happenings of the time.
Let vision come and insight.
Let the future stand revealed.
Let inner union demonstrate and outer cleavages be gone.
Let love prevail. Let all men love.

Perhaps the first step towards such unification is to weave the strands of truth discovered by the many responsible research units which have been at work into an integrated whole, as indicating the pattern of the new age religion; praying also that in the Divine

economy it may become grafted into the existing Christian institutions. It may well be that the Avatar of Synthesis is nearer than we know.

There is a rough and ready tendency to condemn all religious doctrine and "dogma" as sterile because to many it has become outdated. But no one can hold—let alone teach—any inner belief which is incapable of a measure of mental formulation, which in itself must constitute a "doctrine", however he may seek to avoid dogmatic pressures.

In the light of the progressive revelations of our age, our respective Leaders have sought to find a sense in which Christian creed, worship and sacraments can re-generate a vital experience for modern man, and align faith with actuality. It is a matter first of breaking down vague generalities into manageable units of spiritual progress. This we should expect to be the way in which Divinity would lead mankind to spiritual maturity as he leaves behind him his preliterate childhood and emotional adolescence, and attains to new scientific understanding and control of natural forces.

The Tibetan, through A.A.B., makes this clear in his body of teaching, as seen in the following passage from *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy*:

In all the progressing developments, the old outlines can be seen—enlarged, purified and more beautiful, yet recognisable as the old form on a higher turn of the spiral. It is not the freak cults, nor the widely divergent sects, nor the bands of advanced religious revolutionaries who can meet the crying need of the many enquirers today. What is required is the revivification of the old forms, and their infusion with fresh life; the old organisms must be awakened to the hour of opportunity and must change from static organisations to living organisms. The old rituals must be revived and brought up to date (in the esoteric sense of the word) and the religious students of the world must be graduated into a higher school, given the occult interpretations, and taught that, after all, the truth has been present all the time, but hidden and misinterpreted.

"It is surely easier to swing the masses into step and give them the newer light of truth if that light is poured on to familiar ground . . . the truth must be stepped down and adapted in such a way that the advanced minds, the enquiring minds, and the reactionary masses may have opportunity proffered them, to the measure of their receptivity. Did not the greatest of all the Great Ones do this Himself in the synagogue and with His disciples in Judean days?"

There is no reason why this teaching, given here in brief outline, should not provide a simple, coherent picture, somewhat as follows:

Essential Divinity is the groundwork of all Reality, focussed for our solar system in the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, from Whom we receive the Seven Rays which influence our lives, known in Biblical terminology as "The Seven Spirits before the Throne", and now further defined as the Three Major Rays of Will or Power, Love-Wisdom, and Active Intelligence; and the Four

Rays of Attribute, viz., Harmony or Beauty, Concrete Knowledge, Devotion or Idealism, and Ceremonial Order.

These come to us earth-dwellers, not only directly, but also as relayed through the Heaven and Hierarchy of our own planet, ruled by the Lord of the World, between Whom and our Humanity stand "The Spirits of Just Men made Perfect", the Elder Brothers of the Race. These, in company with the Angelic Orders (who have not been encumbered with physical bodies and their emotional accompaniments) form what in Christian parlance is called "The Whole Company of Heaven". And yet the concept of Masters has a different ring for the esotericist from that generally attaching to Saints who "rest in peace". For these Masters are regarded as having enjoyed the multiple experience of many lives, in many climes, races, ranks and religions, and in both sexes, in very truth "a post-graduate humanity".

No past life may have been "perfect" throughout, yet each flaw will have been mastered to a point when karma has been paid and further earth-experience has become unnecessary, so that such beings may either pass on to other spheres or choose to help mankind from the higher worlds. In some lives they will have accomplished great things of which the history-books tell us; in others they will have worked in obscurity. Incidentally, it seems probable that most of them who have lived here in our era will have received Christian canonisation at some point of sanctity. But now all illusion of the physical, emotional, or lower mental worlds will have been left behind: "The former things have passed away and death hath no more dominion over them".

How then can they work among the world of men? A clergyman I know preaches openly of "the Heavenly Civil Service"; and undoubtedly, like all civil servants, they must step down the work in a hierarchical organisation. As above, so below. It is said that they are able to lower their vibrations to soul level, and so work through soul-infused personalities, who can accept their impressions of the Plan of God.

