



THE GOLDEN BLADE

The Golden Blade

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Edited by Adam Bittleston

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EDITORIAL NOTE

WE are all exposed, through the mass media, to a flood of pictures and reports of what happens all over the world. A prominent American has said that when he reads newspapers he turns first to the sports pages; for there at least he reads about human successes, while everything else describes human failures. And a great part of the news is indeed about conflict and disaster, sometimes quite obviously, sometimes more indirectly, caused by man's mistakes.

But whether the news is good or bad, it comes to us in fragments; and we do not know what it means. There are indeed commentators who work hard to give us what they see as the long-term significance of some event. Within days or hours, they are often disproved. And what is needed is a wider context still.

A human life, regarded as lasting from conception and birth until death, is not a complete reality. A human individuality enters earthly existence with particular resolves, which had been formed while it lived in a different condition of being. At death, far-reaching intentions are carried back, and work on. No-one need accept or reject such statements off-hand; it is better to look at actual life attentively and to see what evidence it may provide. If we find that it supports them, we begin to see all happenings in the world in a fresh light.

Such a publication as *The Golden Blade* is only justified if it helps to put current events, about which it says so little directly, in a great context. It is not meant as a holiday from the present, except in so far as a holiday can really illuminate the day's work. We go back to Brocéliande only in order to understand tremendous relationships between things which were actually done by men thousands of years ago and what can be done in the twentieth century and beyond it, if the narrow self-seeking which dominates our present treatment *and vision* of Nature begins to be overcome.

Rudolf Steiner read many newspapers. Particularly during the years of war, 1914-1918, there are many references in his lectures to world events. But what he brought in these lectures

has always a very long-term significance. In this issue of *The Golden Blade* a lecture given in Zurich in 1915 is printed, in which what he had said in the course published as *Anthroposophical Ethics*, given in Norrköping, May 1912, about the four Platonic Virtues (described in *The Republic*) is developed in the direction of that comprehensive picture of man's threefold being – the head-system, the rhythmic system, and the metabolic and limb-system – of which he gave the first full description in 1917, and which is summed up in the Foundation Meditation at Christmas 1923.

No-one should feel discouraged if he encounters in such a lecture, and in the following articles, what seem to him incomprehensible or even fantastic things. None of these lectures or articles can stand by themselves, or explain everything they say at all completely. But behind each there are lives rich in work and achievement, which give them a certain weight; and the reader who is interested or outraged by some statement can generally find fairly easily a book which gives further explanation – for Dr Wegman's article for instance in the book she wrote with Rudolf Steiner, *Fundamentals of Therapy*, or in his *Occult Science and Medicine*. Reading Dr Vreede, the very lucidity and simplicity of her style can mislead one into thinking one has understood it all – she is writing of a mystery!

The 'Interchange of Letters' forms part of real discussions, which have gone on for some years, and which it is hoped will prove stimulating to others – perhaps some readers of *The Golden Blade* would like to join in? The correspondence is by no means closed. Here four distinct points of view are represented.

The article kindly put at our disposal by Dr A. B. Guirdham is in one way exceptional, in that he is not a student of Rudolf Steiner's work. The results of his clinical experience confirm in striking ways much else that is to be found in this issue; perhaps above all this, that courage, moderation, and the search for wisdom and justice are carried on from life to life and give a meaning to history. But intimations of these things can lead to sickness, unless the right help and understanding are found.

THE GREAT VIRTUES

A lecture given by RUDOLF STEINER in Zürich, 31st January 1915¹

OUR spiritual science has the task of removing for our consciousness, indeed for our whole inner life, the gulf that exists for our external human consciousness between the physical world, in which man spends the time between birth and death, and the spiritual world in which man spends the other part of the totality of his existence, the time between death and a new birth.

For one who lives in spiritual science with every fibre of his soul, such a saying is familiar, and even self-evident. But one may well say that it becomes particularly holy to us at such a moment as this. Through the grave events of war we have lost within quite a short time a number of our dear friends and members, and are soon to accompany friends upon their last paths on earth. Tomorrow morning at eleven we shall have here in Zürich the cremation of a dear member, Frau Dr Colazza, and we have just heard that our dear friend Fritz Mitscher died this afternoon about five near Davos. With these two members, souls dear to us have left the physical plane; but spiritual science has shown us the way to understand in a much higher sense than we would otherwise be able to achieve that we do not lose such souls, but remain united with them.

There are already a considerable number of souls belonging to us, who have gone through the gate of death since our work in this movement began. And from those sources from which knowledge of the spirit comes to us, it can be said that these souls have become faithful fellow-workers with us in the spiritual world, each according to his powers. With the full responsibility, with which something can be said, which should have a firm foundation in spiritual knowledge, I can say: in them we have won pillars supporting our spiritual movement. Many have passed through the gate of death, working within

¹ From notes unrevised by the lecturer. Published by kind permission of the Rudolf Steiner Nachlassverwaltung, Dornach, Switzerland, and in agreement with the Rudolf Steiner Publishing Company. The German text appears in *Das Geheimnis des Todes*, Rudolf Steiner Gesamtausgabe, Verlag der Rudolf Steiner Nachlassverwaltung, 1967.

our spiritual movement, and looking down upon that to which their love is directed. In the period between birth and death they have grown attached to the kind of aspiration which is represented in our circle. They have left behind them in our Society something which is itself upon the path between death and a new birth.

Just as nature around us is a world upon which we look back, we can look back upon our physical life from that moment onwards, which can be compared with man's birth. Immediately after death man passes through a condition which can be compared with the embryonic life, with the life within the maternal body, except that this period in the life after death can be counted in days, and is much shorter than the embryonic life in relation to physical life. Then follows what can be compared to the entry into the physical world, with the drawing of the first breath. This can be called the awakening in the spiritual world; it is a perceiving that the will of the soul which has gone through the gate of death is received by the beings of the higher Hierarchies. Just as a human being physically entering the physical world from his mother's body finds himself able to receive the external air, and as his senses gradually awaken – in the same way there comes the moment after death when the soul feels: that power of will, which during physical life was contained within the limits of the physical body, now flows from me out into the universe. And this soul then feels how this will is really received through the activity of the beings of the next higher hierarchy, the hierarchy of the Angels. That is like drawing the first breath in the spiritual world, and the gradual growth into the spiritual environment; spiritual experience shows us this.

I would like to speak of the destiny of those who have gone from us in the course of the years, leaving the physical plane. I would like to look at those who have become attached to our spiritual movement here, and who look down upon it as something of which they know that it informs human souls while still within the physical body about that condition in which they themselves live. To be able to relate oneself in this way in memory of earthly life is something which even here in the physical world belongs already to the spiritual world. For those who have gone through the gate of death this is something

infinitely precious and significant. When, like a tributary into a river, they can flow entirely into that stream which flows up to them from the physical world, taking its source from what they have experienced in our movement – the stream in the thoughts of those linked with them in love or by family ties – then the community is a much closer one than it could otherwise be in our materialistic times, because it is based on spiritual relationships.

We may say: with many a one, who has gone early through the gate of death into the spiritual world, it seems as if he had done this from intimate love to our spiritual movement, in order to help with stronger powers from the spiritual world. Among a considerable number of those who have gone from us there lives in their souls the most wonderfully clear feeling about the need for our spiritual movement. For him who can look into the spiritual world all those who have gone through the gate of death, and now gaze down upon the movement with which they were connected, are like spiritual heralds of our movement. They carry their standards before us, and call to us constantly: we were convinced while we were united with you of the necessity of this movement. But now that we have entered the spiritual world we know that we can help and how we must help at a time in which this movement is necessary.

This is something which those who are left behind on the physical plane will feel more and more, when they have lost people dear to them. For them what has been said can be the deepest comfort, for they have here all that can bring about a still deeper connection between souls when we can no longer be connected in the external realm of manifestation, through physical eyes and physical words.

This spiritual movement, of which we are to become part, has to bring a very great deal. Today I would like to choose out one particular chapter. A time like ours, in which external civilisation, in spite of the last echoes of the old religions, builds entirely upon the materialistic consciousness, can only develop the impulses of the moral life in a way that reckons only with life between birth and death. Among the many things which should come about through our spiritual movement will be a fresh development of the whole moral life of humanity. For men will learn to regard the moral life from a point of view

which extends beyond birth and death, and which reckons with the fact that the human soul goes through repeated lives on earth, and that this soul, as we bear it within us between birth and death, has passed through many lives, and can hope for other lives in the future. When we have extended our vision from a single life to a series of successive lives, we shall have a more comprehensive understanding for our existence, and a sounder and more comprehensive understanding of what virtue and morality are.

When we speak of human virtues we can distinguish four of these which we can describe in ordinary language. There is one virtue, as we shall indicate later on, which lives in the depths of the human soul, but of which we should speak as little as possible as we shall see, for reasons that are holy. All other virtues which exist in life, and which together make up morality, can be regarded as special examples of the four virtues which we shall consider, four virtues of which antiquity in particular had much to say.

Plato, the great philosopher of ancient Greece, distinguished these four virtues in particular, because he was able to draw his wisdom from the echoes of the ancient Mysteries. Under the influence of the old Mysteries Plato could distinguish the virtues better than later philosophers and much better than our times, in which knowledge of Mystery wisdom has become so remote and so chaotic.

The first virtue which we must consider, if we speak about morality from a comprehensive knowledge of human nature, is the virtue of wisdom. But this wisdom is to be understood in a rather deeper sense, more related to ethics, than is usually done. Wisdom is not something that comes to man of its own accord; still less can it in the ordinary sense be learned. It is not easy to describe what its meaning for us should be. If we pass through life in such a way that events work upon us, and we learn from them how we could have met this or that more adequately, how we could have used our powers more strongly and effectively – if we are attentive toward everything in life, so that when something meets us a second time in a comparable way we can treat it in a way which shows us we have benefitted from the first experience – then we grow in wisdom. If we preserve all through life a mood of being able to learn from life, of being able to regard every-

thing brought to us by nature and our experience, in such a way that we learn from it, not simply accumulating knowledge, but growing inwardly better and richer – then we have gathered wisdom, and what we have experienced has not been worthless for the life of our souls.

Life has been worthless for us if we pass through decades and still judge something that we have experienced in just the same way as we thought about it earlier in our lives. If we pass through life in such a way, we are most remote from wisdom. Karma may have brought it about that in youth we grew angry, and condemned this or that human action. If we retain this quality we have made poor use of our lives. We have used them well, supposing we formed harsh judgments in our youth, if at a later stage of life we do not judge harshly, but with understanding and forgiveness; if we make the effort of wishing to understand. If we have the character that from birth some things aroused furious anger in us, and if when we are old we no longer grow angry as in our youth, but our anger has left us and we have grown gentler – then we have used life in accordance with wisdom. If we were materialists in our youth, but then allowed ourselves to experience what our time could bring us as revelations from the spiritual world, then we have used our life in accordance with wisdom. If we close ourselves to the revelations of the spiritual world we have not used our life in accordance with wisdom.

To be enriched in this way, and to achieve a wider horizon, we can call the use of life in accordance with wisdom. What spiritual science seeks to give us is able to help us in opening ourselves towards life, in order to grow wiser. Wisdom is something which strongly opposes human egoism. Wisdom is something which always reckons with the course of universal events. We let ourselves be instructed by the course of universal events because this liberates us from the narrow judgment made by our ego. Fundamentally, a wise man cannot judge egoistically; for if one learns from the world, and grows in understanding for the world, one allows one's judgment to be corrected by the world; thus wisdom detaches us from narrow and limited vision and brings us into harmony with itself. Much else could be described, in order gradually to form a picture of wisdom. We should not attempt a definition of such ideas, but keep our

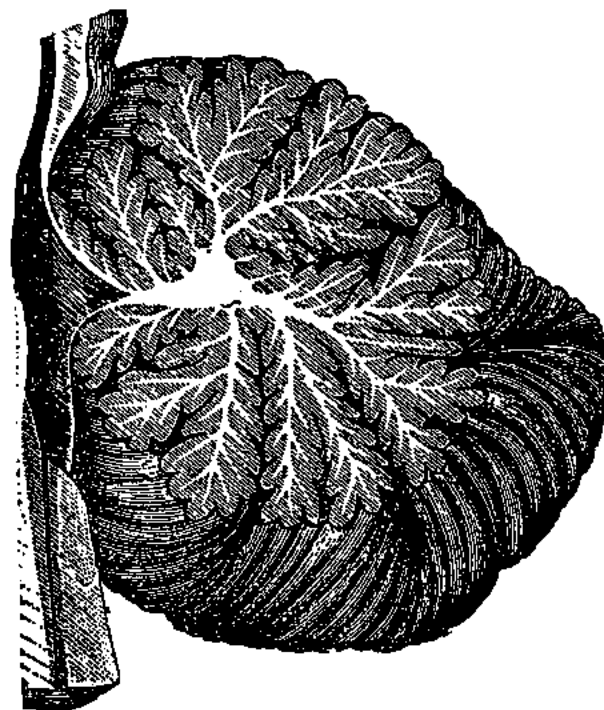
hearts open, in order to grow wiser, even about wisdom.

Here in the physical world everything which man is to experience in waking life has to use the instruments of external physical and ethereal nature. Between birth and death we are only outside our physical and ethereal body with our soul-being, in so far as this is ego and astral body, during our periods of sleep. In our conscious, waking condition we use as instruments our physical and ethereal bodies. When we fill ourselves with wisdom, when we try in action and thought, in feeling and perception to live in accordance with wisdom, we use those organs of our physical and ethereal bodies which are so to speak the most perfect in our earthly life – those organs which have developed over the longest period, which were prepared by Saturn, Sun and Moon and have come into our lives as a heritage, having reached a certain completion.

I would like to give you from another point of view an idea of what can be understood by more or less perfect organs. Take on the one hand our brain. The brain is not the most perfect organ, but we can still call it more perfect than other organs, for it has needed longer for its evolution. We can compare the brain with our torso, upon which we have our hands. When we intend to do something with our hands, we have the thought: I stretch out my hand, I take the vase, I draw back my hand. What have I done? I have stretched out not only the physical hand, but also the ethereal and the astral hand, and a part of my ego; the physical hand went with them.

If I only think, clairvoyant consciousness can see how something like spiritual arms stretch out from the head, but the physical brain remains within the skull. Just as my ethereal and astral hand belongs to my physical hand, something ethereal and astral belongs to the brain. The brain cannot follow, but the hands can follow. In a later time the hands will one day be fixed, and we shall only be able to move their astral part. Hands are on the way to become what the brain is already. In earlier times, during the old Sun and Moon periods, what today stretches out from the brain as something that is only spiritual was still accompanied by the physical organ. The skull has now covered it, so that the physical brain is held fast within it during the evolution of the Earth. The brain is an organ which has passed through more stages of evolution. The hands are on the

way to become similar to the brain, for the whole man is on the way to become a brain. Thus there are organs which are more perfect, and have evolved into something more self-enclosed, and others which are less perfect. The most perfect organs are used for what we achieve in wisdom. Our ordinary brain is



Section of cerebellum, enlarged, showing tree-like structure

really used only as the instrument for the lowest form of wisdom, earthly cleverness. The more we acquire wisdom, the less we depend upon our cerebrum, the more activity is withdrawn (a thing unknown to external anatomy) to our cerebellum, to that smaller brain enclosed within our skull which looks like a tree. When we have become wise, when we have become *wisdom*, we find ourselves in fact under a 'tree', which is our cerebellum and which then especially begins to unfold its activity.

Imagine how a man who has become especially wise stretches out the organs of his wisdom mightily, like the branches of a

tree. They originate in the cerebellum which remains within the hard covering of the skull; but the spiritual organs stretch far out, and man is under the tree, the Bodhi tree, in spiritual reality.

And so we see too that what we do in wisdom is the most spiritual thing about us, or at least belongs to the most spiritual, for the organs are already at rest. If we do anything with our hands, we must use part of our strength in the movement of the hand. If we form a wise judgment, or decide something wisely, the organs remain at rest, strength is no longer used upon the physical organ. We are there more spiritual; those organs which we use on the physical plane for the development of wisdom are those on which we need to use the least amount of energy – they are in a sense the most perfect.

Thus wisdom is something in the moral life which allows men to experience themselves in a spiritual way. It is connected with this that what man attains in the way of wisdom enables him to reap the greatest harvest from his earlier incarnations. Because we can live in wisdom within the spirit without any effort by the physical organs, we are most able through the life of wisdom to make fruitful what we have won in earlier incarnations for this life, bringing over this wisdom from earlier incarnations.

We have in German a good expression for a man who refuses to become wise. We call him a Philistine.¹ A Philistine is a man who resists the development of wisdom, who wants to remain as he is his whole life through, without altering his opinions. A man who seeks to become wise makes the effort to carry over the work which he has done and stored up in the course of earlier incarnations. The wiser we become, the more we bring over from earlier incarnations into the present, and if we do not wish to become wise, so that we leave barren the wisdom developed in earlier incarnations, there is then one who comes to saw it off: Ahriman.

No-one likes it better than Ahriman that we fail to grow wiser. We have the power to do it. We have gained far, far more in earlier incarnations than we believe; we won far more during the times in which we passed through the old conditions of clairvoyance. Everyone could become much wiser than he does become. No-one has the excuse that he could not bring

¹ The German and the English meanings of the word are rather different. (Tr.)



The Buddha as Tree of Wisdom (sandstone relief from Bharhut, India, c. 2nd, Century B.C.)

Indian Museum, Calcutta

much over from the past. To become wise means that one develops what has been won in earlier incarnations in such a way that it fills us in this incarnation.

* * *

Another virtue can be called – though it is difficult to describe it exactly – the virtue of Courage. It contains the mood which does not remain passive towards life, but is ready to use its strength and activity. It can be said that this virtue comes from the heart. Of one who has this virtue in ordinary life it can be said: he has his heart in the right place. This is a good expression for our condition when we do not withdraw in a timid way from things which life asks from us, but when we are prepared to take ourselves in hand and know how to intervene where it is necessary. When we are inclined to get moving, confidently and bravely, we have this virtue. It is connected with a healthy life of feeling, which develops bravery at the right moment, while its absence brings about cowardice. This virtue can naturally be used in the physical course of life only through specific organs. These organs, to which the physical and ethereal hearts belong, are not so perfect as those which serve wisdom. These organs are on the way to alter, and will indeed become different in the future.

There is a great distinction between the brain and the heart in their relation to cosmic evolution. Suppose that a man goes through the gate of death, and passes through life between death and a new birth. His brain is altogether a work of the Gods. The brain is permeated by forces which leave him altogether when he goes through the gate of death, and for his next life the brain is built up entirely anew, not only materially, but also in its inner forces. That is not the case with the heart. With the heart it is so, that not the physical heart itself, but the forces which are active in the physical heart, remain in existence. These forces withdraw into the astral and into the Ego, and continue in existence between death and a new birth. The same forces, which beat within our hearts, beat again next time in our new incarnation. What works in the brain has gone; that does not appear in the next incarnation. But the forces active in the heart reappear in the next incarnation. If we contemplate the

interior of the head we can say: invisible forces are working there, which compose the brain. But when a man has gone through the gate of death these forces are given over to the universe. But if we perceive a human heart-beat, we perceive spiritual forces which are not only present in this incarnation, but will live too in the next incarnation, having passed through death and a new birth.

Popular feeling has had a wonderful inkling of such things. It is because of this that it is so much concerned with the feeling of the heart-beat, not because the physical heart-beat in itself is valued so much, as because we are looking at something much more eternal when we consider a human heart-beat. If we have the virtue of courage, of bravery, we can use for it only a part of certain forces. We must use the other part for the organs which are the instrument for this virtue. They are organs for which we have still to use part of the forces concerned. If we are not courageous, if we let ourselves go and withdraw timidly from life, abandoning ourselves to our own weight, then we cannot bring to life those forces which have to accompany the use of the quality of courage in life.