The Soul of each human being, so we are told, is a Master in its own right, dwelling on the higher mental plane; but before it can be perfected and released to higher realms, it must have expressed itself victoriously through all facets of human experience. The Soul is both immanent and transcendent. It is immanent in that as the personality life develops in integration, it shines more clearly through each incarnation; yet each life has its own differing personality, not the same one reborn. The Soul is also transcendent in that its essence remains throughout, gathering to itself the "permanent atoms" of the successive earth-lives, and absorbing them into the higher soul energy. Thence each successive personality can draw upon them, at first unconsciously, and later with continuity of consciousness. Hence, as a man advances, he becomes a "World Server" through his rounded experience of all human life, and with

growing power, love and tolerance he qualifies to serve in *group work*.

*

Much is said in the A.A.B. literature of "The New Group of World Servers". Increasingly, as man progresses up the human school, he finds old links with men and women encountered in the long struggle up the spiral way back to the Father's House; thus strong groups are formed, with growing recognition on both sides of the veil of earthly life. These teams now become capable of closer co-operation with the ashrams of the Masters responsible for special aspects of the Divine Plan. As these Servers rise, they are given further tools for extended service, and the insignia for swifter recognition of and by their fellow-workers. It is not, however, an insignia for general identification, since status claim-making would be its own disqualification.

In their turn, the World Servers work through an expanding body of "Men of Goodwill", disciples and probationers willing to carry the work into the next stage for physical manifestation, as artificers to the architects; just as the stage above had passed it down from the Planners to the architects. At this lower level the numbers are greater and ever-growing, as men learn to give disinterested and wholehearted service to their fellow-men in every race, religion and capacity.

And so the process reaches down to the mass of men upon the ladder of ascent, disciple stretching out a hand to help disciple or probationer, so that none is ever alone or unaided even at the human level, did he but know it.

As a "service activity" an effort has been made to enhance this ideal of Goodwill—the clarion note of Christ's Nativity—by giving it formulated expression and tracing its growth in the contemporary world by means of a Journal entitled *World Goodwill*, which has just united with an Eastern-edited paper to become *WORLD Union-Goodwill*.

Another activity has been the promotion of a Triangle Movement, which seeks to weave the present quadrilateral pattern of the ethers into a triangular one through a system whereby three people, whether members of an esoteric school or not, link daily to recite the Great Invocation in reciprocal recollection.

Such practical techniques are considered as all part of the preparation for the externalisation of the Great Ones on earth to make possible the Reappearance of the Christ.

The above chart of human progress makes its more finely graded steps seem the more serially attainable. It lifts some of the old shroudings of moral and mystical theologies from "the hid battlements of Eternity", and stretches the imagination along new vistas of hope for the human race in this most crucial age of its history. Its note of optimism is well summarised in this prophecy (from the *Treatise on White Magic*) of a human brotherhood based on inner

unification of mankind's higher mental energies within the Divine intent:

"The plan as at present sensed . . . might be defined as follows: It is the production of a subjective synthesis in humanity and of a telepathic interplay which will eventually annihilate time. It will make available to every man all past achievements and knowledges, it will reveal to man the true significance of his mind and brain and make him the master of that equipment and will make him therefore omnipresent and eventually open the door to omniscience. This next development of the plan will produce in man an understanding—intelligent and co-operative—of the divine purpose for which the One in Whom we live and move and have our being has deemed it wise to submit to incarnation."

Questions and Answers

So few questions were sent in that we have had to omit this feature, but we are ready to revive it next year if more questions come. Please address them to Charles Waterman, Ridge House, Kingston, Lewes, Sussex.

—The Editors.

BOOK REVIEWS

Meetings with Rudolf Steiner. By Albert Steffen. (Verlag für Schöne Wissenschaften, Dornach, Switzerland. 40/—.)

ANYONE taking up this book and expecting a biographical study will find something different. The essays here gathered together assume an acquaintance with the main outline of Rudolf Steiner's life and the development of his life-work. The "meetings" of the title are both narrower and wider than a description of personal encounters with their subject: narrower in that comparatively few meetings are recorded, wider because they register the impact in its broadest sense of the spiritual river to which Rudolf Steiner gave the name of Anthroposophy on an individual disposed to drink deeply of its waters. Albert Steffen, writer and poet, is well suited to transform these encounters with Rudolf Steiner's life and work into a form which is artistically valid.

With how open a heart he meets this new experience is quickly apparent from the long opening essay which centres on his life as a student in pre-1914 Berlin. From his notebooks of the time the author sets the mood, the inner scene; impressions of a restless metropolis and the inner restlessness of its inhabitants, the questions of individual destiny they raise, of good and evil, crowd these early pages. Where to turn for the inner resourcefulness to preserve the living quality of the word by which the writer must live, when it is in such palpable decline? Goethe brings refreshment but no longer sufficient nourishment. At a lecture by Rudolf Steiner to which an acquaintance directs him he finds his answer.

We follow the freelance writer to Munich to mingle in the rich cultural life of the time, the theatre, the exhibitions of the experimental artists who congregated there. Fittingly the first performances of the Mystery Plays announce the birth of a new drama where individual destinies stand in the light of spiritual reality. The infinite variety of the path of spiritual development here takes on its most concrete form in a drama where the limits of the senses exist no more.

Next comes the powerful impression the Goetheanum makes on the author as first he walks up Dornach Hill, a few weeks before the outbreak of war. Before long he is drawn into the varied teams from many nations working, often at unfamiliar occupations, on the internal fabric. With characteristic directness the author tells us what it was like to take up mallet and chisel for the first time; the joyful acquisition of the skill to cut the wood sharp and clear, fashioning the living forms under the guidance of the master architect. Fatigue is balanced by the refreshment flowing from the forms as they are released from the material to reveal the living forces of nature, not imitating her outer cast but welling direct from her life-giving powers. The following sentences sum up the essential mood:

I discovered that Rudolf Steiner, in erecting this building, had performed a model educational deed. He turned us from impractical, dreamy eccentrics who often ran away from life into workmen who used their bodies in the service of the spirit. Here the goal was attained—if only for a few years—of serving the earth in freedom and brotherhood without being faithless to the gods.

As it must ever be for the artist, the immediate material dictates the theme; the theoretician may be left to pick his text abstractly from the hat and dilate upon it. War brings death crowding every household; many feel the presence of the dead in such grievous times. Rudolf Steiner calmly reveals the spiritual reality of their relationship to the living. In several essays the mood of the times is caught, illumined, transformed through the fruits of Steiner's research. Thus does one proceed through the book; circumstance and event recast and illumined.

The appointment of the author as editor of the weekly *Das Goetheanum* reveals Steiner's attitude to the freedom and responsibility of the individual. We sense the currents that stirred in artistic circles before and at the end of the war, and learn how many artists rejected the more conscious but yet not theoretic path to artistic creation which Rudolf Steiner put before them. Many passages reflect the writer's care for his craft, the struggle to sustain the living word in place of the dead letter, which is as alien to art as it is to a true spiritual understanding.

The immediacy of this method, in which the subject itself is reflected in and fructifies the writer, is artistically the most satisfying, particularly where the style is bare yet resilient, concise but suffused with feeling which leaves the reader free from manipulation. It bears within it, however, certain pitfalls which the author's skill does not always preserve him from. Passages from his notebooks enhance the sense of immediacy but become sometimes a row of aphorisms which check the march of thought and theme. Some essays are themselves aggregations of shorter pieces, with but tenuous connections. This is more particularly evident in the long first section recalling early meetings and the student's eye view of Berlin. Kept within the stricter bounds of a prologue, it would, one feels, have served its essential artistic purpose without disturbing the balance of the whole. The style, otherwise so admirably compressed, seems here to emphasise the looseness of structure characteristic of such collections. The slightly self-conscious gathering of experience by the young writer weights the more aphoristic passages. The writer and his mission stand momentarily between the reader and the word: the artist's mission is most fruitful when it dies completely into the work itself.

This is the particular achievement of the later essays, with their gravely luminous style. We read here of the Goetheanum's terrible destruction in the flames of New Year's Eve 1922/23, of the mounting crescendo of activities which Rudolf Steiner sustained in the

last months of his lecturing activity, the author's revealing tribute delivered on the tenth anniversary of Rudolf Steiner's death. These in turn mount to the final heights of the concluding essays, such as those on Steiner's Christology and *Art in the Sign of Michael*, which alone would be justification enough, if justification be needed, for this volume issued in translation for the recent Rudolf Steiner Centenary. One thing the reader gratefully notes is the absence of jargon. Even in translation (and the author appears to have been well served by no less than three translators) each word and sentence resounds fitly to the sense.