When we stand in life in a cowardly way, the forces which should fire our hearts remain unused. They are then seed for Lucifer. He takes charge of them, and we lack them in the next life. To be cowardly towards life means to abandon a number of forces to Lucifer; and these are missing for us, when we seek to build up our hearts in our next incarnation. For these hearts should be the organs, the instruments of courage. We come into the world with defective, underdeveloped organs.

* * *

The third virtue reckons with the least perfect organs, those which will achieve a form in the future, of which they contain at present only the seed. This virtue can be called Temperance.¹ One shade of it can be called 'Moderation'. We have thus three virtues: Wisdom, Courage, and Temperance.

Now it is possible to be intemperate in the most varied ways.

¹ The German word 'Besonnenheit' seems impossible to render adequately in English. 'Temperance' is widely used for Plato's word *σωφροσύνη* (Tr.)

One can be intemperate in excessive eating and drinking; this is its lowest form. Here the soul is absorbed into bodily desire, and we live entirely through our body. But if we take our desire in hand, if we command the body, what it may not do, we are then temperate or moderate. Through such moderation we keep in the right order those forces which ought to help us, in order that we do not abandon the organs concerned to Lucifer in the next incarnation. For we abandon to Lucifer those forces which are expended through giving ourselves up to a life of passion. We do this in the worst way when our passions intoxicate us, and we are content to live in a dreaming, drowsy state.

When we lose our clear consciousness through intemperance we are always abandoning powers to Lucifer. He takes up these powers, and thereby deprives us of the forces which we need for the organs of breathing and digestion. We return with bad organs of breathing and digestion, if we do not practise the virtue of moderation. Those who like to be carried away by their desires, who give themselves up to the life of their passions, are candidates for decadent human beings in the future, for those future human beings who will suffer from all kinds of faults in their physical body.

It can be said that this virtue of Temperance depends upon the least perfect human organs, those organs that are at the beginning of their development and have to be fundamentally transformed. When we consider our organs of digestion and all that is connected with them, they are put in motion by the use of Ego, astral body, ethereal body and physical body. It is different with those organs which are the instruments for Courage. Here our Ego remains more or less outside, and we move freely; only what is astral and ethereal in us is absorbed into the physical. If we go further to the virtues embraced by Wisdom, we retain Ego and astral body in free detachment. For as we become wiser, we develop the organisation of the astral body and achieve control over it. That is the essential thing, that through becoming wise we transform the astral into the Spirit-Self, and only the ethereal accompanies the physical. In the brain only the ethereal accompanies the physical. While during waking life in relation to the rest of the body we are closely connected, at least with our astral nature, with the physical organ, we retain for the brain the condition, which we have in sleep, in the high-

est degree. Thus we require physical sleep particularly for the brain. For when we are awake we are also outside the brain with our Ego and our astral body, and these have to make the greatest efforts within themselves, without being supported by the external organ.

Thus we find a connection between our human being and the virtues. We can call Wisdom a virtue, which belongs to man as a spiritual being, where with his Ego and his astral body he is freely active, using his physical and ethereal organs only as a kind of basis. We can name Courage as the virtue active where man is only free with his Ego, which is supported by his astral, ethereal and physical bodies. Finally we can speak of Temperance, where the seed contained in our Ego is becoming free; where our Ego is still bound to the astral, ethereal and physical bodies, and yet with our Ego we are beginning to work ourselves free from these bonds.

* * *

There is then a virtue which is perhaps the most spiritual of all. This is connected with the whole human being. There is an exercise of the human being which we lose early, which we possess only in the first years of childhood. I have often mentioned this. When we enter the physical plane we do not yet have the attitude which belongs to our human dignity: we crawl, on all fours. I have pointed out that we only achieve the right attitude, the upright position, through our own forces. We develop too through the forces which enter into speech. In the first years of our life we develop the forces which in the main guide us into the position which we have in the world as true men. We do not enter the world in such a way that we already have the right direction in the world. We crawl. But we are set in it rightly, when we direct the head outwards towards the stars. This corresponds to inner forces.

In later life we lose these forces. They no longer appear. There is nothing which enters human life again so radically as learning to walk and stand upright. In relation to standing upright we grow more and more weary. If we begin in the early morning to live with our brain, then when the day is ended we grow tired and need sleep. What makes us upright in child-

hood, when we are tired, remains tired all through life and grows feeble, and anything comparable to achieving uprightness as children is no longer done by us in later life.

And how do we direct ourselves into life when we learn to speak? Forces of direction work as well when we learn to speak. But the forces which we use in early childhood are not really lost for us in later life. They remain for us, but they are connected with a virtue; with the virtue which is related to rightness and the right, the virtue of all-comprehending Justice, the fourth virtue. The same impulse, which we use as a child when we raise ourselves up from crawling, lives in us if we have the virtue of justice, the fourth that Plato mentions.

Whoever really exercises the virtue of justice puts every thing and every being in its right place, and goes out of himself and into the others. That is what all-comprehending Justice means. To live in Wisdom means to derive the best fruits from the forces we have stored up during earlier incarnations. If we have there to point towards what was imparted to us during earlier incarnations, where we were still permeated by divine forces, with Justice we have to point out still more: we are sprung from the whole universe. We exercise justice by developing those forces which relate us spiritually to the entire universe. Justice is the measure of a man's connection with the divine. In practice Injustice is equivalent to the godless; equivalent to the one who has lost his divine origin; we blaspheme against God, the God from whom we spring, if we do any man injustice.

Thus we have two virtues, Justice and Wisdom, which guide us back to what we were in earlier times, in earlier incarnations in the times when we ourselves were still in the womb of the godhead. And we have two other virtues, Courage and Temperance, which guide us towards later incarnations. We provide all the more forces for these, the less we give to Lucifer. We have seen how what is of the nature of courage and of temperance goes into the organs, and how the organs are prepared thereby for the next incarnation. In the same way moral life extends into the future, when we fill ourselves with spirituality. Two virtues shine out over the past incarnation: Wisdom and Justice. Courage and Temperance shine out over the incarnations to come.

The time will come when men will see clearly that they are throwing themselves into the jaws of Ahriman, when they shut themselves off against justice and wisdom. What was theirs in earlier incarnations, what belonged to the divine world, they would cast over to Lucifer through intemperate or cowardly actions. All that can be seized by Lucifer is taken away from the powers available to us for building up our body in the coming life.

We cannot practise wisdom and justice without becoming selfless, as has been indicated. Only a self-seeking man can be unjust. Only a self-seeking man can be willing to remain unwise. Wisdom and justice lead us out beyond our own Self and make of us members of the whole organism of humanity. Courage and temperance make us in a sense members of the whole organism of humanity; only through experiencing courage and temperance and expressing them in our lives, do we provide for ourselves for the future with a stronger organism to take its place within humanity. We do not then lose what we would otherwise throw to Lucifer. Egoism is of itself transformed into selflessness when it is rightly extended over the whole horizon of life, and man finds his place in the light of the fourth virtue. That is what will be brought by spiritual wisdom for the future of man, and will extend over ethics and the moral life. This will pour into educational method as well. Through understanding wisdom and justice in the sense that I have indicated, the desire to learn all through life will arise. It will be seen that one has to begin learning in the right way when one has already youth behind one — while people think now that they do not need to learn anything more once their youth is past. In this way even the greatest and noblest works of art of the greatest poets are lost. We would understand them best if we took them up again in old age. If people read Goethe's *Iphigenia* or Schiller's *Tell*, they usually think: we read that at school already. That is not right; one should not forget that these writings have their best effect if they are read in later life, for then they develop justice and wisdom.

And again the education of children will bring special fruit if the virtue of courage and the virtue of temperance are seen in the right light. Where children are to be educated, these virtues must be regarded in an individual way, by showing the

children again and again that they are to take hold of life courageously, and not be afraid or withdraw themselves from all sorts of things; and that they grasp life temperately and moderately, in order gradually to free themselves from their passions. An immense amount can be done for the education of children in this way. In the later course of our study of spiritual science these things will have to be developed in greater detail.

So we see that while otherwise the ethical life only provides laws concerned with life between birth and death, on the external physical plane, the considerations of spiritual science extend to an unlimited horizon. It is the same as with other things in spiritual science. Humanity has had to experience in relation to the science of nature the extension of its horizons. Giordano Bruno showed men that there is not only the earth, but many other worlds in cosmic space. Spiritual science shows men that there is not only earthly life, but many earthly lives. Before Giordano Bruno men believed that there was a fixed boundary up in the sky. Giordano Bruno showed that there is no boundary, that the blue of the sky is not a limit. Spiritual science shows that birth and death are not there, but that we introduce them into life through the limitation of our understanding.

Thus the gulf between the physical and the spiritual can be bridged over. Things which rest upon a spiritual-scientific foundation are like this for those seeking to found a genuine, truthful Monism. Those who often call themselves Monists today manage their Monism very simply. They take one part of the world and make of it a unity by throwing away the other half. True Monism comes about through allowing both halves to have their significant influence upon one another. This comes about through spiritual science. This should not only arise in a significant way for our consciousness, but for the whole of our life. We have to come more and more to the real knowledge, looking out into the world: in all that lives and works around us something supersensible is present, not only in what is seen by our eyes, but also in what can be perceived by the understanding which is bound to the brain. There are everywhere spiritual forces, behind every phenomenon, behind the phenomenon of the rainbow, behind the movement of the hand, and so on.

If you read the lecture cycle which I held in Leipzig at the

turn of the year last year,¹ you will find how the Christ Impulse worked through the Mystery of Golgotha, and how Christ lives in the most important affairs of humanity, not only in human conscious knowledge. For instance, there were quarrels about dogmas. But while men were quarrelling, the Christ Impulse lived on and brought about the necessary events.

Take the figure of the Maid of Orléans. In European history the simple shepherd girl appears. She appeared in a remarkable way; there lived in her soul not only those forces, which are otherwise to be found in human beings, but the Christ Impulse works in this personality, enlivening and sustaining her through its mighty influence. She became a kind of representative of the Christ Impulse itself for her time. This she was only able to do, because the Christ Impulse could enter and live within her.

You know that we celebrate the Christmas Festival in the time when the sun has least power, in the deepest darkness of winter, because we can be convinced that at this time the inner light, the spiritual light, has its greatest power.

Old legends tell us that over Christmas, up to 6th January, people have had special experiences, because at this time the life of the earth, and the inner forces of the earth, are most concentrated. Those who have the right disposition for it, experience then in fact the spiritual forces within the earthly forces. Countless legends describe this. The best time for this covers thirteen days before 6th January.

The Maid of Orléans passed through these thirteen days in a particular condition, in a condition in which the life of her feeling was not yet affected by the external world. It is remarkable that the time during which the Maid of Orléans was carried in her mother's body ended during the Christmas time of the year 1411. She was born, having been carried for the last thirteen days in her mother's body, on 6th January. Before she drew the first breath, before she saw the physical life with physical eyes, she experienced what is earthly during these thirteen days in that sleep, through which man passes before he enters the physical world.

¹ *Christ and the Spiritual World*. The search for the Holy Grail (six lectures, Leipzig, 28th December 1913 - 2nd January 1914), published by the Rudolf Steiner Press.

Here I am indicating something immensely significant, which shows how the world is guided from the spiritual; how what happens externally in the physical world is given its direction by the spiritual world; how, through the physical, the spiritual world is flowing.

Thus in our time we must work ever more consciously to remove through spiritual science the gulf between the physical and the spiritual. We do this for one field of our lives, when we become conscious that within our movement the powers of those are at work, who united their soul and body during their earthly life with our movement, and have passed through the gate of death. If we look across to the other bank of the stream, where they are active, feeling ourselves united with them, directing our thoughts towards them - we do this in full consciousness, the consciousness won through spiritual science. We know that we are in the most living connection with those who have gone through the gate of death, and we know that they provide the best powers among us. When we do this, or can think it, we regard life like a field that is to be sown. Between what we ourselves plant, we see plants everywhere springing up, which we could not have grown ourselves. Then we can know: these plants have been put in by those to whom it is granted to be in the world of the spirit, those with whom we feel ourselves connected, those with whom we become united.

Human brotherhood with those as well who no longer bear a physical body - that will be the characteristic sign of this movement and of those who feel themselves as members of this movement, and reckon themselves as belonging to it in the future. Other societies, founded only upon earthly things, will be able to remove many barriers between human beings. The barriers between the living and the dead will more and more be taken away by the movement which unites those men who wish to be united in the sign of spiritual science. We will carry all this in our souls, and keep as an abiding sense this characteristic quality, uniting us with this spiritual movement, which has become dear to us.

THE THREEFOLD SUN

ELIZABETH VREEDE

TO speak of the mystery of the threefold Sun is to touch upon one of the greatest mysteries in world evolution. We could not do this, if we had not had as teacher Rudolf Steiner, who is to be regarded as the renewer of the Mysteries for the present time. On the most varied occasions he pointed towards this mystery and showed us its relation on one side with the mystery of threefold man, and on the other hand with the highest and holiest mystery, hardly to be grasped by the human spirit, the mystery of the divine Trinity.

Knowledge of the threefold Sun was taught in the ancient Mysteries. At different times in human evolution different things were taught about it; of course not in the sense of an inner contradiction, but because the advance of human development brought about changing relationships for human beings within the Mysteries towards it, and towards the beings who are concerned when the threefold Sun is described.

If we try to grasp the old wisdom of the Mysteries, it can be said: they taught of the first Sun, which is known to all of us, which we see in the sky appear and disappear again, which is brilliant and indeed blinding for our eyes, the physical, material sun, as it is understood today – that sun which makes the objects of the world visible for us. In the ancient Mysteries, it was taught: the sun only shines for us in its brilliance, because Lucifer has made it visible for us. He has opened our eyes, he has made the sun visible for the eye which is indeed itself created by the Sun. The first sun, the externally visible sun, was described as Luciferic; it contains indeed in its external constitution, as it is described today from a scientific point of view, something Luciferic.

But another Sun is hidden within it. This is the Sun to which we owe it that we have as human beings a life of the soul, that we have a memory, that we are egos: egos of a kind, which can preserve its experiences in the sequence of memory, and thereby know about itself, and experience in this way a self-enclosed life of the soul, uniting thinking, feeling and willing. The beings to

whom in ancient times men looked up, as the bestowers of this human life of the soul, were described by the ancient Hebrews as the Elohim. It was said of them that their place is the Sun, that they represent a Sun of soul and spirit in comparison with the external, material sun. We know of one of these Elohim, Jahve or Jehovah, that he united himself with the Moon. But the Elohim, who belong to the Spirits of Form, in the Second Hierarchy, they are those who live within the Sun hidden from external sight. Thus one had a second Sun, within the first, visible sun. The first sun which is enkindled by Lucifer, covered and hid this second Sun, in which are to be thought not only the Elohim, but also the other beings of the Second Hierarchy, the Spirits of Movement and Wisdom – although we can rightly regard the Spirits of Form as the particular representatives of this second Sun.

But behind this Sun – thus it was taught in the Mysteries – is hidden yet another Sun, the spiritual Sun in the fullest sense. In it there lives that Sun-being, who at one time united his being with the Sun and thereby made it the most glorious star in the whole universe. This is the Sun-being, which has been called by different names in the course of the ages, and which in the present time bears for earthly men the name of Christ. For it is this third Sun which was united with the earth through the Mystery of Golgotha. In pre-Christian times, when this union of the third Sun with the earth had not yet come about, men spoke of the journey of this Sun-being towards the earth through a long period of human evolution. From the far spaces of the universe, from beyond the Sun, this being came first to the Sun, and then to the earth. And it was taught that this Being, who can be called the true Sun-spirit, gave man the 'I': the 'I', which does not depend simply upon the thread of memory, disappearing when memory ceases (for instance in sleep), but that 'I' which goes from incarnation to incarnation, through which man is an eternal, divine being.

If we consider the post-Atlantean periods of civilisation we shall find that the relationship of human beings to this spiritual Sun in its different aspects passes through various stages. For in each period man had changing capacities for development, and was related in a varying way not only to the external world, but to the spiritual world as well. For the ancient Indian

period we find a Being described, of whom it is said that he is really beyond the sphere of mankind; Vishvakarman, the Being that has 'made all things', as the name expresses. In this divine Being the Indian experienced Him, whom we now call Christ. But He was not yet related to the ancient Indian civilisation, for the time had not yet come.

But in the second period of civilisation, that of ancient Persia, we see how Zarathustra beholds the Sun, and around it an Aura, the 'Great Aura', Ahura Mazdao. This speaks to him as the true being of the Sun, which we must describe as the spiritual Sun.

In the third post-Atlantean period only the effects of the work of the spiritual beings were perceived. The Sun becomes a being, which no longer immediately reveals the spiritual, but in its movements, its radiations, and its effects brings about what is of the nature of the ethereal and astral. The Egyptians spoke of Re Osiris, the sun-god. Re, who has Osiris as his representative on the earth, is the being who conducts the sun around the starry sky, carrying it in a Sun-boat on the waters of heaven. For the Egyptian felt the heavens as related to the watery element. Re is the second Sun, the Sun which works through sending its warmth and its light to the earth – not the external sunlight, but that inner Light which shines also in our thoughts. Of this kind is the Sun that is at first perceived by the Egyptians.

But when we come into a later period of Egypt, when the real Egyptian civilisation is soon to be succeeded by another, then we can see that the external sun is more and more taken into account. We find attention first turned upon the activity of the external, physically visible sun, by the great Pharaoh Akhnaton, Amenophis IV, who lived in the fourteenth century before Christ, and whose 'Hymn to the Sun' has come down to us.

Glorious is thy rising on the horizon of heaven,
O creator Aton, who wast alive at the beginning of all things!
When thou risest in the eastern sky
Every land lies bathed in the light of thy beauty.
Thou art great and resplendent and sparklest high above the
earth;
With thy radiant hands of love
Thou embracest all lands and everything thou hast made.
Thou art Ra, who guideth and guardeth all things

And bindeth them with bonds of love.
Though thou art far, yet are thy rays upon the earth,
And thy countenance is ever towards it on thy journeyings.

It is evident that the emphasis here lies upon all that is radiated from the sun to the earth, and as physical rays warm and illumine human beings.

This is still more the case, if we consider the fourth post-Atlantean period, the period in which the Mystery of Golgotha took place. We still find indeed among the Greeks descriptions of the threefold Sun. From their own spirituality, and their connection with the spirituality of their Mysteries and the Mysteries of neighbouring peoples, the Greeks had still some idea, some inkling at least about the threefold Sun. The first, the Spiritual Sun, they felt as the source of all morality. Goodness itself was connected for them with this Sun. Thus Plato speaks of the Good as a basic principle of the universe, and relates it with the Sun. The Greeks called the second Sun Helios. The Greeks had indeed several sun-gods, but Helios is that god who guides the Sun around the firmament, and allows it to shine for humanity. He is really for the Greeks what Re Osiris was for the Egyptians. What is for us the external sun, the Greeks did not feel only as the blinding, radiant sun-disc, but as the whole earth-ether that is akin to the sun – everything that surrounds the earth ethereally, through which the sun pours its rays. In this there worked and ruled above all Zeus. Zeus is indeed as are the Greek gods in general, in a certain sense a Luciferic being. Zeus was for them the representative of this third sun, the external sun. But not yet in that sharply bounded form that we have today; but we have to include all that ether, as it spreads over the Greek seas and lands, in order to feel what the sun was for the Greeks, as it shone down upon the earth, and enfolded Olympus in its radiance. The threefold Sun was still taught in this way in the Greek Mysteries.