To have lived in the thick of significant events (even though the world be slow as yet to register them) is to be in debt to those whose paths lay elsewhere. These essays nobly discharge Albert Steffen's debt; in many passages we relive the experience of the time. To those who never knew it, the destruction of the first Goetheanum may be as great a loss as to those who saw their work rise in the flames. Nothing can repair the sense of deprivation save the inward reconstruction of those forms of wonder, majesty and heart-warming strength.

Whoever can assist in this gains a ready ear and Albert Steffen does not fail his readers in bringing the essential experience closer. To reconstruct inwardly what lived between the great Michael window in the west and the forms of the Being of Christ in the east is to enter the realm of the creative spirit whence the building was drawn by the master architect. The House of the Word—wherein the word may be truly spoken—cannot be destroyed. All who will, however different their points of view, may meet there in community, as all are reconciled in Christ into whose living presence the forms and movements of the whole converge.

The book is well printed and bound, but the price may deter many from purchasing a volume to which one will want to turn for one essay or another, rather than to absorb at a sitting or two. It illumines themes and incidents in far greater variety than this brief account can suggest.

John Salter.

Christianity in the Catacombs

The Catacombs. Edited by Alfred Heidenreich. (Christian Community Press. 35/-.)

THIS new edition of Dr. Heidenreich's earlier work on the Catacombs (1931) is virtually a new book and a very welcome one. The earlier work was based on *Die Katakomben*, by Lic. Emil Bock and Lic. Robert Goebel; an enlarged new edition of this was commissioned recently, and prepared, after the lamented death of Emil Bock, by Robert Goebel. Dr. Heidenreich took the opportunity to revise and enlarge his own book in the light of the new material now available; the letterpress, he tells us, has been almost entirely rewritten, and the illustrations (including 14 colour plates) have been increased in number and improved in quality.

The Catacombs, Dr. Heidenreich reminds us, were not hiding-places but subterranean cemeteries, but as such they could offer sanctuary, since under Roman law no-one could be arrested there:

Only during the last systematic attempts, under Decius and Diocletian in the second half of the third century, to stamp out Christianity wholesale, was the sanctity of these cemeteries violated. But the contrast between the world above ground and the world below ground was absolute. Above ground the sphere of Caesar, subjugating the world; below ground the sphere of Christ, transforming the world. Above ground the travesty of Man proclaimed God, with proud pomp and circumstance; below ground the reality of God become Man, in humility and love.

It was in the Catacombs, Dr. Heidenreich says, that reminiscences of ancient wisdom and initiation practices were first transformed into Christian wisdom and Christian practice:

In the communal meals commemorating the dead, the love feasts (agape) and the early eucharistic ceremonies, Christ Himself was present. Communion with the living Christ took the place of the ancient Initiation.

Among the first Christians no-one questioned life after death. In the meetings which were held among the tombs, the souls of those whose bodies were buried there were also present. Among the thousands of inscriptions found in the Catacombs, not one preserves the customary Roman 'Vale', meaning 'Farewell'. Its place is taken by 'Live in God', 'Rest in Christ'.... Where Christ is, Death is not—this is one of the fundamental convictions of early Christianity. Inasmuch as the Catacombs were burial places of devout and faithful Christians, they were also centres of resurrection. For the first Christians the "resurrection of the body" was no mere article of faith which referred to a promise at the end of time. A first indication of a resurrection body, woven of light, disclosed itself when in the act of worship in the Catacombs the eye of the soul was opened for spiritual reality.

It is very doubtful, Dr. Heidenreich considers, whether these early Christians would recognise in the organised Churches of to-day a true development of the faith they knew and loved:

Their difficulty would not lie only in facing the different outward appearance and changed position of the Church in the world. They

would have even greater inward difficulties; for these first Christian communities possessed a spiritual secret which was lost in later times, and the loss of which changed the character of Christianity. *They united personal mysticism with sacramental community.* This, above everything, is the most important message of the Catacombs. If this book does no more than illustrate this truth, it will have fulfilled its purpose.

The Catacombs were freely adorned with mural and ceiling paintings; the sarcophagi often carry elaborate carved reliefs. There are scenes from the Old and New Testaments, portraits of departed Christians, emblematic representations of fish and bread (the sacramental meal). As Dr. Heidenreich says, the art of the Catacombs has been variously interpreted by scholars: according to one school, the pictures are symbolic; according to another, they are simple illustrations of biblical and other stories. But there is, he suggests, a third possibility:

The early Christian communities possessed and shared a direct, first-hand experience of the world of the spirit, touching on the constant presence of the living Christ, on life after death, and on the transformation of the soul for the reception of higher spiritual knowledge. It was these first-hand spiritual experiences which the Christians of the Catacombs wanted to express, and for this purpose a special type of biblical and pagan stories offered the best medium, stories in which their own experience was implicit.

Anyone coming to these pictures with only a conventional knowledge of early Christianity would probably not find them very revealing, but under the guidance of this volume they can become an impressive and fruitful study. The red-bronze colouring of the paintings is striking and comes out strongly in the reproductions. Most of the paintings are crude, but several from the Tomb of Lucina have a graphic artistic quality. The volume includes besides Dr. Heidenreich's long and illuminating introductory chapters, a detailed list of the plates and their subjects; a chronology; a short bibliography; and a sketch-map showing the locations of the Catacombs in the immediate neighbourhood of Rome.

Any student of Anthroposophy who has an opportunity to visit the Catacombs would find it immensely rewarding to read this book first, and to take it with him.

C. W.

Pilgrimage

Fool in Love. By Katharine Trevelyan. (Gollancz, 25/-.)

BORN into a distinguished, gifted and good-looking family, Katharine Trevelyan, daughter of Sir Charles Trevelyan, would seem to have started life with the scales of happiness and success heavily weighted on her side. Yet this is a story of many struggles, searing personal difficulties, and much inner conflict.

Her family were confirmed atheists, but she herself early developed a strong awareness of the existence of God, and this inevitably set her on a private, often lonely, path where—in spite of her affectionate relationship with them—her family and its activities were of little support to her. She went abroad to study music, and married the German director of the music academy. This produced the painful situation of maintaining a half-English home and children under the Hitler regime. She went through nervous breakdowns and abysses of dark experience after the birth of each of her two elder daughters, and eventually fled with them to England.

Great courage and resilience, a gift for happiness, and the discovery of the teachings of Rudolf Steiner—particularly through Dr. Heidenreich and the Christian Community—helped her towards stability. Later, without losing contact with Anthroposophy, she became associated with the Subud movement, in which the mystical side of her make-up, as distinguished from the severer occult approach, found great release and refreshment. Readers of this journal will recall her account of this in the last issue.

Students of spiritual biographies will see in some of her experiences a close parallel to the records of the Christian mystics:

I came back from sleep into such a peace as I have rarely known. I saw a golden light falling down from Heaven through the branches of the oak tree and felt it enter my heart . . . As this golden rain entered me, my heart responded with a rhythmical beat as though it were drinking in what was sent to it. It was not a single shaft of light; rather it was like moving golden waves filling the air above me and centring down on my heart. While it happened, I was neither interested nor surprised. I was just IN it, enveloped in it, experiencing it.

The strange "shot from the zenith" recorded near the end of the book stirs similar echoes:

At once and instantaneously a blinding flash came from the very highest zenith of Heaven, beyond and beyond what one can imagine. It was not only light; it was also white-hot heat. It took no time. It shot down into my heart (only, curiously, my spiritual heart seemed to be slightly on the right side compared with my physical heart); it was a moment of intense pain and intense ecstasy. I have known no ecstasy bordering on this. If it had taken any time, as we understand it, I would have been burned to a cinder. As it was, it felt to me as though my heart were burnt clear of all dross or impurities in white-hot rays.

The struggles and victories of any human soul in its search for enlightenment are bound to be of interest to all those who are consciously striving towards some kind of spiritual awareness. This account of one pilgrimage will be read with sympathy and respect by such seekers, including those who may find it sharply different from their own path.