It is different when we come to the Romans. In comparison with the Greeks the Romans were much more abstract, and less spiritual; but the beginnings of their spiritual life are often linked with that of the Greeks. They were willing to take over a great deal from the Greeks. Thus with the Romans it is also Helios who is called upon to lead men to the one whom the Romans had as their sun-god, Mithras. In the Mithraic ritual

we have Mithras as a sun-god, riding indeed upon the bull of the remaining cosmic planetary forces, but himself a sun-being. But in particular in that time, during which Roman civilisation spread out over the whole world, bringing with it the service of Mithras as the religion of the simple Roman soldier, one will find that only a twofold Sun was recognised; an external sun as we know it, and a spiritual Sun worshipped in the service of Mithras. The threefold Sun is reduced a twofold one, because knowledge of the true spiritual Sun has vanished. We know indeed that meanwhile the Mystery of Golgotha has taken place, that the spiritual Sun has united with the earth. We know too that many of the Mysteries reached this knowledge with great difficulty, and still did not recognise, long after the Mystery of Golgotha, that it had happened. This was evidence that they were no longer Mysteries with full authority. Thus in later Roman times we recognise the moving fact that the Romans only know of two Suns and that knowledge of the third Sun – which is really the first, the spiritual Sun – has been lost. This is a fact deeply related to the whole subsequent spiritual development of mankind. Rudolf Steiner often spoke of man as consisting of body, soul and spirit, and having thus a threefold nature. And that at a certain time this human trichotomy was abolished by the decision of a Council, which decreed that man consisted only of a body and soul. But this conciliar decision, laying down a bare, dry dogma, would not have been possible, had not earlier in human evolution the consciousness of the spiritual Sun which was once worshipped and addressed in prayer been lost. The dichotomy which divides man in two had to be preceded by a cosmic dichotomy. The spirit which was abolished by a conciliar decision in the year 869 is the true 'I' of man, which goes from incarnation to incarnation, and which can only endure through its relationship with the spiritual Sun, the Christ Being. Thus when in historic times the transition from a threefold to a twofold Sun was made, the mystery of Christ as a Sun-being was lost. We have gradually acquired that uncosmic Christianity, from which our civilisation still suffers so much today.

But when we go further in evolution we see as natural consequence of this process that the second Sun too, which was still known to the Romans, is forgotten as well. Only one single sun

is left, the ball seen today in the sky, investigated by science and regarded by it as the only reality. To speak of something spiritual in the Sun is possible today neither in a scientific nor a religious sense, so long as we retain conventional ideas. For the man of today the Sun has become a glowing ball of gas, pouring down warmth from the sky, much as a stove radiates heat. This sun, the last that has remained, is the Luciferic sun, in which beings who have lagged behind in their evolution, whether they are high or low, hold sway. Rudolf Steiner once described science (which he valued very much indeed, and which must be valued by everyone who comes to know it) in the monumental sentence: 'What really happens in science? This: Ahriman describes Lucifer!' It is expressed in these words that the faculties which Ahriman has developed in man, the methods of knowledge and also the instruments found with the help of Ahrimanic forces are used to describe all that in nature has come to a standstill, spiritually remaining behind. 'Ahriman describes Lucifer.' The Sun too is pictured in this way, the only sun that is known, consisting of laggard beings. It is indeed beautiful; Lucifer is a being of radiant splendour. Yet it is composed of laggard beings. With the spectroscope and the telescope and other discoveries inspired by Ahriman the sun is investigated with the result that it is said the sun must have an interior of which we cannot know what really goes on there. For it is covered by what lies over it.

Now this central inner part of the Sun is that space, which is no space in the ordinary sense. Of it Rudolf Steiner said again and again that it is emptier than empty; that it is not only empty, but is negative space, a space that sucks. That is the space occupied – a spatial expression has to be used – by the beings of the Second Hierarchy. There is good reason for the statement of science that nothing can be known about the interior of the Sun because it is concealed by the Sun's surface. When this surface is examined, there is first the photosphere. This is what we see of the Sun when we observe it through dark glass or at sunset. What is this photosphere, with which we would like to include at the moment the chromosphere and atmosphere? It is what gives us the impression of a sun-disc or a sphere, something spatial. But the spatial, that which is not the negation of space, is produced by retarded Spirits of Form. It is

the normal Spirits of Form which have their abode truly in the interior of the Sun. It is they who give the interior of the Sun its being. But in front of them are spread out retarded Spirits of Form, who should really have been Spirits of Wisdom, and who now produce as an illusion the picture of the spatial sun, moving spatially across the sky. In reality space itself is radiated out with the light of the sun; it is produced by the abnormal spirits of Form. The naïve man thinks that space must have a form, but it has none. The retarded spiritual beings who should really be Spirits of Wisdom, but have remained at the stage of Spirits of Form, are the beings who produce for us the illusion of space which we are inclined to feel as something formed, although it has no form. Much, much more is of course hidden behind the mystery of space; but we can gain some impression of it in this way. The symbol for such a space, which should really not be space at all, is the disc of the Sun, which appears to consist of glowing gas, and is described as the photosphere.

There are dark patches in this photosphere, the sunspots. They are dark in comparison with the light that streams out from the photosphere. They are formed by beings who have not taken part in the transition from the evolution of Old Saturn to the Sun evolution, beings who have remained at the Saturn stage and who have thus not developed the quality of Light which came into being on the Old Sun. They are Archai, Spirits of Personality, who have remained behind; they were on the human level during Old Saturn.

The photosphere can always be seen if the light of the Sun is sufficiently dimmed. Sunspots are only very seldom visible for the naked eye; in general they can only be observed through the telescope. Still more difficult to observe are the so-called protuberances, the 'flames' of the Sun. They are visible during a total eclipse of the Sun or at other times with instruments which cut off the direct light. To begin with they make the impression as if they shoot up like flames from the surface of the Sun, something like glowing masses of lava during a volcanic eruption on earth. But in this phenomenon there is something that contradicts the nature of the Sun. For everything on the Sun is striving towards the centre, towards the ethereal space which swallows up what approaches it. But if we take a description of

the Old Sun condition, as for example in the fourth lecture of the cycle of *Genesis* by Rudolf Steiner (Munich, 1910): 'Wonderful, shining forms of light in shapes like those of plants pass through the Sun, detach themselves from it, fall into it again, arise and disappear' – then we have in the protuberances at the present time something that has remained behind at the stage of the Old Sun, just as the sunspots reveal the characteristics of Old Saturn, when there was warmth, but not yet light. In the protuberances we have an expression of the Archangel beings who have remained behind at the stage of the Old Sun evolution.

Finally, science studies the strange phenomenon which can only be observed during a total eclipse of the Sun, the corona, which extends then around the hidden sun. In this widely extended, but least powerfully shining phenomenon, we have an expression of the last that has remained behind, the Angel beings who have remained behind at the stage of the old Moon evolution. All these beings active in the visible Sun must be described as retarded.

We can now regard the Sun once more in its threefold nature, as can be done afresh in our time. Much could be said about this, but here only a little can be indicated.

Rudolf Steiner has described man as consisting of three interpenetrating members: the man of the head, the man of the breast, the man of the metabolic system and the limbs. The system connected with the head contains the hardest matter. With the head, hard matter is particularly important, because the spirit is outside, not within the matter. Here spirit becomes conscious in us, finding in this unmoved brain a kind of resistance, in which it can reflect itself. Here we have what is most material in us. But in our heads we have too the most destructive, disintegrating forces. Forces of disintegration are constantly needed in order that a consciousness can arise in us. But this consciousness, which we can only develop on the basis of disintegrative forces, is that which Lucifer has to begin with enkindled in man. It is not for nothing that we speak of the light of our thoughts, the light of the intellect. We have in our life of thought to do with a light which is in fact Luciferic, which shines within us as a Sun of knowledge, but to begin with as a Luciferic Sun. Our clear waking consciousness during the day

is connected with the daily circling of the starry sky. The Sun shares in this over-rapid revolution,¹ inasmuch as it accompanies the daily movement of the stars from East to West; but the Sun in its *annual* course acts retardatively upon the Luciferically-conducted *diurnal* revolution. The former acts, not upon the head, but upon the heart, upon the life of Feeling.

In the system centred in the chest, spirit and matter are interwoven. There is a continual oscillation between the two. In the rhythmic system there lives the breathing, from which the whole circulation of the blood proceeds, and all else that is rhythmical in man. Here those spirits are at work who have breathed into man the divine Breath, the Jahve-Elohim-Spirits which at the beginning of the earth evolution lovingly united themselves with man through this rhythmic system. Here we have the Second Sun, the Sun of the Second Hierarchy, with which Christ specially united Himself before he united with the earth. In the rhythm of the blood, the beat of the pulse, the second Sun is really alive within man.

In man's metabolic and limb-system spirit and matter are most closely connected. Of course we cannot stop at the ordinary conceptions which regard the metabolic life as something inferior. No high value is put upon the spirit which is so closely connected with matter in this realm – yet it brings about the miracle, that it restores and preserves the whole of man, making good what the head continually destroys. While through the Luciferic intellect we send down into the body forces of disintegration and destruction, life processes continually restore and rebuild through metabolic processes. In this metabolic and limb-system we can feel on the one hand strongly the working of the Father principle, which works to bring order into all material existence. But we can feel as well the saying of Christ: 'I and the Father are one.' For they are one: spirit and matter. Of course these words must not be pressed too far; they belong to the Mysteries. They have to be taken with their whole 'Aura'. But it belongs to the holy Sacraments, that to the metabolic part of man as well the divine substance is brought, that in this way it may experience the divine. Thus one can

¹ The significance of the relation between the rhythm of the earth's rotation and the course of the year is discussed by Dr Vreede in earlier chapters of *Anthroposophie und Astronomie* and by Rudolf Steiner in lectures not published in an English translation, *Entsprechungen zwischen Microcosmos und Macrocosmos* (Dornach, 1920).

attempt to understand the spiritual Sun, which is connected with the metabolic part of man, the instrument of will. *Light* lives in the head. *Love* moves and weaves in the breast. *Life* streams in the metabolic part of man. With the three words, Light, Love, Life, we have a purely Christian description of the threefold Sun. In esoteric Christianity, knowledge of the threefold Sun has never departed. These words have been connected with the Christ. The one who spoke them knew that fundamentally the three Suns are one.

The first, highest Sun is the Christ Sun. It was in the very beginning and has created all things. The second Sun arises when the beings of the higher Hierarchies, led by the Christ, have to detach from the earth the spiritual forces which work all too strongly, and to found a Sun outside in the cosmos. This Sun would not have been visible for present-day physical eyes. Only through the work of Lucifer the Sun was surrounded by visible, shining, indeed dazzling substance. Thus arose the third Sun.

The Christ-Sun has united with the earth. That is the event of which we think at Easter. In the holy night of Christmas we see the Child born, who is to become the bearer of the Christ. 'Every year the Christ-Child comes again', for the Sun comes every year to the point where it is lowest upon its path, that is to say where it develops least the misleading forces of the heights, and at the same time shines in that hour for the eye of the spirit, without visible light, as Sun at Midnight.

And with the Christ events, which begin thirty years after the Birth with the Baptism in Jordan on 6th January, and then last for three and one-third years, the seed is planted for the second Sun to unite at the end of the earth evolution with an earth which has meanwhile been spiritualised – the seed too for the redemption of the third, Luciferic Sun, which unredeemed must consume the earth. So at the Christmas festival let us remember for what the earth is intended, and what must be done in preparation by men, that the earth may at last become a Sun.

FROM A NOTEBOOK OF 1924

RUDOLF STEINER

Sieh, du mein Auge
Der Sonne reine Strahlen
Aus der Erde Formenwesen.

Sieh, du mein Herz
Der Sonne Geistgewalten
Aus des Wassers Wellenschlägen.

Sieh, du meine Seele
Der Sonne Weltenwillen
Aus der Lüfte Glanzgeflimmer.

Sieh, du mein Geist
Der Sonne Götterwesen
Aus des Feuers Liebeströmen.

•
See thou, mine eye,
The Sun's pure rays
In crystal forms of Earth.

See thou, my heart,
The Sun's Spirit-power
In Water's surging wave.

See thou, my soul,
The Sun's cosmic will
In quivering gleam of Air.

See thou, my Spirit,
The Sun's indwelling God
In Fire's abounding love.

*From Verses and Meditations by Rudolf Steiner.
English translation by George and Mary Adams.
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ORACLES

A. C. HARWOOD

ORACLES differed from Mysteries in that they involved no spiritual experience on the part of the seeker or questioner. They were also primarily concerned with giving answers to specific questions, and directions in specific situations. Direction might – and often did – emanate from the Mysteries, but this was not their primary concern which was spiritual experience or initiation.

Students of spiritual science perhaps too easily think of the earliest oracles of which they hear – those of Atlantis – as Mystery Centres. Yet Rudolf Steiner emphasises that the word 'oracle' should be used for them and that all true later oracles descend from them, and more especially from the great Sun Oracle. We must remember that the people whom the 'Leader' of the Sun Oracle gathered around him were not the cream of their own age, people who had developed the clairvoyant powers natural to their time to an exceptional degree, but simple people (perhaps they might be called the poor in spirit) who had the first rudiments of intellectual thought. For them the 'Leader' was guide and instructor rather than initiator. Steiner adds, perhaps rather ruefully, that, in reverse, it is much the same today, when the groups of anthroposophists are not the cream of the modern intellectuals, but people with the rudiments of, or desire for, spiritual vision.

In the historical times it was when direct spiritual vision declined that people turned more and more for guidance to the oracle centres or sought some form of more personal oracular prediction. The diversity of methods of prediction was immense. There was however one common factor. The prediction was ultimately sought in some sphere of the unconscious. The reason is plain. The unconscious is not only wiser and deeper than the conscious (our psychologists know this) but in man it lies in the sphere of the will – and it is through the will that the future enters human experience. Any revelation from the side of the will tended, therefore, to be a revelation of karma – group karma or individual karma. Oracles directed the

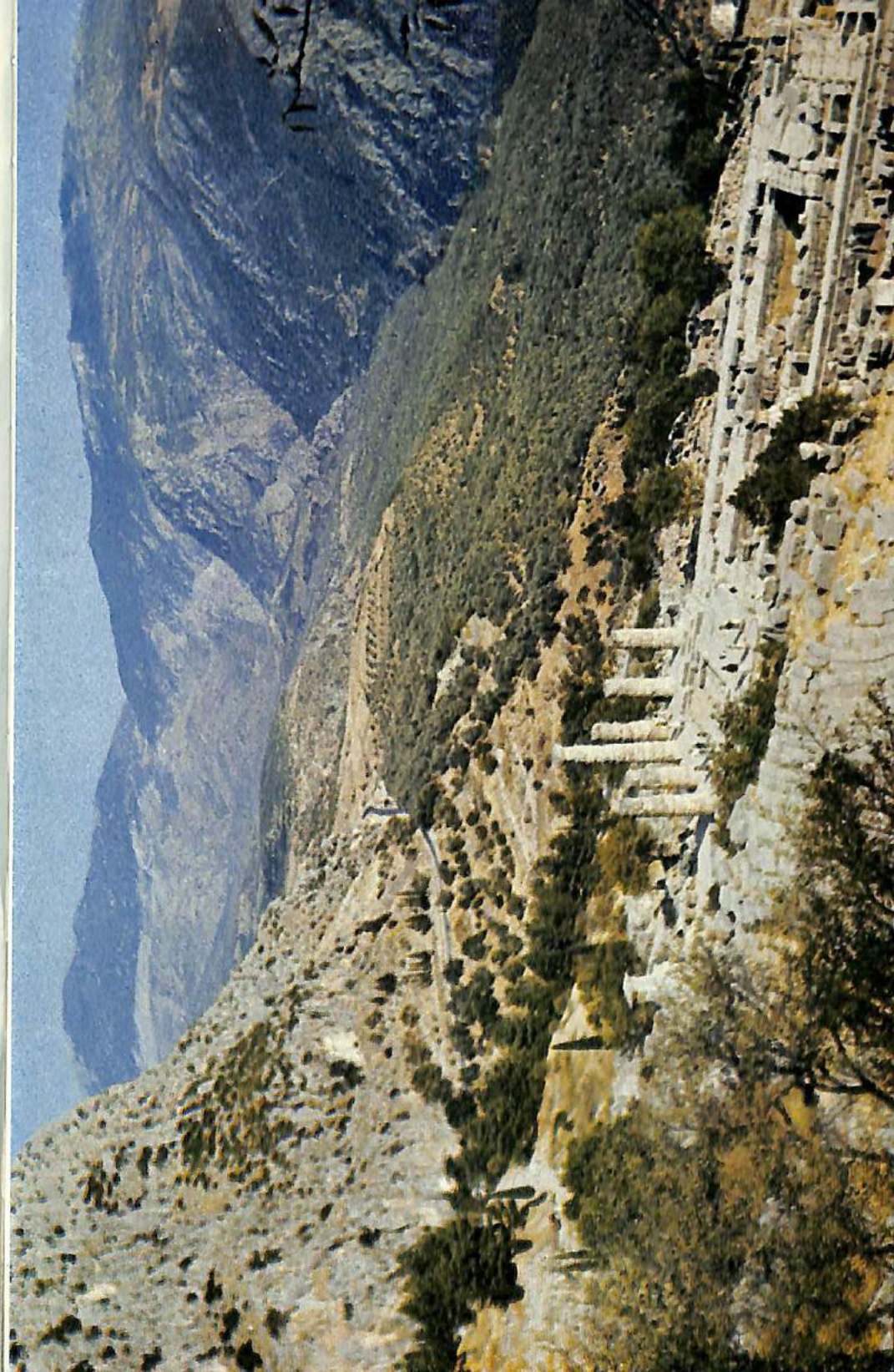
development of nations and cities no less than of individuals.

Plato divided oracles into two classes, the 'sane' and the 'insane'. The former involved the conscious examination of observed events in nature, or of instinctive happenings in human life. The latter were based on conditions of ecstasy or trance, though of course the 'sane' element entered as interpreter of the vision or ecstatic experience.

The variety of 'sane' oracles was very great. When all events on the earth were considered to be reflections of cosmic happenings, it was natural to conceive that the impulses from the macrocosm descended through the elements. Hence winds and tempests, thunder and lightning and shooting stars were prophetic voices. The Romans studied especially the flight of birds. After preliminary sacrifice the augurs divided the heavens into quarters and watched for celestial phenomena and the movements of birds. They also listened to the calls of the birds – indeed the word augur is said to be derived from *avis* and *garrere* – the garrulousness of birds. Or they observed the way the sacred chickens pecked their food, for chickens are still birds and belong to the air even if they do not fly. Thornton Wilder begins his remarkable novel *The Ides of March* with a letter from Julius Caesar to the College of Augurs demanding two sets of auguries, one favourable and the other unfavourable. Such a letter may well have been written in the decadence of augury.

The oracle at Dodona in Greece depended on the sound of the wind in the leaves of the oak trees, or of aeolian harps hung on the branches. The prophet Calchas gave to the assembled host of Agamemnon that interpretation of the two eagles devouring the pregnant hare which led to the sacrifice of Iphigenia. Winds and birds have played no small part in human history.

One method of examining nature for prophetic signs seems very peculiar to the modern mind. It was the examination of the entrails of sacrificed animals and especially of the liver. The organs of digestion, however, form one of the physical bases for the will – the unconscious element born out of the future. And among these organs the liver holds a special place through its special connection with the blood. In the human being, for instance, one-sixth of the blood is always to be found in the liver. It was the liver of Prometheus which the eagle of Zeus



devoured. In Egyptian embalming the canopic jar which held the liver always had a human head on its lid. It is, therefore, not surprising that, whatever the sacrificial animal, in ancient Babylonia, Etruria, Greece, Rome and in Africa till recent times, it was the liver of the sacrificial animal which was specially examined for its marking and the state of its lobes. We must remember also that the ancient world considered the liver to be the seat of consciousness. Later, in Greece especially, came the advance to the heart – and the lungs. It was a step towards modern consciousness when Plato assigned intellect to the brain, the higher emotions to the heart, and the lower to the liver, a belief which lasted through the middle ages. It was only with Descartes that the brain came to be regarded as the exclusive bearer of every form of consciousness. In examining the liver the haruspex was delving very deep into the strata of life and consciousness.