D. E. E.

The Way Through Death

Though You Die. By Stanley Drake. (Christian Community Press. 12/6.)

THIS short book is written primarily for readers who are not familiar, or only slightly familiar, with Anthroposophy, but it will be helpful also to those already acquainted with Rudolf Steiner's treatment of the subject, particularly if they have occasion to answer questions about this. Mr. Drake shows that various people have had experiences, quite unconnected with Anthroposophy, which have convinced them that death is not extinction but a passage into a new mode of consciousness. He goes on to give a clear, concise account of the life between death and rebirth, as Dr. Steiner describes it, followed by chapters on the care of the dying, with particular reference to the sacraments of the Christian Community; some aspects of reincarnation and karma; and the significance for human dying of the death and resurrection of Christ.

In this concluding chapter there is a passage (p. 99) which could be misleading. Mr. Drake speaks of the "kingdom of the shades, in which all souls before Christ had to dwell in a lonely and shadowy state", and adds that "from this condition, which was not a punishment for the wicked but an unavoidable experience for pre-Christian souls, Christ rescued mankind." This seems to imply that throughout pre-Christian times the realm immediately beyond death was without the possibility of light, even for the most saintly souls, or for those who had gone far along a pre-Christian path of initiation. This may not be what Mr. Drake means to say, but as the passage stands it seems to me not to do justice to Dr. Steiner's treatment of pre-Christian religious wisdom and the Mystery schools.

Apart from this uncertainty, the book is valuable not only for the information and counsel it offers, but for its discerning human approach, neither cold nor sentimental, to a subject which concerns everyone but nowadays is seldom freely discussed.

C. W.

* * *Mr. Drake (asked by the reviewer if he would care to comment) writes:* "I can understand your feeling that the contrast I have drawn between the condition of the souls before and after Christ is too crass. I have stressed it sharply in order to emphasise what I believe is important for the Christian religious life today, namely a sense of wonder and awe at the tremendous effect of the death and resurrection of Christ on the lives of men and women, both this side of and beyond the gate of death, in regard to their spiritual and bodily state of being.

"I do not believe that the experience of utter darkness 'without the possibility of light' was universal in pre-Christian times, any more than I believe that every soul today experiences only universal light. The matter is far more complex than that. So I plead for the reader's tolerance for my over-simplification."

Religion in the Early Years

Growing Up In Religion. By Evelyn Derry. (Christian Community Press. 18/-.)

EVEN for the parent who is completely committed to and fully at ease in one or another religious denomination, a child's approach to religious practice and belief—not to mention his often formidable metaphysical questions—can present many difficulties.

Beginning with the child's true being, and with the relationship between child and adult, Mrs. Derry clears away many of the misconceptions, tensions and barriers that befog the religious education of children, and too often make it something entirely separate from the pattern of their daily lives.

There is an admirable chapter on Moral Training which almost any parent could read with profit. The importance of the seasonal festivals in a child's life; prayer in the different stages of growth from infancy to adolescence; conceptions of good and evil as they affect the child; the development of conscience—these and many other aspects of religious growth are examined with insight and good sense.

While the book is of necessity one for Christian—and particularly for anthroposophical—parents, it is also of great interest to all adults concerned in any way with the care of children.

D. E. E.

Eleanor Merry

Art: Its Occult Basis and Healing Value. By Eleanor C. Merry. (New Knowledge Books, East Grinstead, Sussex. 35/-.)

ELEANOR Merry was a woman of wide interests and imaginative insight. In this book we are offered the fruits of her life as an artist. The core of the book is the section on *Painting and Imagination* which formed her contribution to *Pure Colour* (a handbook on colour and painting written jointly with Maria Schindler, now long out of print). These chapters distil her experience as a painter and are at the same time a fine example of her lively, imaginative style of writing which renders even the commonplace fresh and immediate.

For Eleanor Merry, the soul of art is wonder; its language, imagination. For painting, this language is the everchanging tones of colour and the way in which these are woven into picture by the elemental powers of nature.

This section is prefaced by essays on *The Origins of the Arts*, which broadly trace the development of various arts from their birth in the ancient mystery centres, and by a short but nevertheless rewarding study of *The Portrayal of Christ*.

The latter part of the book contains an article on *Rudolf Steiner and Art*, where the author roundly, and rightly, dismisses the term "anthroposophical art", and a brief note on the painter Nicholas Roerich, for whom Eleanor Merry had a warm appreciation. The book concludes with a long discussion, under the title of *Culture in Transition*, of art in relation to science and religion, and its place in the sadly unbalanced civilization of today.

A notable feature of the book is the inclusion of nine reproductions in colour of paintings by the author. Each is the vivid rendering of an imaginative experience which is characteristic of her painting. The examples chosen range from the more delicately luminous Christmas imaginations of *The Kings* and *The Shepherds* to the striking colour of *Vision* and *Ancient Wisdom*, the last a picture based on a prismatic scale of almost cruel intensity.

In some ways one feels Eleanor Merry's painting as an art in transition—plunging deeply on one hand into the life-giving, imaginative ocean of colour, retaining on the other a strong connection with Renaissance tradition in the realisation of form. Perhaps the most successful, certainly the most "modern" in feeling, is her *Orestes and the Furies*, where colour and form are woven into a taut and interdependent composition. One finishes the book with gratitude to the editor for rescuing its various parts from the obscurity of out-of-print books and journals. It is at once a remembrance of the work of a gifted artist and a source of fresh encouragement to a later generation.

John Salter.

The Celtic Past

The Flaming Door. By Eleanor C. Merry. (New Knowledge Books. 40/-.)

THIS very well produced volume, with 66 illustrations, including 10 in colour, is an enlarged edition of a book first published in 1936. It has a helpful new Introduction by Adam Bittleston; he pays tribute to the intuitive sympathy that Mrs. Merry brought to her studies of the Celtic past and mentions the relation of the Hibernian Mysteries, with their emphasis on the polarity between knowledge and artistic creation, as described by Rudolf Steiner, to the controversy about the "two cultures" in our midst to-day.

The book itself covers a wide variety of Celtic lore and legend, relating them to the evolution of human consciousness and the incisive effect of the coming of Christ. A great deal of not readily accessible material is brought together and discussed by a writer who did not claim to be a scholar but had a strong sense of kinship with the old Celtic ways of life and feeling.

C. W.

A Dream of Death

The Dream Song of Olaf Asteson. Translated by Eleanor C. Merry. (New Knowledge Books. 30/-.)

THIS is a translation (from a German version) of the remarkable old Norwegian folk-ballad (its date of origin seems to be unknown) which recounts the experiences of Olaf Asteson while he sleeps through the Thirteen Holy Nights after Christmas. In spirit he crosses the bridge of death, passes through regions of purgatory, and is at last led by Michael to the judgment of Christ.

The coloured illustrations show Mrs. Merry's art at its best, working in a visionary realm particularly congenial to her. An interesting note on the modal music of the song, with music-type examples, is contributed by Benedict Wood.

C. W.

Colour and Its Powers

The Mystery-Wisdom of Colour. By Gladys Mayer, with contributions by H. Boos-Hamburger, John Salter, G. L. Appleby and Ceridwen Jeffree. (New Knowledge Books. 35/-.)

THIS volume, an unusual combination of typescript printing with 29 illustrations in colour, is both an introduction to Dr. Steiner's teachings on colour, its inner significance and its use in art, and a practical handbook for students, giving detailed advice on the preparation and handling of colour-washes, with examples and exercises.

Miss Mayer and her collaborators have assembled (though in a not very clearly arranged form) a wealth of ideas and information which will be most useful to anyone who wishes either to understand the theory of this approach to painting, or to experience the method by practising it.

C. W.

A New Venture

The Cross Bearer. By Isabel Wyatt. (The Michael Press, Hawkwood College, Stroud, Glos.; 5/-, postage 4d.)*

THIS first production of the new Michael Press is through and through the work of a student of Anthroposophy. The reader, however, has no need to search for meaning, but can enter with

* The Michael Press has been started in grateful memory of Lily Whincom, who founded Hawkwood College, and of George Bertram Coleman, who made the new venture possible. The intention is to bring out yearly three or four anthroposophical booklets with appropriate illustrations and cover designs. The proceeds will go to Hawkwood Building Fund.

spontaneous appreciation into each vividly painted fairy-tale scene as it follows another. Those who know something of Rudolf Steiner's work must nevertheless realise very soon that nothing has been inserted at random. From the picturing of the central character of the story, the half-man, Krestianin, who is given a rose-briar cross to bear in place of a whole man's cross of bone, that he may stand upright, down to the smallest details such as the naming of the different trees which grow on the opposite sides of the valley separating the land of Death-which-is-Birth from the land of Birth-which-is-Death—everything has conscious meaning. So, too, in the manner of telling: each word and phrase is wrought with the greatest care.