Another group of sane oracles was to be found in chance human actions. The sneeze (perhaps microcosm of the tempest) came from Zeus and was always significant. Xenophon's plan for the retreat of the ten thousand was unanimously adopted when a soldier sneezed at the end of his speech. There was an oracle in Greece in which (after preparatory offerings in the temple) the enquirer stepped into the market place and listened to the first chance words he heard. These were then interpreted by the oracular priest. Or people threw sticks at random on the ground and a professional interpreter read the language of the form they happened to take.

One of the most obvious ways of consulting a deeper consciousness was the dream – above all, for cities and peoples, the dream of kings. This was a universal piece of state-craft, in which there was commonly a dreamer and an interpreter, as was the case with Joseph and the Pharaoh, or Gilgamesh and Enkidu. There was one oracle centre in Greece where the questioner himself had the prophetic dream. In Epidaurus, the sanctuary of the healing god Asklepios, the sick, after due preparation, slept in a special chamber in the temple precincts. There they were possessed by the god in sleep, and each dreamed the remedy appropriate to his illness.

The great home of oracles, as apart from divination, auguries, dreams etc., was undoubtedly Greece. Many Gods inspired

oracles, Zeus, Themis, Ge, but their oracular centres were overshadowed and sometimes taken over, by the Light-God Apollo. He had numerous oracular shrines which by no means followed the same customs. Many of these were of the 'sane' type. At a shrine in Lycia his priestess observed the behaviour of sacred fish, at Epirus snakes took the place of fish, while at Daphne in Asia Minor the priestess listened to the bubbling of a fountain.

But these oracles were minor affairs compared with the great oracle of historical Hellas at Delphi. It was an oracle by no means confined to the Hellenes. King Amasis of Egypt contributed to a fund raised for the rebuilding of the Delphic temple after one of its periodical destructions by an earthquake. King Croesus of Lydia frequently consulted it. According to Herodotus he had satisfied himself that it was the most reliable oracle by the device of sending messengers to the different oracle centres, all of whom were to enquire what King Croesus was doing on a given day. Only the Delphic oracle gave the right answer – that he was cooking the flesh of a tortoise in a brazen pot!

There seems little doubt that the original oracles at Delphi were given by Ge, Themis and Poseidon. But by Homer's time the Pythian Apollo was already established at Delphi and Homer tells the story of his journey there from Crete. From that time on he became the only true unifying force in the scattered communities of Greece. The festival at his birthplace in Delos was a sacred time for all the Greek cities. Socrates could not be put to death while the Athenian State ship was absent, making Apollo the yearly offering. His oracle was universally consulted, all the leading Greek states had their 'treasuries' at Delphi and took part in the Pythian Games.

The reason for the pre-eminence of Apollo is connected with one of the most profound secrets of human life. It is that the whole of Greek civilisation stood 'under the sign' of the third of those great deeds of healing which came through the power of the Christ Being before he descended to the earth. It was the healing of the forces of the soul, the harmonising of the powers of thinking, feeling and willing.¹ This great spiritual event was

¹ See 'The Pre-Earthly Deeds of Christ', a lecture given by Rudolf Steiner at Pforzheim, 7th March 1914, and also his 'Christ and the Spiritual World' (Leipzig, December-January 1913-14).

reflected in Greek consciousness in the legend of Apollo. In clairvoyant vision the attack on the soul forces was seen as the dragon, Pytho – the original name of Delphi. Apollo overcame the dragon by entering into it, it might be said by becoming it. He was thus able to use its forces for higher ends. He became Apollo Pythios. For the Greeks this harmonising of the soul forces through the overcoming of the dragon was the central fact of their civilisation. Perhaps it was for this reason that they regarded Delphi as the centre or navel (*omphalos*) of the world. For the later Christians, who had experienced the fourth great healing deed on the earth itself, Jerusalem became the spiritual and therefore also the geographical centre. Medieval maps frequently showed Jerusalem as the centre of the world.

The special relation of Apollo to the faculty of prophecy springs from his being a God of Light. He is not the God of the visible sun and the manifest light. This was Helios who drove the sun chariot across the sky. The two were sharply distinguished in Greek belief. At Delphi in the winter, when Helios went further and further to the south, Apollo departed to the north – and there were no oracles. For Apollo is pre-eminently the God of the spiritual or unmanifest light, and it is through this that we see his connection with the Sun Oracle of Atlantis.

When the Sun withdrew from the Earth (as described in *Occult Science, an Outline*) the elements of Warmth and Light alone remained manifest on the Earth. The Life Ether and Chemical (or Sound) Ether were withdrawn from human perception.

The Atlantean Initiate, however, was able to experience these two Ethers in the intermediate state between waking and sleeping. He could hear the Harmony of the Spheres, and the Speech of the Creative Word.

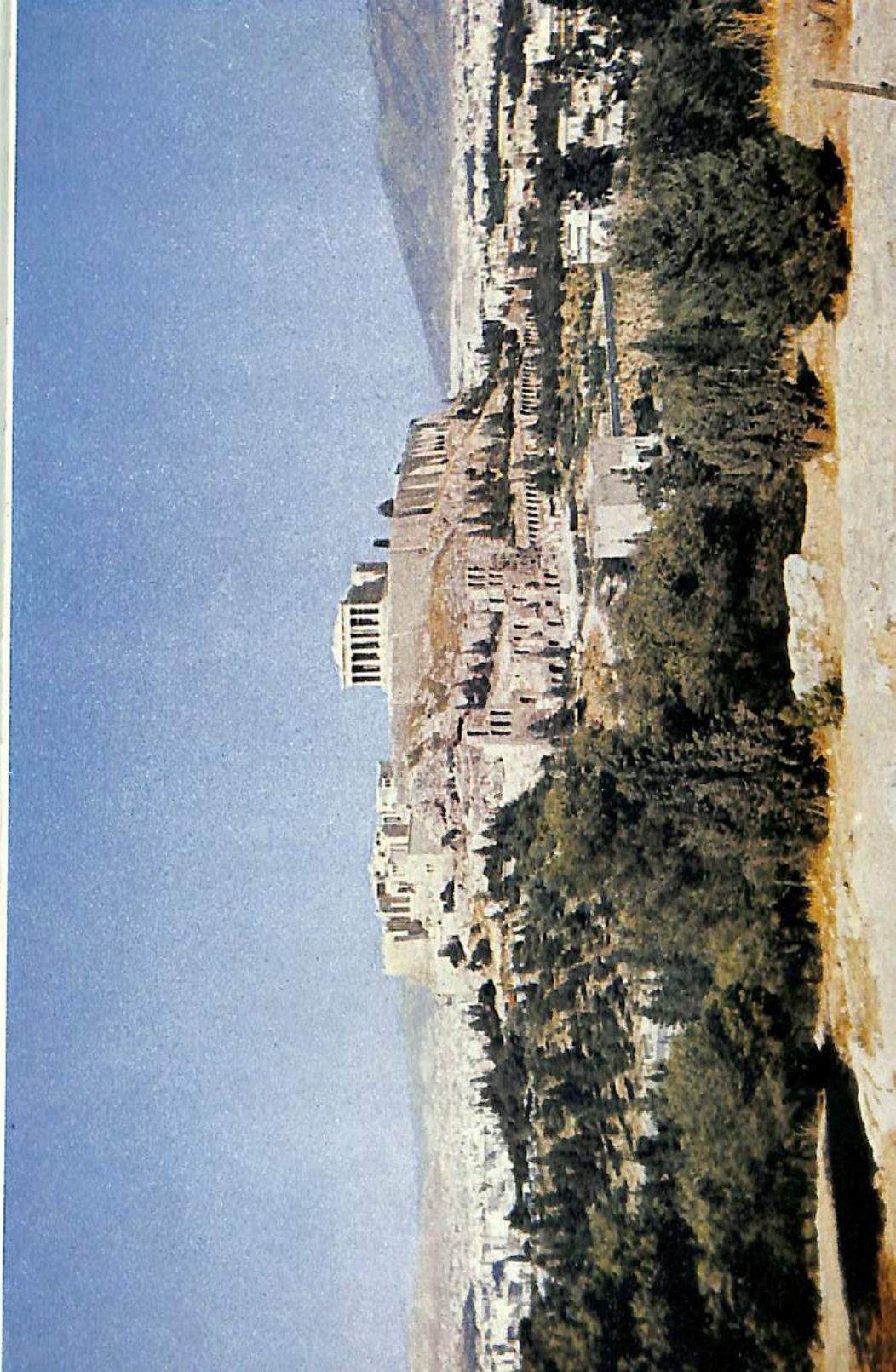
All this is reflected in the oracular power of Apollo. The vehicle of the prophet, always a woman, went into an ecstatic trance, in which she experienced the divine afflatus. As Cassandra felt it in the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus, so the priestess felt it at Delphi when sitting on the tripod over the chasm. This trance ecstasy was a kind of re-enacting of the 'intermediate state' of the Sun Oracle – neither sleeping nor waking. And the priestess re-enacted in this state that penetration of the dragon

through which Apollo had overcome it. She was overwhelmed by the fumes rising from the depths of the earth. Nor are we necessarily to think of these as physical fumes – modern geologists do not believe that physical fumes – or even a physical cleft – could have been there. It would be more in the character of Apollo to fight against the spiritual forces of the depths.

The priestess was not intoxicated with wine. She chewed laurel leaves and drank water from the underground spring *Karratis*. Water is the element of the Chemical or Sound Ether. The laurel is the plant which Steiner distinguishes from the olive. Whereas the olive is filled with the forces of the earth, the laurel is a meteorological plant and expresses the Air Element.

The Greeks did not isolate or abstract their Gods. Where one was present the others were there as well. In the Delos sanctuary of Apollo there was a temple even of an Egyptian God, Serapis, with its avenue of sphinxes. The main entry to Delphi was dominated by a temple of Athene, and Dionysos had his important place there as well. In the same way a cathedral or church of the middle ages dedicated to a particular Saint held shrines of many others as well.

This catholicity was particularly true of the Apolline centres because Apollo harmonised the forces of the Depths with those of the Heights, or, we might say, the powers of the conscious with those of the unconscious. The oracle spoke in a manner which 'half revealed and half concealed' the meaning of the God. The form was almost always the rhythmical hexameter, the metre which harmonises the pulse of the blood with the flow of the breath. But the meaning was often enigmatic and called for the intelligence of the interpreter, the power of Athene. The oracle could be interpreted wrongly, as Croesus of Lydia found to his cost. But the practice of consulting Apollo was as universal in Greece as was that of taking the auguries in Rome. In the great age of Greek colonisation the oekist or city-founder always consulted the oracle. Byzantium was located where it is because the Megarian colonisers were told to build 'opposite the city of the blind' – and they heard of other colonists building on the Asian shore of the strait where there was no good harbour! Other colonists were told to build on the coast of Africa 'between the waters'. They found a place with many springs – and Cyrene was founded. At the time of



the Persian Wars the Athenians were told that 'Safety would be in the wooden wall'. Themistocles rightly interpreted this to mean the Athenian ships; and though the oracle had added 'Divine Salamis shall bring to death women's sons' he pointed out that the oracle would not have said *divine* Salamis if it had meant the destruction of the Athenians, but rather *hateful* Salamis. So the Athenians sought refuge on the island from whence they watched the Persians burning their city. But they defeated them in their wooden walls on the sea.

Sometimes the oracle at Delphi added gratuitous advice irrelevant to the question put to it. In the time of the tyrant Hippias, whenever the Spartans consulted the oracle they were also told, 'Athens must be freed from the tyrant.' In the end a Spartan army marched into Attica, Hippias fled and Athens was freed. Over a century later the oracle kept adding to its answers on specific questions that 'Socrates was the wisest of living men'. Socrates interpreted this as meaning that he was the wisest in knowing that he knew nothing, and he began his search for knowledge on the basis of questioning every received opinion and building anew on first principles. It is hardly too much to say that we owe the city and the man who have most influenced human culture and consciousness to the Delphic oracle.

The oracle was also a leader in the sphere of morality. A certain Glaucus from the Peloponnese asked the God whether he could embezzle some money that had been entrusted to him. The Oracle replied that he had committed as great a crime in thinking of such a deed as if he had actually committed it.

Perhaps the same thing may be true of oracles that Rudolf Steiner said of prophets, that their importance lies not so much in the accuracy of their predictions as in the impulse they gave to human action. They were fundamentally concerned with the will because it is through the will that the future reveals itself. In this sphere the influence of Delphi was prodigious. The medieval papacy was concerned with directing and controlling the will impulses of man, the Delphic oracle inspired them.

Two origins are given for the name *Delphi*. The first connects it with *Delphus*, a womb. The oracle revealed what lay in the hidden depths, in the womb of time. The second refers it to

Delphinos, the dolphin. In the Greek legend Apollo came in the form of a great dolphin on a Cretan ship to Krisa, the port of Delphi. There he leapt to land 'like a star at midday', led the Cretans up the slope of Parnassus and made them the first priests of Delphi. Readers of Karl Koenig's entrancing article on dolphins in the *Golden Blade* of 1967 will need no reminder of the extraordinary significance of the dolphin in mythology and in nature. But in this particular legend we can perhaps note two things. A new civilisation is to be born out of an old one. And it is to be one in which the dolphin forces are to be realised as divine forces – as the 'star at midday'. The day-star is of course the Sun. The light-filled Apollo – filled both with the manifest and the unmanifest light – is to bring about a new civilisation. The external light of the Sun in Greece is still extraordinary, unlike any other light. But the inward light – the light of thinking – in Greece was still more remarkable. We live by that light even to our present day.

AN INTERCHANGE OF LETTERS

I

From Tomas to Duns

In the Introduction to the enlarged new edition of his *Romanticism Comes of Age*,¹ Owen Barfield says: 'It has been the deepest of disappointments to me to find that when one refers to Steiner, people do not listen. Or rather, I have not merely been disappointed, I have been shocked and puzzled to have it borne in on me over and over again that even those who are prepared to lend a very sympathetic ear indeed to *my own* observations, whether on language and poetry or on the wider issue of the whole evolution of human consciousness, are not in the least interested in the news about Steiner which it has been one of my main objects in life to set before the educated public with all the earnestness and sobriety at my disposal. . . . I am not thinking so much of positive denigration. I am thinking of that combination of a refusal to investigate with a readiness to dismiss, which alone can account for the absence of at least a *reference* to Steiner from a hundred Indexes where one would expect, simply because of his obvious and extreme relevance, to find his name.'

These experiences will be sadly familiar to many students of Rudolf Steiner's work. How often have I looked in some likely index without finding his name! How shall one explain this neglect – this ostracism, one might almost say? One partial reason for it may lie in a difficulty I am well aware of on my own account – a difficulty which I think calls for more searching discussion than it generally receives.

The immense range of Steiner's teaching falls roughly into two parts. One part – much the larger in quantity – is concerned mainly with imparting the results of his spiritual-scientific investigations. The other part describes the method and the way by which the higher faculties necessary for apprehending the super-sensible can, in principle, be awakened. Leaving aside for the present any questions about this second part, I want to explain the difficulty I have with the first part.

¹ Rudolf Steiner Press, 1966.

What is one to make of the vast amount of factual, often detailed information given out by Steiner about past events, including New Testament events, the evolutionary history of the earth, previous incarnations of individuals; or about the cosmic experiences of the human soul after death, the nature and activities of the Beings of the spiritual Hierarchies? Or – to come nearer home – about the subtle bodies of man, the etheric formative forces, the working of elemental beings in the kingdoms of nature?

Almost none of this information can be checked or tested by any means open to me. Hence I feel that unless I am going to take it all as proven truth on his authority alone – which emphatically was not his wish – I have to remain agnostic towards it, neither believing nor disbelieving. For myself (I am not wishing to lay down any rule for others) I can't see much other immediate choice – acceptance or agnosticism. This does not prevent me from studying Steiner's teachings and reflecting on them, for they offer a kind of food which I have hunger for and find nourishing, even while I remain agnostic towards them; but this approach seems to require a special affinity to Anthroposophy which is not common. I can understand many people saying: 'Why should we give a lot of time and attention to all these strange statements by Steiner when there is no possible way of determining whether or not they are true?'

If an intelligent and not unfriendly person were to put this question to you, how would you reply?

II

From Duns to Tomas

It is not easy to explain why Rudolf Steiner has been so completely disregarded. But I do think that what you say is very significant. It seems at first sight as if Rudolf Steiner is simply asking for the results of his spiritual investigation to be believed, just because he states them. As you rightly say, this was not at all his wish; he wanted everything tested. And I believe that he thought this was possible with everything he said.

How can it be explained that he thought this – and yet you,

after so many years of appreciative and careful study of his work, can say the opposite? 'Almost none of this information can be checked or tested by any means open to me.' If you *still* think this, how much more must this be the impression of the new not unfriendly enquirer you describe?

A scientific hypothesis can be tested by its usefulness in prediction, with results which can be expressed quantitatively. Some of the difficulty lies, I think, in the immense differences between this kind of testing of a hypothesis and the testing which is appropriate for the results of spiritual investigation in Rudolf Steiner's sense. Perhaps it could even be said that we have to develop methods of testing his statements which are entirely new to us, and which are devised for this purpose. Are you not really doing something of this sort all the time?

You mention 'the subtle bodies of man', and say that 'this is coming nearer home'. It is near indeed; if Rudolf Steiner is right, the interplay of the elements which he describes is what we *are*, at every moment of our existence. We cannot indeed see what he calls the 'astral body'; but we are living in it – should we not know if the description fits? And it is not a matter just of a single description, but of hundreds, from many different points of view. These gradually join up, making an impressive and comprehensive account – should we not be able to tell whether we are getting nearer through this to real self-knowledge?

I believe that you do a lot of testing of this sort, perhaps almost without noticing that you are doing so. You speak of finding a kind of food in Anthroposophy, and I think it is a good analogy, which can be carried further. The digesting is a testing. May not one of the hindrances that delay the recognition of Rudolf Steiner be the failure to observe this, or perhaps an unconscious unwillingness to be active enough in mind and feeling to carry this process through?

III

From Tomas to Duns

Yes, if there were in Anthroposophy nothing I could test by relating it to my experience, I would not have been a student

of it for so long. So I will speak first of some elements in Rudolf Steiner's teachings which I hope I have assimilated, as far as I am able, and have found helpful.

First I would put the treatment of Lucifer and Ahriman. I feel very well aware in myself of this polarity of temptations, and I can see them at work in the world.

Next, in the history of human society I find good evidence for the evolution of consciousness – a basic theme in Steiner's work. Looking back from our epoch of the Consciousness Soul (or the onlooker consciousness, as it has been called), and feeling its imprint strongly in myself, I can see that in earlier times not only men's ideas about the world, but their ways of experiencing it, were different. Also I seem to see in English history a recapitulation of previous epochs (the Sentient Soul in the Elizabethan period, the Intellectual Soul in the eighteenth century), before the incoming Consciousness Soul made its full impact felt.

Then there is Steiner's picture of threefold man, where he connects thinking with the nerves-and-senses system, feeling with the rhythmic system, willing with the limb-metabolic system. This is something one can experience and it leads on to the growing up and education of children. Here, too, tests from experience and observation are possible, at least up to a point. Can one test the finding that a child's spiritual being descends from pre-existence in other realms and gradually, by fairly well-defined stages, enters into its bodily organism? This I take as a working hypothesis, and a very helpful one, but not as something I can confirm for myself. I would say the same of the astral and etheric bodies.

There are many other parts of Dr Steiner's teachings which I have to take in the same provisional way, but in order to keep our dialogue within bounds I will turn to a special problem.