Those who already know and admire Mrs. Wyatt's stories will be sure to find much to satisfy them in *The Cross Bearer*, and little children may well enjoy having it read to them. Yet naturally this style of writing will not be to everybody's taste. In spite of the strong, dramatic mood, some may find these brightly painted scenes too formal and remotely beautiful, rather in the manner of Burne Jones or Rossetti; they may feel that a more unorthodox treatment would have been better suited to a 'new' myth. They may feel, too, that although the description of the effects of evil is poignantly done, that of evil itself is scarcely attempted.

The booklet has a sturdy cardboard cover and is printed on good quality paper in large, clear type. Both the cover design (Isobel Smith) and the coloured illustration (Collet D'Herbois) suffer a little from not being sufficiently adapted to the medium of a small booklet and give a rather cramped impression. The cover looks too much like a religious tract . . . a simpler design might have achieved a more modern effect!

The founders of the Michael Press are to be congratulated on their new venture. It is assured of a warm welcome from all writers and artists who are attempting to work out Rudolf Steiner's impulse.

Joy Mansfield.

Christmas Verses

The Way Down. By Isabel Wyatt. (Michael Press, 7/6; postage 6d.)

THESE gentle, melodious verses are written out of the mood of an 'anthroposophical' Christmas—a Christmas, that is, in which both the accepted Biblical themes and the traditional accompaniments, the holly and the candles, the robins and the snow, have been given new meaning and significance.

And out of the reality of her content and her sensitive approach to it, kindled by the charming sights and scents of Christmastide, Mrs. Wyatt is able to achieve a quality which is both fresh and

sweet, a new theme springing from the old. At times, however, the poems seem too derivative. Old, well-loved carols are frequently taken as models and it would need a fine hand indeed to surpass these. But one is also powerfully aware in many cases that a lecture by Rudolf Steiner lies behind, sometimes appearing to replace the harsh birth-pang of personal sensation and experience. Here is certainly a problem which confronts many anthroposophical writers and artists: how to achieve the stamp of real artistic individuality while basing their work on an inspiration derived from Rudolf Steiner.

The collection is dedicated to 'Children of All Ages', and although most of the poems are more suitable for those of a certain maturity, there are others, such as 'Christmas Morning' which even the very youngest should enjoy:

"He is born!"
The cock crows.
"When, when?"
Clucks the Hen.
"At Dawn"
The Ox lows.
"Where? Where?"
Breathes the Hare.
And the Lamb bleats to them,
"Be-eth-le-hem!"
Be-eth-le-hem!"

J. M.

BOOKS AS GIFTS

ART: ITS OCCULT BASIS AND HEALING VALUE. Eleanor C. Merry. Cloth. 192 pages. 9 colour plates. (\$5.50) 35s.

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by

L. Francis Edmunds

What is Rudolf Steiner education? To answer this question, so frequently asked, the Rudolf Steiner Press is preparing a series of books. The first, by L. Francis Edmunds, is entitled *Rudolf Steiner Education—the Waldorf Impulse*. It is an enlarged and revised edition of his 65 page booklet published in 1955 and he has brought it completely up to date.

L. Francis Edmunds was for many years a teacher at Michael Hall, the oldest English Rudolf Steiner school, has lectured on education throughout the world, and is now the principal of Emerson College near Birmingham. Having been a leading figure in Rudolf Steiner education almost since it began, he is uniquely qualified to describe it.

The publishers are confident that in its new form the book will help many people who want to know what Rudolf Steiner education is. As well as giving a lucid and factual account of all aspects of the education, the author relates the schools for normal children to the perhaps better known Rudolf Steiner homes for backward and handicapped children and discusses teacher training and adult education. He also lists all the Rudolf Steiner schools in the world in which the medium of teaching is English. There is a greatly extended section in which Mr. Edmunds answers questions that have often been asked of him by parents.

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