Steiner gives fairly detailed accounts of life in Lemuria and Atlantis, treating Atlantis as a large island in the Atlantic, not very distant from Ireland, which sank finally under the waves, after a series of inundations, not much further back than 12,000 B.C. or thereabouts. Of course there is a long tradition of Atlantis, and hundreds of books have been written about it, but the only extant documentary evidence for it is in two of Plato's dialogues, the *Timaeus* and the unfinished *Critias*, and

the geographical and chronological indications they offer are open to various interpretations.

One current theory, supported in some detail not long ago by Sir Gavin de Beer, F.R.S. (*The Listener*, 15th September 1966), is that the Atlantis story is a reflection of the destruction of Minoan Crete by a huge volcanic eruption on one of the Santorin islands, about seventy miles to the north, in about 1500 B.C. For our purpose, however, it is not the controversial evidence for this or any similar theory that matters, but the geological evidence against the Atlantis described by Rudolf Steiner.

'The fact is,' Sir Gavin de Beer writes, 'that continents are made of granites, gneisses and sedimentary rocks, with a specific gravity of 2.7, whereas the floors of ocean beds are composed of basalts with a specific gravity of 3.2, and even heavier rocks, and the former cannot become converted into the latter. In other words, ocean floors have never been continents. . . . Wherever Atlantis may have been, it was not a lost land sunk beneath the Atlantic.'

One might question Sir Gavin's *never*, but a modern scientist will find it hard to believe that part of the present ocean floor of the Atlantic can have been a large surface island as recently (geologically speaking) as 14,000 years ago. If then he begins to study Anthroposophy, he is likely to find Steiner's treatment of Atlantis (let alone Lemuria) a great stumbling-block. He might pass it by if he could suppose that Steiner was simply repeating an old tradition. But he finds that Steiner was not relying on any tradition, but claimed to describe Atlantis from his own direct vision of the past – from reading the Akashic record, as he said. Hence the scientist may be inclined to say: 'Well, if Steiner's vision leads him to describe a large island which – unless modern geology is all wrong – cannot have existed when and where he says it did, how much confidence can I place in the numerous other findings he derives from super-sensible research?'

Steiner, you say, 'wanted everything tested. And I believe he thought this was possible with everything he said.' How would you apply this (rather sweeping?) remark to his accounts of Atlantis and Lemuria?

IV

From Duns to Tomas

So far as I have been able to do any at all adequate testing or digesting of what Rudolf Steiner says about human history, this has been concerned with much more recent periods than 'Atlantis' or 'Lemuria'. I can only say a few quite general things. I hope your search for answers in these matters will prompt someone much more qualified to write about them.

If we find what seems to be a flat contradiction between scientific statements and those of Rudolf Steiner, it is essential to remember the wider pictures, of which statements on each side are part. The scientist's picture is always constructed with the help of certain general or particular assumptions, on which he feels that he can rely; these may or may not be conscious. Rudolf Steiner claims that he speaks from direct spiritual perception, and his results very often do not conform in the least with the scientist's assumptions.

The geologist assumes, unless he finds evidence to the contrary, that physical changes on the earth proceeded at the same speed in the past as they do today. Rudolf Steiner perceives the whole earth as a living organism, with tremendous differences in its speed of change at different times. It was once much more evident that the earth was living and developing, and passing through tremendous and swift changes, which seem for the modern geologist to have required immense lengths of time. According to Rudolf Steiner's descriptions, it is only a very recent thing that the earth has settled down to a slow, relatively calculable condition, resembling the old age of organisms more familiar to us. (Do you know the remarkable discussion of this process by Dr Helmut Knauer, 'Die Bildung der Erdoberfläche' in *Goethe in unserer Zeit*, Dornach, 1949?)

I find it difficult to feel sure what stage of solidification and regularity had been reached at the end of what Rudolf Steiner calls the Atlantean period. But I think he means us to picture the end of Atlantis not as a normal part of this process, but as something like a crisis in the life of an organism, an acute illness of the earth. Just as we dread today some disastrous harm to the life of the earth which might be brought about by atomic conflict, or even by some technological misjudgment, so the

condition of humanity then produced catastrophic changes in the environment, an exceptional irruption of moral realities into the natural order. The deep shock of this irruption left its traces in many mythologies; of course most familiarly in the biblical story of the Flood. But I do not think we should picture it as an ordinary flood.

If we take this picture as a hypothesis, it is not at all surprising if geologists find no trace of 'Atlantis', or only disputable considerations. But a further problem is worth considering too. Modern man takes for granted the existence of the physical world *as he sees it* (though of course a physicist may regard *his* world as nearer to reality). So when he thinks about a far past time, he assumes that the reality was what *he* would have seen if he had been present with the mind and senses that he has now. Geology proceeds on this assumption as a matter of course.

But has not your own inner path led you to the conviction that the world as we see it now is an illusion? For me it is one of the most profoundly convincing elements in Rudolf Steiner's description of the world that he sees all reality as beings and the relationships of beings, and what we call *things* as appearances, behind which beings are everywhere at work. The world *could* not have been what we picture it to be before the kind of consciousness existed which could see it and think it as we do. (There is a penetrating discussion of this in Owen Barfield's *Worlds Apart*.)

May not the significance of Rudolf Steiner's description of 'Atlantis' and 'Lemuria' be found in their relationship to buried memories in us of worlds utterly different from our present world, memories which could become deeply disturbing if there were nothing in human conscious understanding that could come to meet them?

V

From Tomas to Duns

Yes, a mountain as we see it today is an illusion, or, perhaps better, an appearance. We should regard it as a sense-perceptible expression of the activities – or rather in this case the sleeping presence – of spiritual beings. This concept applies to the entire external world, present and past.

But what was the appearance of the outer world like in the far-distant past, before any human or human-like beings were there to perceive it? We cannot tell, but we can very easily be misled by relics of the far-distant past which have come down to us.

I possess a small lump of chalk in which is embedded a perfectly preserved, sharp-pointed tooth. The Geological Museum says it comes from a shark which lived about 120 million years ago, before the South Downs rose out of the sea. Then there are skeleton fragments and footprints left by the dinosaurs from a still earlier period. These relics seem to imply that the reconstructed dinosaurs in the South Kensington Museum of Natural History are accurate renderings of these huge creatures, just as they would have appeared to us *if* we had been there when they lived. We are inclined to form a picture of a world not very unlike our own, except for differences in vegetation and climate, and to populate it with animated versions of the enormous scaly beasts in the Museum. But I think this picture is deeply deceptive.

We are not (for one thing) forced to conclude that the dinosaurs had skeletons as hard as the skeletal fragments dug out of modern earth, or the shark a set of teeth exactly like the tooth in my lump of chalk. Time has preserved the *forms* of skeletons and teeth, but these (we may suppose) have shared in the densifying, hardening process which the whole earth has gradually undergone before it could become the solid earth under our feet today.

But this way of looking at earth history does not help us much with the problem of Atlantis. The impression one gets from Rudolf Steiner is of the Atlanteans living on a large island which appeared to them – at least in their later periods – as a solid and fertile external world. One might expect that this land-mass would have left on the ocean floor some traces of its relatively recent existence above the waves. But the oceanographers and geologists have – so far – found no such traces. On the contrary they find evidence which convinces them that the Atlantic ocean floor has never been dry land.

However, let us leave the problem of Atlantis. I raised it only as one example of detailed information given by Steiner which cannot at all easily be checked. Since you mention

reincarnation, let us turn to the Karma lectures, where near the end of his life Steiner gave information about the previous earthly lives of numerous persons, including many well known in history.

I have never understood clearly why he chose to do this. The subject of past incarnations *can* lead very easily to speculative gossip about contemporaries, with vanities and jealousies coming into unhappy play. Steiner must have been well aware of this risk and must have deliberately taken it for some important reason. He must have expected his hearers to gain from these lectures not only information, but some helpful illumination: a better understanding of what reincarnation signifies. Probably he believed that the truth of his statements could to some extent be checked by comparing the lives and characters of known persons with those of their previous embodiments. For me, the accounts of these previous lives seldom seem to throw any revealing new light on the lives known to history; but other students may well disagree.

In any event, I can imagine that a scientifically minded reader, coming perhaps to these lectures with no great knowledge of Anthroposophy, would find them indigestible. He might ask – why did Steiner give them? How am I expected to take them? To which I might add one more question: Is it certain that Dr Steiner intended all these Karma lectures to be printed and published for general circulation?

VI

From Duns to Tomas

Rudolf Steiner must indeed have known the risks he was running when he gave the Karma lectures; perhaps they were even more far-reaching than you describe. I think that the decision to give them was one of a group of decisions made about that time, which were, I think, among the gravest and most difficult of his whole life. He said and wrote a good deal about these decisions at the time; but I think he hoped for a particularly active, and particularly heartfelt kind of understanding for what he was doing – a kind of understanding, perhaps, which we have hardly ever succeeded in achieving.

I know therefore that my answers will be inadequate. But I would like to describe what I think the basic theme of the *Karma Lectures*, 1924, is. In November and December 1923, Rudolf Steiner had given the most explicit and vivid descriptions of the process of Initiation in the ancient Mystery centres of Asia Minor, Greece and Ireland. But these descriptions were of a general kind, just as *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds* gives a general description of the process of Initiation today. After all the events of the Christmas Foundation Meeting, and some lectures describing the general working of Karma, he went on in March 1924 to the description of representative individualities. And the people he chose were related, though not always in obvious ways, to the life and destiny of the ancient Mysteries. These lectures showed, more and more plainly as they went on, what can happen when a soul carries into human civilisation as it has become in recent centuries the effects of participation in the Mysteries. We have on the surface all that is given by heredity and environment, the ways of life and the ways of thinking which a human being absorbs as he grows up – and on the other hand deep questions and deep purposes which are aroused by the soul's heritage. Such examples are, I think, meant as an arduous exercise in distinguishing Maya from reality, a preparation for the still more painful exercise of self-knowledge. For in the summer of 1924 Rudolf Steiner went on, as you know, to describe the Karma of the Anthroposophical Movement. He was working to replace those vanities and illusions which you describe with realities, which would support a steady and modest confidence in life, if they were rightly understood. He showed how the predisposition could be prepared in earlier lives for that hunger and thirst of which you wrote in your first letter. What he has to say here in a more general way is closely linked with what he says about particular individualities; for everywhere in real life the predisposition towards the spiritual is complicated by individual destiny.

I think he hoped that these lectures would be received by students of his work with a mood of particular reverence and earnestness; and that this mood would form a protection for them, and for much else that is of an esoteric kind in his work, if later they came to be published.

We have indeed to test Rudolf Steiner's work on many

different levels. On one level with our intelligence and common sense; but on another, through the mysterious echo which tells us 'This you have once known; you are learning it afresh.' What parts of Rudolf Steiner's teaching we are able to test to some extent and to make truly our own, may well depend upon the destiny of the spiritual individuality which links each personal life to past and to future lives.

VII

From Martinus to Duns

I had hardly read a word of Rudolf Steiner till two years ago. My present attitude to Anthroposophy is one of gratitude and admiration combined with some perplexity.

Here, I say to myself, are ideas, truths of extraordinary relevance and urgency for our times that somehow make much less impact that they deserve. At the few lectures I have attended the audience has been almost wholly of middle-aged people like myself; yet Steiner's mind is youthful, vital, invigorating and poetic, the very thing you would think young people today, disappointed with so much in their education and upbringing, would be in search of. But few are there. Why is this?

I wonder whether it would not be wisest to consider in general our English character, culture and situation and ask whether there is any important area or aspect of it upon which we could as it were, graft the central insights of Steiner. I feel Owen Barfield has suggested one right road ahead in what he has written about the Romantic Revolution of the nineteenth century in England, an event or experience, however they feel about it, that most English people are at home with. That revolution of the last century, that showed prospects of extending far beyond literature, hardly got under way before it came haltingly to a standstill. You could almost say that our spiritual future depends on getting it in motion again, only with more understanding and wider spread.

Do you see my drift? The content of Anthroposophy is good but for us English at any rate the terminology is very difficult. I would even think the existence of a Society with this name in part defeats the aims it exists to promote. Of course that is true

of all societies more or less as they become institutions; it is sad that it should be so, as unreasonable of its members as of its makers, but a fact. Those who are inside the Anthroposophical Movement and interested in it from this point of view know that it is Christian to the core yet the fact that a C. S. Lewis could not, so far as I know, join it should give them pause.

It is indeed Christian, I would say, but it doesn't always look like it; it often looks like something very different. Some will say this doesn't matter and, as I see it, the influence of the work of its members, albeit in their private and personal capacity, will increase greatly in the next few years. But I think it does matter; and this brings me to my second point.

Steiner wrote more than once on the subject of human blood, about its spiritual character and changes in men's attitudes towards it in different periods and so on. It was clearly of prime concern to him and yet somehow, or so it seems to me, he fails to see the heart of the matter. Indeed how often in reading him in some biblical context one feels a certain reference or quotation is the very thing he needs to make his point, and he does not use it. Time and again in the Old Testament we read that 'the blood is the life' or 'the life is in the blood'; and in the New that only those who 'eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man' shall 'live by him'. That is the wine of the Sacrament, is the sign and material mode of this 'life', the express guarantee at once of our union with God and our communion with one another. Now in view of all that Steiner says about our human relation to and growth in Christ and notably all that he intends to convey by his reiterated reference to St Paul's 'Not I live but Christ lives in me', is it not strange that he does not urge, as a matter of vital importance, his followers' participation in the Mass, Eucharist or Memorial Meal? Nothing surprises me so much about Steiner as his omission, if he did omit, to share and urge his hearers to share in what, if I understand the New Testament rightly here, is not a matter of secondary import or one that is left to each individual Christian's choice. After all, everything he says suggests he would be the first person to understand the Bible's meaning or Christ's plain command here and to accept its injunction for himself and pass it on to others. Why then did Steiner presumably consider this was something that could be dispensed

with by himself and others? Could it be that he felt its substance which was spiritual, could be or should be spiritually apprehended and appreciated?

I notice too an unwillingness amongst Anthroposophists to use the word 'sin'. Sin, however, is central to the Bible's vision of man, and I feel the hesitation here is evidence of that picking and choosing from the Bible what suits their particular purpose that tends to characterise Anthroposophists. Surely, it will not be claimed that the evolution of consciousness, the insights of psychoanalysis and so on, authorise us, much less compel us, to define it in other terms. It is almost the trouble of some of Steiner's followers perhaps that they are such good people, such innocent people – I intend no irony here. The sinner proper (and here surely C. S. Lewis agrees with me) is only too conscious of his helplessness in dealing with the frustration he finds in his own being. Anthroposophy can help us wonderfully in very many ways but I doubt whether it can much help a man in this very central domain of human experience.

Finally, the understanding of a Browning may be assisted by the forming of a Browning Society; but I fancy many of us would feel a little uneasy about forming a Shakespeare Society, though in the ordinary course of life we would do what we could to enjoy other people's pleasure in his poetry and to share our own with all who came our way. . . .

VIII

From Duns to Martinus

Rudolf Steiner once spoke of the impossibility of translating some German sentences into English. And when people translated his own books he wanted them to do so very freely – recreating, one might almost say, rather than translating. The immense difference between the two languages, German and English, is only one of the many significant differences which make the task of English anthroposophists (should I call them that?) so difficult. You are absolutely right about this. If over recent decades there had been say twenty writers in English who knew and understood Rudolf Steiner's work, and who could write as effectively and interestingly in a variety of fields

as Owen Barfield has done in the subjects he has made his concern, the position today would be very different. (It is not surprising that his name keeps coming up in this correspondence.) But may not something like this be on the way? I do not mean just a popularisation of Rudolf Steiner's work in English; I mean work springing from that wider consciousness, sharing in the relationship between earth and the spiritual world, of which he was a great herald.

* * *

It is a most impressive fact that nearly everywhere in Christendom today the Sacrament of Bread and Wine has remained central. I do not think that this fact can be understood by judgments which remain upon the surface of events. For in that picture of the world which has developed in recent centuries, and which theologians and clergy have absorbed along with everybody else, I cannot see that this Sacrament has any real place. It is because there is a perceptive organ in the human heart, which sometimes guides men on ways which their heads would lead them to reject, that a deep reverence for this Sacrament continues to exist.

I think you have already felt that the conception of the world, which begins to form for us when we study the work of Rudolf Steiner, makes far more comprehensible for us the Incarnation of Christ. We begin to live in a universe of which this is indeed the central event. And Rudolf Steiner makes quite clear that in all the Christian Sacraments this event continues to work, for the redemption not only of mankind but of the whole earth.

But he did not say – to put it bluntly – ‘therefore you all ought to take part in these Sacraments.’ Have you not observed that he hardly ever says anything in this form: ‘You ought . . .’ or even ‘It is Christ's clear command that you should . . .’? Most of all in such matters as these, he carefully describes the spiritual facts in a way that will leave the hearer free. It seems to me that the tone in the Gospels is really the same. The Sermon on the Mount describes the consequences of acting in this or that way; but none of it can be obeyed like an external injunction, but only by a gradual transformation of our whole being.

When the Christian Community was founded, Rudolf Steiner was concerned to describe the living relationship between it and the Anthroposophical movement from a number of very different points of view, seeking to bring about a situation in which those who already belonged to the Anthroposophical movement would feel able to find their own free and individual relationship to the Christian Community. In this, as in many other matters, it was all too easily supposed that he wished everyone to decide in the same way. He wanted each to interpret his tasks and responsibilities for himself.

He made clear too that a spiritual Communion is possible, which leads to the same goal as the receiving of the visible bread and the visible wine in which there lives Christ's Body and Blood. The very earnest and at the same time very practical tone in which he spoke of this you will find described in Dr Rittelmeyer's *Rudolf Steiner Enters My Life*. There could for him be no conflict, only the completest harmony, between the visible and the invisible Communion, where these are rightly felt and understood.

And for this understanding what theologian, what mystic, or what devotional writer has done as much as Rudolf Steiner, though his words may *sound* so dry and matter of fact?

* * *

Have you read Rudolf Steiner's first Mystery Play? The central figure in this play, ‘Johannes Thomasius’, is a man who is brought face to face with his own sinfulness in the bitterest, most appalling reality. He recognises that the evil within him threatens to destroy all his human relationships, and to rob him of all strength for positive work.

In an early draft of the play Rudolf Steiner called Johannes simply *Mensch*, man. He is both a particular person and someone whose experience is characteristic and central for human beings in general. The overwhelming impression of one's own sinfulness is an inescapable part of any real spiritual path; and indeed those who appear to others good and innocent are likely to have it sooner than those who appear to have plenty to be ashamed of. What is contained in *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds* is intended as help in facing this experience steadily, without

interrupting the fulfilment of one's daily tasks. A great deal that is described in *Occult Science* and elsewhere is meant to provide an immense context, through which man's tragic condition can be understood. If the word 'sin' is comparatively seldom used, it is perhaps because from the aspect of that objective consciousness, the consciousness of the Spiritual Soul which Rudolf Steiner sought to cultivate, it is generally more important to describe a specific fault in man's make-up, as it has become under the influence of a particular temptation, rather than sinfulness generally. It can be very important to know in what part of our being an error or weakness has taken hold.

But of course knowledge alone is not enough for the healing of sin. In the Mystery Plays we see again how other human beings come to help Johannes with their love, their personal sacrifice, and their practical support. Priest and doctor in their different ways can be guided and strengthened by all that Rudolf Steiner brought for the mending of lives. But the teacher, the artist, the farmer and everyone else who lets their work be inspired in this way are also serving the same purpose.

What need then of a Society or a particular Community if we are only trying to do, with Rudolf Steiner's guidance, what all Christians are seeking to do anyhow? This seems to me really a practical question, rather than one of principle. If a group of people devote themselves to a specific task, recognising and supporting each other, this should not alienate them from Christendom or from humanity – above all, if they feel that they have received their task as a commission from those spiritual beings who serve Christ.

IX

From Bardowick to Duns

Owen Barfield deplores the fact that people do not take Steiner seriously. He has not only been disappointed, he has been shocked and puzzled that people are not in the least interested in the news about Steiner.

Would it, I wonder, be any consolation to Owen Barfield to consider that people generally don't take anybody seriously, not even Christ? I can think of a number of outstanding

thinkers, poets and scientists whom people generally have neither heard of nor desire to hear about. Yet I personally believe that these thinkers, poets and scientists have demonstrated truths vital to the course of humanity. I understand and sympathise with Owen Barfield, having myself had the same experience, but am I morally justified in feeling disappointed, shocked or puzzled because other people will not take seriously those writers who inspire *me*? On this line of reasoning I ought to be shocked and puzzled that the anthroposophists refuse to take seriously those thinkers whom I consider of the utmost importance!

It is true, I think, that one ought to be shocked and puzzled by people who refuse to think at all about life's basic principles; but at this point I find the anthroposophists themselves run into a contradiction, because they ask us to listen to, and eventually, presumably, accept, the 'truths' expressed by Steiner, but here my attitude is very much the same as that of Tomas – little of the information he passes on to us can be checked or tested. Is it to be expected that I shall accept what he has to say on his authority alone? This would be a reversion to the decadent scholastic attitude towards Aristotle in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. I am always disappointed, shocked and puzzled by the appeal to the authority of Aristotle during these centuries. The cry, 'Aristotle has said . . .' made any enquiry into truth impossible.

Why should people take Owen Barfield himself more seriously than Rudolf Steiner is not difficult to understand. People always prefer the living to the dead. Assuming the ideas of Steiner to be true (and I say nothing about this, one way or the other), why then their truth can only be expressed in the life of a living person or persons.

I am influenced by many thinkers, both living and dead, but the idea that I should be a 'follower' of any one of them strikes me as very strange. I think there is a great danger in building up a body of followers, as can be demonstrated in the communist and national socialist movements of Marx and Hitler respectively.

But the most potent reason why people will not listen to the views of Steiner as expressed by anthroposophists is the reason which Owen Barfield accuses us of, namely, anthroposophists

will not listen. How often have I not heard anthroposophists brush aside the views of non-anthroposophist philosophers and scientists! I remember once being asked to expound the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead to a group of anthroposophists in Germany. I had hardly got started before what I was saying was brushed aside and I found myself listening to a talk on how much better the 'philosophy' of Rudolf Steiner was. Lack of self-criticism and impatience of the views of others is a characteristic of Steiner followers which is perhaps the chief reason why people will not listen to Steiner.

X

From Duns to Bardowick

May I start with your last point, and try to work backwards? I can well imagine that the experience you have had of a failure by anthroposophists to listen has been a fairly widespread one. Those who become very much interested in Rudolf Steiner's work often go through a time when his ideas seem so full of colour and significance that they cannot imagine why anyone else should not see this, or bother with any other modern thinker. But I would have thought that this is generally followed by a humbler stage, when one sees that one has not really understood anything of anthroposophy securely, unless one can link it with what has been discovered and thought by others outside the anthroposophical field. I think that a certain inability to listen to others is a quite general failing of our time, to be found both in anthroposophists and non-anthroposophists. But Rudolf Steiner never tired, from the beginning to the end of his teaching life, of showing that this inability needs to be overcome, and can be overcome.

He did not want 'followers', or people who accepted his statements as dogmatic expressions of truth, as happened with Aristotle – which meant of course a disastrous failure to understand Aristotle. Rudolf Steiner was very guarded in his use of the verb 'follow' – using it nearly always, so far as I know, in direct relation to Christ. The relationships Rudolf Steiner sought to establish between the men of his time and the work he was doing could perhaps be described as taking four distinct

forms, though they could shade into one another. First, people who did not study his work in detail could recognise that it was a thorough-going and well-intentioned attempt to remedy some of the troubles of our civilisation, as was done for example by Albert Schweitzer. Secondly, some people could give his work long and thorough study, without taking up any public stand or activity as a consequence. (These he specifically welcomed as members of the Anthroposophical Society.) Thirdly, students of his work could decide to become active in different ways, as representatives of it, thereby undertaking serious responsibilities towards the anthroposophical movement as a whole, particularly while it remained small in number. Fourthly, Rudolf Steiner accepted some esoteric pupils. Some remarkable descriptions exist of his relationship to these, for example by Dr Rittelmeyer in *Rudolf Steiner Enters My Life* and by Dr Maria Röschl-Lehrs in *Rudolf Steiner: Recollections by Some of his Pupils*. 'A special quality of Rudolf Steiner's guidance was the care with which he left his pupils free' – this statement by Dr Röschl-Lehrs anyone who had the privilege of knowing some of these pupils could amply confirm for himself; they showed strong individuality and the most colourful variety of behaviour, never resembling faint carbon copies of their teacher.

Now at none of these stages is the acceptance or non-acceptance of particular statements by Rudolf Steiner the significant thing. At the first stage, what matters is perhaps a recognition of the general intention of his work; at the second, an understanding of his methods; and at the third, the ability to use his work as a training in the recognition of one's duty in particular practical tasks. But increasingly, at the third and fourth stages, all of a human being's capacities are involved in finding an active relationship, not simply to what Rudolf Steiner said in the past, but to a living spiritual world that both surrounds and indwells us all. And I think this has been the concern, though they have expressed it in very different ways, of most of those great personalities in human history who have really inspired you or me.

THE WOODWARD OF BROCELIANDE

ISABEL WYATT

The variants Grail – Graal, Lancelot – Launcelot, Perceval – Percivale have been used in accordance with the sources quoted. 'Arthur' is to be taken as a title given to successive initiates of the Arthur Mysteries, indicating that the same supersensible being was working behind and through them all.

IN 1891 a Danish peat-bog yielded up, in sections, a magnificent silver cauldron of Celtic workmanship of the second or first century B.C. – the now famous Gundestrup Bowl. Not only is it unique in size and weight (42 centimetres in height, 69 centimetres in diameter, nearly 9 kilograms in weight), but the repoussé scenes which adorn it both without and within place it among the great masterpieces of Celtic art.

One such panel on its inner face portrays the Celtic god Cernunnos in his role of Lord of the Animals, elegant antlers on his head, his cultic stag beside him, and antelope, boar, dolphin and other creatures standing or sporting about him.

This woodland scene calls to mind, by its very mingling of correspondences and contrasts, that other woodland scene described in the Welsh mabinogi, *The Lady of the Fountain*, when the Arthurian knight Sir Kynon tells his companions Sir Owain and Sir Kay how he was directed to the magic fountain of the title:

'Within the wood thou wilt come to a sheltered glade with a mound in the centre. And thou wilt see a black man of great stature on the top of the mound. He is not smaller in size than two of the men of this world. He has but one foot; and one eye in the middle of his forehead. And he has a club or iron, and there are no two men in the world who would not find their burden in that club. He is not a comely man, but on the contrary he is exceedingly ill-favoured; and he is the woodward of that wood. And thou wilt see a thousand wild animals grazing around him. Enquire of him the way.'

Sir Kynon relates how, when he did indeed come to this black giant, he asked him 'what power he held over those animals'.

'I will show thee, little man,' said he.

'And he took his club in his hand, and with it he struck a stag a great blow, so that he brayed vehemently, and at his braying the animals came together, as numerous as the stars in the sky. There were serpents and dragons and divers sorts of animals. And he looked at them and bade them go and feed; and they bowed their heads and did him homage as vassals to their lord. Then I enquired of him the way, and he became very rough in his manner to me.'¹

Fired by Sir Kynon's story, Sir Owain fares forth himself in quest of the fountain. Chrétien de Troyes, in his version of this adventure, the *Chevalier au Lion*, places the fountain in the enchanted Forest of Brocéliande. It was the Woodward of Brocéliande Sir Kynon had encountered.

The Breton description of this Woodward of Brocéliande is even more sinister than the Welsh:

'The lord of this vast forest was a terrible giant, completely black, who had only one foot and one eye. The animals, as well as the plants and the elements, obeyed him. At his will – at a word of command or a gesture of his hand – a thick mist filled the glades; the trees appeared to be on fire; dreadful roarings arose on every hand, made even more appalling by their reverberating echoes; monsters issued from fathomless caves; hideous serpents entwined their folds about the blazing tree-trunks.

'Anyone who ventured to the heart of this immense, mysterious domain saw the trees begin to move and approach each other behind him, to close the way by which he had come and keep him forever a prisoner in this Valley of no Return.'²

The Breton legends give very precise details as to the location and extent of this enchanted forest. It was nearly thirty leagues long and more than twenty leagues wide, and it covered the entire heart of the Armorican peninsula, its northern boundary stretching from Fougères to Quintin, its southern one from le Faouët to Redon. Arthur's camp (marked still by the *Grotte d'Arthur* at Huelgoat) was just outside its western extremity, his castle of Kerdhuel just beyond its northern boundary; Nantes, which Wolfram von Eschenbach gives as the chief seat of the

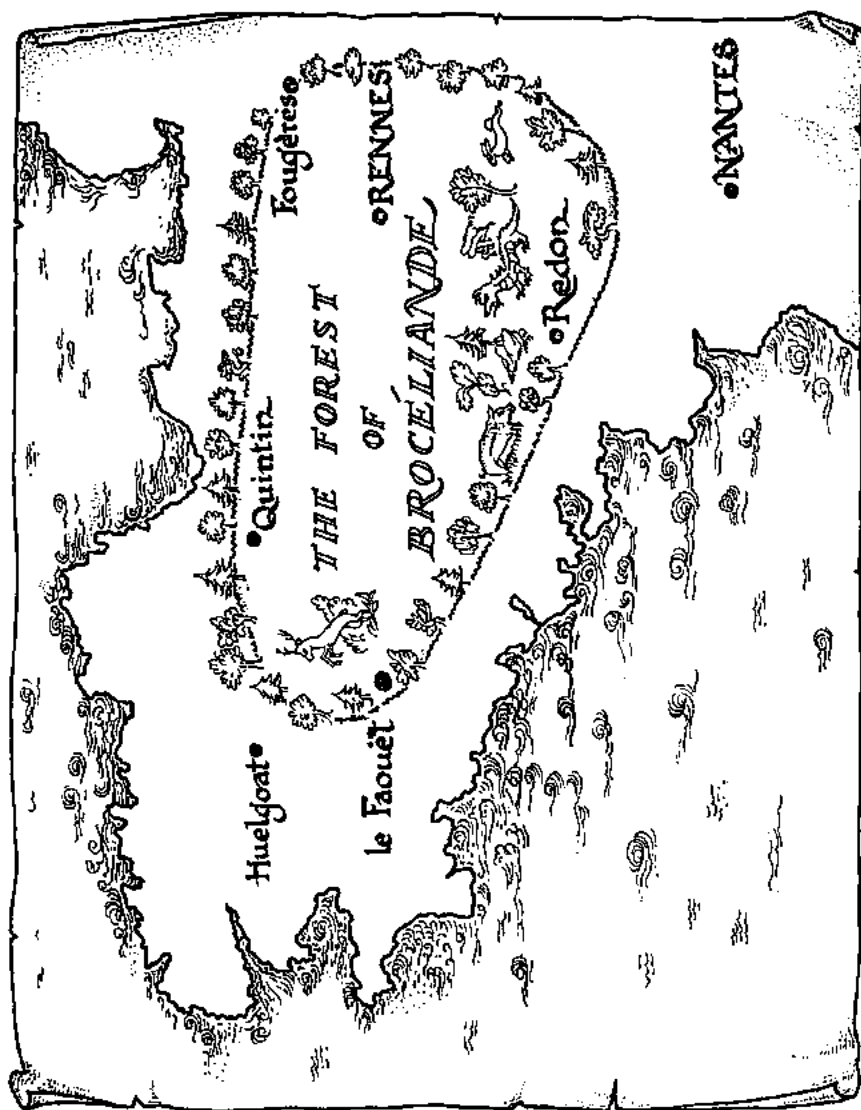
¹ *The Mabinogion* (eleventh century), Lady Charlotte Guest's translation.

² *Légendes Traditionnelles de la Bretagne*, Louis Aubert.



Panel from the Gundestrup Bowl (Celtic, 2nd to 1st century B.C.)

National Museum of Denmark



Round Table in France, was a little further south-east of the forest's south-east corner. Thus a kind of Arthurian Gulf Stream engirdled and isolated it.

Today only scattered strips of Brocéliande remain, the twelve thousand acres of Paimpont Forest, south of Rennes, being the largest. It is surely significant that Paimpont Forest is the scene of the Breton Grail-fairytale, *Peronnik l'Idiot*.

* * *

In terms of geological time, the separation of the British Isles from the Continent of Europe took place comparatively recently; formerly they and Brittany and the mid-western continental seaboard had been united in the ancient region of Hibernia. In Hibernia, when the Manu led his chosen band from the sinking continent of Atlantis to the Tarim Basin near the Gobi Desert, the last survivors of the Atlantean cataclysm found refuge.

The Hibernian Mysteries were of so lofty a spirituality that the Druids of the Celtic peoples, when these later came in their turn, united their wisdom with their own. But alongside these exalted Mysteries, relics of an atavistic Atlantean consciousness lingered wrongfully and harmfully into post-Atlantean times.

In the Woodward of Brocéliande we can recognise many such atavistic echoes – in his single eye, Atlantean clairvoyance; in his colour, its blotted-out dream-consciousness; in his size, the tendency innate in its strong lunar forces to produce gigantic forms, particularly in beings of evil disposition. The Atlanteans saw all things swathed in mist; to them the trees burned with an auric fire; so complete was their control of the Nature-forces that, as with the Woodward, animals, plants and elements obeyed them.

Just as the Addanc slain by Peredur in the Welsh mabinogi which bears his name would seem to have been an anachronistic survival of the Avanc which in Welsh mythology had caused the Flood, so the monsters which at the Woodward's will issued from the fathomless caves of Brocéliande and the hideous serpents entwining their folds about its blazing tree-trunks give the impression of being the terrible and illicit spawn of the decadent relics of an earlier phase of evolution.

The Atlanteans left behind were those who, through the

betrayal of their Mysteries, had become the most depraved. Their dying-out filled all these ancient parts of the earth with devastating corruption which brought forth demonic beings; these it was the task of the Arthur Mysteries to subdue. In Brocéliande, with its one-eyed Woodward, we can see a kind of prototypal picture of a region still dominated by such evil astral forces, which the Arthurian knights exorcised in the shape of those nightmare monsters who issued from fathomless caves.

The Arthurian cycles have come down to us clothed in pictures of medieval chivalry, so that we tend to forget the antiquity of the spiritual stream of which they bring us dim and distant rumours. 'The content of the King Arthur legend, referred to later times by a scholarship which is not at all scholarly in respect of the real facts, reaches back in reality to a very early epoch,' Rudolf Steiner tells us. He speaks of 'a few thousand years ago, when the Arthur stream had its beginning', and of 'the Arthur Impulse going out from England, an Impulse which was kindled originally by the Hibernian Mysteries'.

Indeed, the reason given in the twelfth century for the institution of the Round Table points right back to the results of the ravishing of the Nature-forces in the betrayed Atlantean Mysteries:

'In the wells and springs of England harboured damsels who fed the wayfarer with meat and bread. These maidens dwelt in caverns – which the old tale elsewhere calls grottoes – hewn out by more than mortal art in the depths of the forest. . . . To Aaron there came out of the grotto a maiden – I trow you could not have wished for one more fair – and in her hand she bore a golden chalice. But Aaron did wrong to her, and carried off her golden cup, and the men of Aaron¹ followed this evil example, so that the springs dried up, and the grass withered, and never more came damsels out of the grottoes to comfort the wanderer.' The Knights of the Round Table, 'when they heard the tale, were at once filled with a desire to win back the grottoes and restore them to those hands which formerly had possessed them.'²

For the relationship between Nature-spirits and these Mystery-messengers, whom we call, in the term of a later

¹ Or Amangons.

² *Le Conte de Graal*, Chrétien de Troyes (1188-90).

chivalry, Arthurian knights, was a close and wonderful one. The knights received the working and weaving of the Nature-beings into their own etheric bodies, and with these Nature-forces they received impulses which came from the Sun, which in those pre-Christian days they knew to be the dwelling-place of the Christ. It was with the Christ Sun-forces thus borne to them by the Nature-beings that they were able to carry out their task of battling with the astral beasts and uplifting and civilising the peoples of Northern, Central and Western Europe.

The Cernussos panel of the Gundestrup Bowl is like a picture of this transformation.

This Celtic stag-god was an annunciation of the as yet uncarnated Sun-Being – we shall see presently how the stag as image of the Sun-Christ echoed right down the ages to *Perceval li Gallois* in the thirteenth century and *Le Morte d'Arthur* in the fifteenth. In the panel he sits cross-legged, his soles not yet belonging to the Earth; in his left hand, the Luciferic hand, he grasps the ram-headed serpent of the pre-Christian Luciferic wisdom which already searches forward towards the Lamb of God. The torc of lordship in his right hand describes the circle of the Sun.

He is the new Woodward of Brocéliande. Under his lordship hideous monsters no longer issue from fathomless caves, but the woodland creatures sport about him; a Nature-being rides gaily on a dolphin, that symbol of transition, sacred to the sun; and a delicate uniting tracery of leaves tells of a healed plant-world's restoration of life-bestowing saps.

* * *

Once Rudolf Steiner has revealed to us this beautiful and moving liaison between the Nature-beings and the Arthurian mission, we read with a new kindling of the eye that

'In the old daies of the King Arthoure,
Of which that Bretons speken grete honoure,
Al was this land fulfild of fayerie'.¹

Or that:

'In these times there were fairies with knowledge of enchantment and charms and acquainted with the powers of words and

¹ Chaucer (fourteenth century).

of stones and of herbs. These were more numerous within the bounds of Great Britain than in any other land.¹

We read now with a most willing suspension of disbelief about Arthur's non-mortal godparents:

'As soon as he came to Earth,
Elves took him and enchanted him with magic most strong.
They gave him to be the best of all knights.
They gave him to be a rich king.
They gave him to live long.
They gave him the princely virtues most good,
So that he was most generous of all men alive.
This the elves gave him:
And thus the child thrived.'²

We read with moved heart Arthur's last words:

'I will fare to Avalon, to the fairest of all maidens, to Argante the queen, an elf most fair; and she shall make my wounds all sound, make me all whole with healing draughts. And afterwards I will come again to my kingdom, and dwell with the Britons with much joy.'²

We take seriously Layamon's declaration that Arthur's burny (coat of mail) was 'fashioned of steel, that an elvish smith had made with his excellent craft; he was named Wygar, the witty wright (skilful craftsman)'.²

And we remember with a new understanding that it was the Lady of the Lake who brought up Sir Launcelot; that it was her arm clothed in white samite which, rising from the surface of the lake, both gave and received back Arthur's sword, Excalibur; and that it was she, under her Armorican name of Viviane, who, beside Sir Kynon's Fountain of Baranton in Cernussos' Forest of Brocéliande, wove about Merlin that tower of invisible crystal in which the clear soul of the initiate unites with the transparency of the etheric world.

* * *

At the turning point of time, Christ descended from the Sun. But the Round Table still continued to experience Him in

¹ *Roman van Lanzelet* (twelfth century).

² *Brut*, Layamon (1204).

Nature. 'After the Mystery of Golgotha,' Rudolf Steiner tells us, 'the Earth was swathed by the Life-Spirit of the Christ. This was perceived in the Irish Mysteries, but above all by the Knight of King Arthur's Round Table, who lived within this Life-Spirit which encircled the Earth and in which there was this constant interplay of the Spirits of the Elements from above and from below. . . . The Mystery of Golgotha legible in the Book of Nature represented the science of the higher graduates of King Arthur's Round Table.'

Thus the pre-Christian Christ-stream of the Arthur Mysteries was metamorphosed at the Mystery of Golgotha into a stream within Celtic Christianity; both were still cosmic.

With Christ had descended that cosmic intelligence which, administered by Michael, had hitherto inspired men in the sun-rays, but which had now to fall from his hands and become an earthly attribute. But the Round Table, itself a picture of the cosmos, an earthly reflection of the heavenly Zodiac, still clung to the cosmic intelligence, working longer than any other Michael-community to keep it still in Michael's hands.

The Norman tympanum at Parwick in Derbyshire, framed in its arch's chevron-portrayal of the light-ether, is like a soul picture of the Arthur stream now Christ had come to Earth. The lamb of God has succeeded Cernussos as Woodward; the bird of thought hovers above Him; the stag, His forerunner, stands in homage before him, his antlers metamorphosed into great deep-ribbed leaves. The day-serpent and the night-serpent begin to intertwine man's sleeping and his waking into the healing caduceus of the second half of the Earth's evolution and to breathe forth *ur*-plant forms pointing to that Mercury dissolution which will release the archetypes frozen into matter by Mars in the earlier half. As, with the Persians, new life in the form of plants sprang from the back and tail of the bull when the sun-hero Mithras (their reflection of Michael) bestrode him, so here too the wild beast's tail breaks into leaf, into quicksilver-shaped leaf. But the cross the Lamb carries is still circled with the Celtic sun-torc; it is still the cross of the *Cosmic* Christ.

* * *

In the fourth century A.D. men carried the cosmic intelligence

a first step in the direction of the modern intellect – the old clairvoyant picture-consciousness began to grow shadowy.

Till that century higher beings had been able to guide man through the more powerful upper portion of his astral body. But now the lower portion began to grow more powerful, increasing man's freedom but at the cost of sickness.

In the fourth century, also, the last of the old pre-Christian Mysteries declined, and at the same time the esoteric significance of the new Christian Mystery began to be largely lost. Julian the Apostate, the last human being who could have led the former Sun Mysteries over into the latter, was murdered in 363 A.D.

Further, from the beginning of that century, there began to fade that tableau of the life of Christ of Earth which till then had remained visible in the supersensible worlds and out of perception of which the Gospels had been written. Men had a sense of being left lonely and bereft.

With the Arthurian knights this supersensible vision lasted longer; but after the first five centuries of our era, their powers also began gradually to diminish. 'The King waxed slothful, and the Knights of the Round Table, when they saw his well-doing slacken, departed thence and began to hold aloof from his court, nor did no adventure befall there any more.'¹

On Ascension Day the Queen begs him, weeping:

'Sir, were you to go to the chapel of St. Augustine that is in the White Forest, that may not be found save by adventure only, methinketh that on your back-repair you would again have your desire of well-doing.'

King Arthur goes, and, kneeling at the door of the chapel, sees a vision of the Child and His Mother as the hermit sings mass, and the hermit is the only living being in the chapel who is clothed in 'deadly flesh'. Yet the King hears 'right fair responses, as it were the responses of angels. . . . When the mass was sung, the voice of a holy angel said, *Ite, missa est*. The Son took the Mother by the hand, and they vanished forth of the chapel with the greatest company and the fairest that might ever be seen.'

And after this the King does indeed 'amend him well'; and

¹ *Perceval li Gallois* (thirteenth century), translated by Dr Sebastian Evans as *The High History of the Holy Graal*.

Sir Gawain and Sir Lancelot 'have more toil and travail than all the knights in the world before them', and Sir Perceval 'knoweth not how to live without travail, and little toil he thinketh of it, whereof shall God be well pleased'.

We ask ourselves:

Why (as the Queen had prophesied) did the King's presence at mass at St. Augustine's chapel usher in a resuscitation of that knightly adventure which Rudolf Steiner characterises as 'what the knights did in the fulfilment of their tasks'?

* * *

We learn from Rudolf Steiner's spiritual researches that, from the fourth and fifth centuries onward, new elementary Spiritual Beings have been descending from other spheres to help men on earth. From that period when the lower portion of man's astral body began to preponderate perilously in power, these new Earth-Spirits have so worked on men who had strong moral ideas as to build these moral ideas into their very being and blood, thus uniting a man's individual moral quality with his new and increasing individual freedom.

Such a process of creative fusion would seem to have come to birth in Arthur at the chapel of St. Augustine.

The chapel of St. Augustine 'may not be found save by adventure only' – that is, in connection with the fulfilment of appointed tasks. What King Arthur experiences there implements his intention – 'To amend me have I come hither.' On his 'back-repair' to court, not only his 'desire of well-doing' but also his power of well-doing has been restored. It is exactly as if these new Earth-Spirits have become his helpers.

We ask ourselves again:

Why should this happen when the King is present at mass?

These new Earth-spirits find a path to man through ritual. Rudolf Steiner tells us that 'in the cults of the Churches, those who have visions of realities can often dispense with the person who stands in the flesh before the altar, because – apart altogether from the officiating priests – they are able to perceive the presence of these Spiritual Beings in the ceremonies'.

One is left with the awed surmise:

Can these new Earth-Spirits then have been 'that greatest company and the fairest that might ever be seen' who had made

'right fair responses, as it were the responses of angels', and who had 'evanished forth of the chapel' with the Son and His Mother when mass had been sung?

* * *

If one reads attentively one discovers how, from now on, delicate and gradual preparation is made for the far-off meeting and uniting of the Arthur stream with the Grail stream.

First, 'when the hermit had done his service and was divested of the arms of God', he brings to King Arthur his first intimation of the Grail Quest:

'A great sorrow is befallen in the land of late through a young knight that was harboured in the hostel of the rich King Fisherman, for that the most Holy Graal appeared to him, yet never asked he to whom was served thereof nor whence it came, and for that he asked it not are all the lands commoved to war, nor no knight meeteth other in the forest but he runneth upon him and slayeth him.'

Then, as Arthur rides home to Cardoill, 'in the thick of the forest, he heard a Voice that began to cry aloud:

'"King Arthur of Great Britain, God biddeth thee that thou hold court at the earliest thou mayst, for the world, that is now made worse of thee and of thy slackness in well-doing, shall thereof be greatly amended."'

It had formerly been King Arthur's custom to hold court three times a year, at Christmastide, at Easter and at Pentecost; but after 'a slothful will came upon him he had been no more minded to hold them'. It was now Ascensiontide, ten days only till Pentecost; he therefore 'made seal of his letters and sent them throughout all his lands that he would hold court at the feast of St. John, for that Whitsuntide was already too nigh. Wherefore all began now to marvel whence his new desire had come.'

So, for the first and only time, Arthur held his court on St. John's Day, the day of him who said: 'I (the last of the pre-Christian Sun-forces) must decrease, and He (the newly incarnated Sun) must increase.' And it was on this day that the Grail Cross – the cross of the Christ Who had united Himself with the Earth – was first brought to Arthur's court.

For as Arthur and his knights sat at table, three damsels

entered the hall. The second damsel 'bore at her neck a shield banded argent and azure with a red cross, and the boss was of gold, all set with precious stones.' The first damsel said:

'Sir, the shield that this damsel beareth belonged to Joseph, the good soldier knight that took down Our Lord of hanging on the rood. Keep the shield for a knight that shall come hither for the same; you shall make it hang on this column in the midst of your hall, and guard it in such wise as that none may take it save he only. And of this shield shall he achieve the Graal; and another shield shall he leave here in the hall, red, with a white hart.'

The damsel brings King Arthur greetings from 'the rich King Fisherman, of whom is sore sorrow for that he hath fallen into a grievous languishment.

"Damsel," saith the King, "sore pity it is; and God grant him his heart's desire."

"Sir," saith she, "know you wherefore he hath fallen into languishment?"

"Nay, I know not at all, but gladly would I learn."

"This languishment is come upon him through one that harboured in his hostel, to whom the most Holy Graal appeared. . . ."

So King Arthur learns that King Fisherman's affliction, like the wars and anarchy of which the hermit had told him, are due to the un-asked Grail-question.

Much time was to pass and many adventures were to befall before, one night, King Arthur awoke and saw a ship 'coming afar off as it were the shining of a candle in the midst of the sea. When the ship was arrived under the palace and was quite still, he saw therein a knight that lay all armed upon a table of ivory, and his hands were crossed upon his breast. Anon he cometh all armed and holding his sword all naked, and the King seeth that he beareth the red shield with the white hart whereof he had heard tell. The knight taketh the shield that hung at the column and hangeth the other there; he enters again into the ship and so departs and leaves the castle behind.

'When Lancelot seeth the shield that he had left on the column, he knoweth it well, and saith: "Now know I well that Perceval hath been here, for this shield was he wont to bear."'

Thus Perceval, in this version of the lineage of 'Joseph of

Abarimacie', and in this version the first Arthurian knight in whose destiny Arthur-stream and Grail-stream are to be united, is also the first for whom the white hart of the pure Cernussos who is the reflection of the Sun-Christ gives place to the Christ Who has become the Being of the Earth. This exchange takes place by night – that is, it is a supersensible experience; and at this point of time it takes place for him alone.

Galahad, in Malory the first Arthurian knight to achieve the Quest of the Grail, has a similar experience, one even more explicit. But in his case it is a mystical experience, and he shares it with the three human beings whose Grail destinies are most closely entwined with his own.

Galahad, with Bors, Percivale and Percivale's sister, was riding through a waste forest when 'they saw afore them a white hart which four lions led'. These they followed to a chapel, where a hermit sang mass.

'And at the secrets of the mass they saw the hart become a man and set him upon the altar in a rich siege; and saw the four lions were changed, the one to the form of a man, the other to the form of a lion, the third to an eagle and the fourth to an ox.

'Then they took their siege where the hart sat and went out through a glass window, and there was nothing perished nor broken. And they heard a voice say: In such a manner entered the Son of God in the womb of a maid Mary, whose virginity was ne perished ne hurt. And when they heard these words they fell down to the earth; and therewith was a great clereness.'

When they 'were come to their self again', the hermit explained to them that by the four lions were to be understood the Four Evangelists, and that 'ofttimes or this Our Lord showed Him unto good men in likeness of an hart; but I suppose that from henceforth ye shall see Him so no more'.¹

Galahad, like Perceval, also had a red cross shield; like Perceval's, Galahad's had also belonged to Joseph of Arimathea. Joseph had given it to the noble pagan, King Evelake, and had drawn the red cross upon it with his own blood. Galahad, like Perceval, is physically related to Joseph; but he is also descended from Evelake. The pagan piety of the one and the Grail guardianship of the other are already united in his blood.

* * *

¹ *Le Morte d'Arthur*, Sir Thomas Malory (written 1467, printed 1485).

In *Perceval li Gallois*, Perceval never asks the healing question of King Fisherman; but after the latter's death he rescues his castle and kingdom from the infidels who have conquered them under the King of Castle Mortal. Then 'the Graal presented itself again in the castle, and the lance whereof the point bleedeth, and the other holy relics whereof was right great plenty. For our Lord God loved the place much.'

At Whitsuntide King Arthur, holding his court at Cardoil as the Voice in the forest had bidden him, 'looketh at the windows of the hall to right and left, and seeth that two sunbeams are shining within that fill the whole hall with light. Thereof he marvelleth much and sendeth without the hall to see what it might be. The messenger cometh back and saith thereof that two suns appear to be shining, the one in the East and the other in the West. He marvelleth much thereat.

'Then a Voice at one of the windows said to him: "King, marvel not that two suns should appear in the sky. Know well that this is for joy of the conquest that the Good Knight hath made that took away the shield from herewithin. He hath won the land that belonged to good King Fisherman from the evil King of Castle Mortal, and therefore was it that the Graal was hidden. Now God so willeth that you go thither, and that you choose out the best knights of your court; for better pilgrimage may you never make; and what time you shall return hither, your faith shall be doubled and the people of Great Britain shall be better disposed and better taught to maintain the service of the Saviour."'

When did two suns appear at the same time in the sky, the one in the East, the other in the West? When did the Round Table go on pilgrimage to the Grail Castle?

Rudolf Steiner tells us:

'Two streams came to meet each other – the *pre-Christian* Christ stream and the *Christian* Christ stream. The one is known subsequently as the Arthur stream, the other as the Grail stream. In the Christianity of the Grail, the Christ Who descended through the Mystery of Golgotha took His way from East to West. And to meet Him from the West there came the spiritual etheric *Image* of the Christ evoked by the Mystery of Golgotha but still picturing the Christ of the Sun Mysteries.

'From the West came pagan Christianity, the Arthur-

Christianity. From the East came the Christ in the hearts of men.

'And then the meeting takes place.

'This meeting took place in the year 869 A.D.'

* * *

When this momentous meeting took place, the cosmic intelligence had taken a further earthward step. From now on, for the next thousand years, Western Christianity was to be formulated into exoteric dogma; there was place in it neither for Arthurian understanding of the Sun-Mysteries nor for Grail understanding of Christ as Spirit of the Earth. So these two streams flowed underground together, preserving their content in readiness for the renewal of esoteric Christianity which would accompany Michael's return to rulership of the earth in 1879.

We live today in this new Michael Age.

But before we can regain an understanding of Christ as Sun-Being and as Spirit of the Earth, that cosmic intelligence which had fallen from Michael's hands into men's heads must return to him, that he may administer it now through their hearts. And this, Rudolf Steiner tells us, is to begin in our own time.

As, in the crisis in the fourth century, new Earth-Spirits descended from other worlds to help man build his moral ideas into his blood, so, when the new Michael Age began, further new Beings – Vulcan Beings – began to descend to help man work on his now earth-dried intellect and render it fit for Michael's service.

They bring us living Imaginations to quicken the corpses of our thinking into new life. They bring us cosmic truths ensouled in these Imaginations. They bring us Anthroposophy.

And more and more such Beings will descend to help us in the coming centuries.

* * *

Twenty years after the beginning of the new Michael Age came the end of Kali Yuga. And with the end of Kali Yuga, the Dark Age, appeared a new kingdom of *Nature-beings*, 'in order that our life of soul may be quickened by what it draws from Nature'.



Norman Tympanum, Stoke-sub-Hamdon, Somerset

The double thread of man's moral life and of the intellect's need of redemption runs through his connection with all three of these groups of new Beings on the earth. The new Earth-Spirits of the fourth and fifth centuries, who unite man's moral ideas with his growing freedom and who will help him to form the new earth-planet, Jupiter, out of his outbreathed morality, are 'repelled by the brains of academic scholars and rebuffed by mechanical contrivances'. The new Vulcan-Beings who from 1879 onwards seek to enliven the shadow-pictures of the intellect and to guide our thinking again into the sphere of Michael are also concerned that the Spiritual Science they bring to us 'shall be translated into social behaviour and action on the earth'. And the new kingdom of Elemental Beings who from 1899 issue from Nature as a fount of spiritual life bring changes into the ether-body both by the freshening forces with which they imbue our thinking and through the order brought into our moral impulses by the vision of the karma of our deeds which can be fostered in our souls when we carry these new helpers with us from autumn through to spring.

The ether-body is the instrument of our whole life of thought. The intellectuality of our own era has, up to this century, gradually dried and hardened this body as it has dried and hardened the physical one; but it has at the same time caused it to evolve towards a certain independence.

Once we have unfolded the faculty of thinking our own thoughts, our thinking is no longer limited to and by our sense impressions and the outer world. The world of thought can now embrace other worlds. And particularly if those worlds include the moral and the aesthetic, the ether-body slowly embarks on a process of loosening which can bring it eventually to actual perception in those other worlds.

The glorious crown of that long development will be, sometime in the future, the ability to perceive the Etheric Christ as a natural event.

When we consciously co-operate with our spiritual helpers, as the Arthurian knights did with theirs, we enter this true stream of future evolution. And as the Cernussos of the Gundestrup Bowl is like a picturing forth of the Christ on the Sun as He worked in these knights through those helpers; as the Norman tympanum at Parwick is like a picturing forth of the Cosmic



Norman Tympanum, Parwick, Derbyshire (long hidden under plaster)

Reece Winstone

Christ, now incarnated but still seen as the Sun-Spirit, bringing peace to the astral realm; so the Norman tympanum at Stoke-sub-Hamdon in Somerset is like a picturing forth of this true stream of future evolution.

In it the tree of Life has been restored to man and Nature. Because purified feeling leads to sense-free thinking, the earthly animals are no longer portrayed, but birds alight on the Tree. In the realm of the starry animals, Sagittarius, that centaur-image of supersensible man, yearns towards Leo, the Sun-portal through which divine beings descend to earth. And the Christ Himself appears in the etheric world, no longer as that Sun-Being Image of Himself so long perceptible to Arthurian vision, but as the Mystical Lamb, a Being so cosmic that He sends us His sacrificial gifts from Aries, but bearing now, in place of the Sun-Cross, that cross which He bore when He rose from the grave as Spirit of the Earth.

We see Him guarding with a lamb's gentle mien the resurrected Tree of Life. We see in Him the world's true Woodward.

LECTURE CYCLES by RUDOLF STEINER:

Cosmic Christianity
Karmic Relationships, Vol. IV
Supersensible Influences in the History of Mankind
A Picture of Earth Evolution in the Future
The Christ Impulse in the Course of History

VIOLET PLINCKE

ANNE M. GRAY

THOSE who met Violet Plincke could feel themselves awakened, through the warmth and depth of her understanding, to the significance of their own destiny. Over many years, through the extreme modesty of her own claims on life, she seemed able to put herself entirely at the disposal of those she met, through her unceasing work as a lecturer, a leader of discussion groups, or as a personal friend and adviser. Of the events of her own earlier life she spoke seldom and briefly; when she was with her friends, her interest in their paths was so strong – she would sometimes touch lightly on how life had brought her where she was. She was born on 17th June 1883, and spent her childhood in St Petersburg, as it then was, the daughter of an English father and a German mother, in a cultured international circle there.

She experienced with wonder the church festivals, especially Christmas, which remained a deep fount of joy right through her life; she would remember at Christmas (our Epiphany) the Tsar going down to the Neva to be sprinkled ceremonially with water out of a hole drilled in the frozen river; her Russian nurse introduced her to the church services, and to the rich folklore she was always to carry with her.

Her own life was rich in personal connections, friends and family; she was specially close to a brother who died during her youth. After receiving a full education at home she attended a college for women, but had to leave because of ill-health, and spend some time in Finland to recover from a serious illness. She had already loved the Russian countryside, but in Finland two new experiences were in store for her. Though so close to St Petersburg Finland gave her an altogether stronger awareness of the beings of nature. She found there too an intensely burning patriotic search for freedom, the freedom of a people. It was only later that she understood, and made us understand, the characters in the Kalevala, and what the Threefold Commonwealth would have meant for a country such as Finland.

After returning to Russia – she was about twenty-nine – she

made the move which was to be the turning point in her destiny. So far she had lived the life of a scholar, and not yet plunged into the material world in any way practical. I remember her telling me that at thirty she had to learn when water boiled in a kettle, she had not concerned herself with such matters before! She left her home, not knowing she would not see it again, to study philosophy in Germany. And in Freiburg, she began to look after herself. She found that very difficult, yet she made herself learn the essentials of this task so alien to her. Unable to return home for Christmas she turned to the books a fellow-student had lent her:

Christmas was approaching; the students were all leaving Freiburg to spend Christmas with their families; the town became quite empty. Before going to his parents, who lived near Hanover, the student brought me *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds, Theosophy*, and *An Outline of Occult Science*. It was in the evening of 22nd December 1912. He said he would call again on his return to see how I got on with the books.

That same evening I plunged into '*Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*'. There was not a moment's hesitation as to which of the books was to be tackled first. From the very first pages onward there was only *one* dominant feeling: 'At last! I always knew that such a book must exist in the world – and here it is.'

It is impossible to describe how I ate and drank the books. For by the time the student returned in the evening of 27th December I had read *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds, Theosophy* and about two-thirds of *An Outline of Occult Science*. Only when I reached the chapter on the Evolution of the World I thought, 'Why is this written in prose? It should have been written in dithyrambic verse.' The years of search (which had begun quite early) had made me so desperately hungry that I could not do otherwise than read and absorb at this whirlwind pace.

In February 1913 she heard Rudolf Steiner lecture at Tübingen, and soon afterwards she obtained an interview with him at Stuttgart.

He shook hands and I sat down. Utter stillness. I did not venture to say a word. So silence, utter silence, entered and stayed, on and on. I thought it had lasted for hours. At last agony took possession of me, and when I could bear no more I said, 'You know why I have come to you.' Then only he began to speak in a quiet, even voice. With endless patience he had waited until I

had found the courage to ask. For he had accepted that despairing outcry on my part as a question.

(*The Golden Blade*, 1959, pp. 23 and 24)

For the autumn term of 1913 she moved to Berlin University and in Berlin she could hear Rudolf Steiner's lectures on 'The Fifth Gospel'. After the war she was asked to join the staff of the Waldorf School. She left to spend a year at Miss Cross's school at Kings Langley. This was not to be her life task, and on returning to Germany she again sought Rudolf Steiner's advice. He asked her to go back to England – she had never lived there before her time at Kings Langley – and start lecturing on Anthroposophy. The field was vast, she had to find her own way, and she had no connections, no backing, but she was free from personal commitments, as her marriage had previously come to an end, and she had her sisters in London, who had settled there after 1917. Their home became her *pied-à-terre*, and her room in it was not only her home, but a quiet haven for her friends too.

She often felt unequal to her tasks; she was desperately shy, at her best with a few people, and dreaded lecturing. But she devotedly set to, studying constantly, practising exercises she would later explain to us in minutest details, also concentrating on speech exercises; we all later remarked on the special quality of her speaking voice, at which she painstakingly worked, even to her very last lecture given almost a year after her accident in March 1966, on the occasion of Rudolf Steiner's birthday in February 1967.

She was very objective in criticising her own work, discussing it with those she knew really well, explaining where she had failed and defining her new tasks to overcome this failure. This was perhaps the most remarkable lesson of all, done quite coolly and impersonally, in the quiet of her room, or in the home of the many friends with whom she stayed on her lecture tours, which continued steadily for forty years. She travelled extensively, and had regular lectures and groups in London, East Grinstead, Bristol, Malvern, Ardleigh, Stoke, Manchester, Sheffield, the Lake District, Edinburgh and Aberdeen. She gave regular courses for the W.E.A., and during the war enjoyed talking to an East End women's community centre, and found their fresh approach and comments very stimulating,

particularly when she took a group to the National Gallery.

On the one hand there was a life work of ceaseless study and devotion, on the other, a warmth of friendship and love to all those who came to know her. Besides lecturing on basic anthroposophical themes, she was ready to prepare any subject requested of her; but whatever this subject, it always linked up somewhere with her own inmost endeavour, showing us in how many various and wonderful ways the Christ Impulse worked through the ages, and calling upon us to understand how it would work on in the future. Part of the Christmas Foundation Meditation, which she made so intensely her own, is like a shaft of light on her own tasks:

Spirits of Light!
May there be kindled from the East
The flame that is moulded by the West,
Saying:
In Christ Death becomes Life.

She followed this theme through the history of the world, in many movements and individuals. She wrote for example of Mani (in *The Golden Blade*, 1962):

What is it that now draws us so insistently to probe into Mani's heritage, although the sources of information – in spite of all the zeal and endeavour directed to their study and interpretation – are far from adequate? It is the fact that in this heritage we see a fulness of the Christ-impulse, a cosmic breadth and a penetration into the tasks of the future to which our deepest forces directly respond.

Mani's experience of the Christ-Event was direct and independent of tradition, and on his long journeys to distant countries he hoped to bring what he knew to be *fulfilment* to those who still lived in a mystery-knowledge *preparatory* to the coming of the Christ. Yet this was only part of his work. The central feature of his cosmogony was the realisation of the forces of opposition which were admitted by the Divine Powers themselves because – and this is the heart of the secret of Evil – it is the Darkness itself which causes the forces of Light to grow beyond that measure of strength which could be attained without this opposition. And equally it is willed that the cardinal impulses which have to work themselves out in evolution must first appear 'prophetically', as it were and, seemingly, die into the Darkness because their time 'is not yet

come', in order to reappear much later, and thus to unfold and bear fruit. So the seed of Mani's teaching, so intimately united to all that lives in the Gospel of St John and the Pauline epistles, can begin to speak to us today and lead us into the future.

As long ago as 1931 she had already probed into the mystery surrounding Mani, and the Zarathustra stream in Persia:

Just as the spiritual research of Rudolf Steiner enables the West to recognise Persia's part in the preparation of Christ's Coming, so it is likewise the key which Rudolf Steiner has laid in our hands for a new understanding of the Gospels and, more than this, to strengthening, deepening, and heightening our spiritual vision till it reaches Christ Himself. It is this that we must now carry to Persia. This is what she demands of us. She is one of the countenances of the East turned questioningly towards us of the West. But her countenance is more articulate than the others by virtue of her unique past. . . .

What the East demands of the West is: to be helped to spell the Being of Christ throughout the ages and His revelation now. Whether we equip ourselves to fulfil this demand – on this depends the ultimate living peace between East and West.

(*Anthroposophy*, Midsummer 1931, p. 188) The theme is further developed in 'How Russia's past and future join hands' (*Anthroposophy*, Easter 1933).¹ This article interested me immensely when it was published because Marxist explanations of the purely economic bases of history had driven me to study Steiner in sheer despair.

She first quotes Dostoevsky's address at the Pushkin centenary in 1877: 'Yes, the mission of Russia is, undoubtedly, a Pan-European and universal one. To become a true Russian, to become a complete Russian, very possibly only means (*ultimately*, be it understood!) to become a brother of all men – Pan-Man, if you like.' And she continues:

It is none other than this special quality indicated by Dostoevsky's words – tangible and familiar even to those who rely for the knowledge of Russia only on the impressions supplied by her great writers and poets – that is at the root of all that made the peoples of Middle and Western Europe hearken to voices coming from Russia. It provided the bridge of understanding for those to whom

¹ This article as a whole, and others by Violet Plincke, will shortly be republished in an anthology on Russia edited by John Fletcher.

all things Russian in their outer framework and inner structure would otherwise have remained completely alien. But the search and striving for brotherly love . . . rang like a message from a far-off country, familiar to all, and yet – at present – only hovering over the heads of men like a luminous dome, the prophetic teaching of the unity of mankind, of brotherly love fulfilled.

After a powerful description of Russia's history up to Ivan the Terrible, Violet Plincke says:

It seemed as if it had been foreordained that Russia should not take part in the converse of nations when they were taking their first steps on the path to the development of Ego-rooted consciousness. Such a deliberate and forced isolation speaks a strangely clear language if one considers that Russia's day in history is indeed to be saved for the advent of a civilisation not anchored in the unfolding of the individual but rather in the shaping and the working of *new groups* of men, united in common spiritual pursuit and therefore knit together, in active love.

From Peter the Great onwards, there has been an alternation of expansion towards the West, and a contraction of Russia upon itself, coming to a climax in the nineteenth century, when this is expressed in the intellectual life as well:

Ever since the best minds of Russia had awakened to the great problem of their own country's special place within the whole European family, and the Russian nation's character as well as its history began to call for an interpretation, the answers given to these questions oscillated between two opposite poles. One group of men (the Westerners) held that Russia could not do better than recognise her backwardness of civilisation and endeavour to absorb European thought and forms of life as soundly and as wholeheartedly as possible. The other group (Slavophiles) maintained the opposite view, namely, that the life of Russia throughout the course of history gave ample proof of the necessity to consider her path as totally different from the rest of European nations, that the Eastern Church and Byzantine traditions formed the bed in which her waters were to flow. The consequences of these two divergent solutions were like Scylla and Charybdis. . . .

These extreme directions . . . seem to indicate that point which lies between them, but which could not be formulated before Rudolf Steiner's illuminating words concerning the destiny of Russia had been uttered. According to these words, Russia's destiny demanded, indeed most urgently, a breaking through the



Violet Plincke in 1939



Violet Plincke in 1957

traditional forms of life, which afforded wellnigh no scope at all to individual initiative, and a turning towards the West. But Russia was not to take a sudden leap towards Western humanity proper. The true path lying before her was the path that led, first of all, towards the absorption of Middle Europe's greatest gift – consisting in the activity of living, Ego-directed thought – and then only would she be able to continue her path Westwards and contact the will-forces of those who have learned to understand the laws of the material world and to make its wealth of resources serve man.

Rudolf Steiner often pointed, in this connection, to the relation between such thinkers as Hegel and Fichte in Germany and Solovieff in Russia. But what happened in 1917 was a radical turning away from what Solovieff had begun. Writing in 1933, Violet Plincke goes on:

To some, Russia represents the dawn of a new humanity; to some it is the grandest and most interesting of all modern experiments; to some it is a problem which words fail to summarise. To use terms like 'anxiety' or 'apprehension' does not touch the hem of the experience. It is something of an urge that is an inner command to draw away the thick, dark veil hiding from so many the features of Russia's countenance of the future, when she is to become the bearer of a civilisation based on Brotherhood, inspired and moulded by the marriage of the Cosmic Spirit to the Human Soul.

(*Anthroposophy*, Easter 1933, pp. 90ff)

Not only the history of Russia as a whole, but many outstanding individualities of world history, were for her living experience, which she deepened and enriched throughout her life. She sought in each human being the indwelling Christ. For example, in her penetrating study of Rembrandt:

How does Rembrandt read destiny? By tracing the facets of suffering which, like a divine hammer, come to shape the human being. . . . Rembrandt is the first and bravest among the painters of modern times who created out of the ripe knowledge of *sanctification* of pain. When Rembrandt's contemporary Pascal – unknown to him – jotted down abruptly: 'It seems to me that Jesus Christ does not allow us to touch anything else but His wounds after His Resurrection. *Noli me tangere*. Only with this suffering must we seek to unite ourselves' – then something was pronounced that forms one of the key-notes of Rembrandt's work. This too

explains the fact why in his pictures, drawings and etchings which represents scenes from the New Testament, the Gospel of St Luke predominates over the other Gospels.

(*Anthroposophy*, Midsummer 1929, p. 253.)

Physical suffering came to Violet Plincke again, after many years of exceptional vigour, from the time of her accident in March 1966 until her death in a London hospital on 7th January 1968. Although she received much friendship and loving care during this time, it was profoundly irksome to her not to be able to continue her active work. But she always knew that something is to be made from every kind of suffering. This translation of a sonnet by Michaelangelo (LIX), which she gave me at a particularly poignant moment in my own life, seems to illuminate for me the efforts and achievements of her destiny:

It is with fire that blacksmiths iron subdue
Unto fair form the image of their thought,
Nor without fire hath any artist wrought
Gold to its utmost purity of hue.

Nay, nor the unmatched phoenix lives anew
Unless she burns: if then I am distraught
By fire, I may to better life be brought
Like those whom death restores nor years undo.

The fire whereof I speak, is my great cheer;
Such power it hath to renovate and raise
Me who was almost numbered with the dead;
And since by nature fire doth find its sphere
Soaring aloft, and I am all ablaze,
Heavenward with it my flight must needs be sped.

WHAT IS 'LIVING WATER'?¹

THEODOR SCHWENK

THOSE who keep up with developments in any phase of today's water problem constantly come across references to 'living water' and 'dead water'. For some, these are perfectly familiar terms and concepts which they use every day in their professional practice. Others reject them on the ground that since water possesses none of the characteristics of living organisms it cannot be spoken of as either live or dead.

A big-city dweller who goes into mountain country and drinks from a ceaselessly bubbling spring in some mountain meadow knows at first hand what living water is. Just because he comes from a big city he can really distinguish between 'dead' and 'living' water. He knows, of course, that city water has to meet strict sanitary standards. But he has had personal experience of the vast difference between that water and what he drinks from mountain springs. And though what comes out of city faucets can be counted on not to contain coliform bacteria or other toxic organisms and is sure to be free of nitrates and phosphates, can these criteria suffice when it comes to characterising what he knows at first hand as living water?

In dealing with modern water problems, the inevitable question arises of how to describe and verbalise the concept of living and dead water . . . despite immediate experience and the familiarity of those terms.

We will try to work out such a concept in the following pages.

Let us begin by recalling some unspoiled brook that we may have seen making its way through dark forest depths, now burbling over pebbly stretches, now pent up in quiet pools. It sparkles in the changing play of light that breaks through the screen of foliage above; it leaps ahead in rippling wavelets, alternating between soft murmuring and silvery tinkling. It takes a meandering course among the trees, twisting this way

¹ Digest of a lecture given at Herrischried, West Germany, on 3rd September 1967, for friends and supporters of the Institut für Strömungswissenschaften. Translated by Marjorie Spock.

and that as though to make its lively game last longer. Surely this water cannot be called anything but living!

If we pick up a stone along the bank, its wet under-side and the hole it came out of will be found all a-wriggle with tiny living creatures. Should water that contains such life be designated 'living'? We certainly do not want the water that comes out of our faucets full of it, even though its presence is considered by science to be one of the best indicators of a water's excellence, and scientific classifications are actually based on the presence or absence of that life.

Nevertheless, none of it is welcome in our drinking water, whether it comes out of faucets or from mountain springs. The concept 'living water' must be built on some other sort of criteria.

What is it that attracts us so powerfully to living water? Do we perhaps feel that water flowing out of faucets in dark city flats is dead and almost unreal because of imponderable elements in the environment? Whereas water that constantly pours out of a spring in the middle of a flower-filled mountain meadow, sparkling in the pure, cold air and in light reflected from shimmering snow-peaks round about, perfectly satisfies our concept of what living water is.

Our age feels the need to form concepts of even the most livingly experienced realities. And so too in the case of living water, which we want to 'grasp' in the double sense both of understanding what it is and how to have it and hold on to it.

But if we take this 'grasping' literally and try to take hold of water, it slips through our hands and flows away unless we put it in some sort of container. If the container is solid we can 'catch' water in it; then it quiets down immediately. But this means that it is already well on the way to being dead, to losing the quality that originally made it living water. And the concepts we form of it suffer the same fate: the moment one tries to catch the real nature of water in a hard and fast definition, the reality of it is no longer there. To be adequate, concepts of water must retain something of water's liveliness and movement, of the way it lends itself to constant change. They must be capable of metamorphosis, shaped in harmony with and able to express water's functions.

If we ask again at this point, 'What, specifically, is living

water?' we see that another question has to be answered first – namely, 'What is life?'

Life manifests itself in quite specific, tangible attributes in every living creature: in growth, reproduction, metamorphosis (i.e. changes of form that take place in organisms); in metabolic functions, which include the digesting of food and excreting of wastes; in the regulation of chemical, warmth and other processes; in tides of burgeoning and fading that rise and fall in definite time-patterns, always subject to life's characteristic rhythms.

Are these attributes of life to be found in water? Does water grow? Can it reproduce? We certainly know water to be the very prototype of everything formless and fluidic; how, then, could it possibly be said to undergo metamorphosis, to change its form, as living organisms do? Is it subject to digestive and excretory processes? Does it possess definite organs that perform typical organic functions? Can it adapt itself to fixed determining factors? Does water evolve into an organism and then die? Are autonomous rhythms, like say, the heart-beat of an animal, to be found in water?

The answer to all these questions is of course obvious: water possesses none of these characteristics of living organisms. Whatever it turns out to be, we feel sure that it must rank lower than a living creature.

But if that is so, must our search for an adequate definition of living water not end up in a blind alley?

It would seem so. Yet what of the experience of people who work professionally with water and daily apply the concept 'dead' and 'living' water in their practice? Perhaps we had better wait to draw conclusions until we have looked at the problem from another side.

Everyone knows that water has a close affinity with all forms of life. So we may ask what the connection is – whether manifestations of life can occur in the absence of water. Is growth possible without it? Propagation? Metamorphosis? Are digestion and excretion conceivable where water is lacking? Is it not essential to conversion processes and organic functions? It is not the great mediator and regulator of chemical, warmth and other processes, both in living organisms and outside them? Can a living organism even come into being without water's

help? And, in the last analysis, could rhythm exist in organisms if there were no fluids?

Here again, to put the question is to find that the answer is self-evident: none of the above life-characteristics would be present without water. Life depends on water for its very life!

Again we are confronted by a riddle:

Water does not manifest a single life-characteristic,
Yet where water is lacking, there can be no life.
All the factors noted depend upon water.

At this point the ground beneath our feet begins to seem somewhat less than solid, as can often happen with true riddles. But isn't it perfectly natural to feel at sea when pursuing the theme of water? Perhaps this state of affairs may even prove an asset and set us on the right course for our further enquiry.

Why, then, does water, which has no life-characteristics of its own, form the very basis of life in all life's various manifestations?

Because water embraces everything, is in and all through everything; because it rises above the distinctions between plants and animals and human beings; because it is a universal element shared by all; itself undetermined, yet determining; because, like the primal mother it is, it supplies the stuff of life to everything living.

And what makes water capable of all these feats?

Because it renounces any form of its own, it becomes the creative matrix for form in everything else.

Renouncing any life of its own, it becomes the primal substance of all life.

Renouncing material fixity, it becomes the implementer of material change.

Renouncing any rhythm of its own, it becomes the progenitor of rhythm elsewhere.

Is it any wonder, then, that in all highly developed cultures water has always been held sacred as the magically transforming substance, as the very 'water of life'?

* * *

Now that we have considered the plant, animal and human kingdoms as specimens of living organisms, let us try to come a

step closer to the answer to our question by bringing that all-inclusive living being, the earth organism, into the picture as the living whole it is.

There exist comprehensive discussions of the earth as a living entity in which it is shown that such a concept is no mere theory, but a reality quite susceptible of human experience. These studies range from works by the great astronomer Kepler to contemporary presentations by Wachsmuth, W. Cloos and others.

Contemplating this vast living organism, earth, one's attention is drawn again and again to the layer-structure of its great enveloping mantles and to the rhythms that play in and through them. A glance at the surface configuration of the earth reminds us, for example, that 70 per cent of it is water-covered. This watery surface, in its immense extension, provides a plane of contact with the atmosphere. Here an exchange sets in between the elements of air and water that moves in both directions, up and down. Thus water is absorbed into the atmosphere, where it works as the great regulator in matters of climate and in meteorological processes and their rhythms. Meteorologists, whose daily observation of the weather and its changes has led to the development of a special sense, shared by all outdoorsmen, for what goes on in the atmosphere, often find that they have to speak of processes there as of something living. A. Schmaus, for example, talks of 'biological concepts in meteorology', of an 'orchestral score' of atmospheric happenings, with 'entrances' in the time-pattern of the year's unrolling seasons. P. Raethjen says in his treatise on the dynamics of cyclones that 'the atmosphere behaves like a living creature', and elsewhere in the same work, '... For one thing, cyclones have a metabolic process without which they could not exist: they constantly draw new masses of air into their vortices and excrete other masses in their outward-spirallings. Then too, ... they have a typical life history, with characteristic beginning, developing and ageing phases. They reproduce themselves, not in a wave-like spreading out in space, but like a living creature, in the sense that a young "frontal cyclone" is born out of the womb of an adult "central cyclone" ...' We know that cyclones (low-pressure areas) have to do with water. A 'low' and rain belong in the same concept.

Thus the life of the earth organism as a whole is just as closely bound up with water as the life of any of the creatures on it. Rhythmic processes are present in the cosmos which play into the various atmospheric strata, giving rise to the rhythms found wherever water is. Rudolf Steiner, Wachsmuth, Marti, Adams, Poppelbaum, L. Kolisko and others have acquainted us with these 'formative forces' raying in from the cosmos; they have taught us to distinguish between them and to recognise how they build and shape all earth's living organisms.

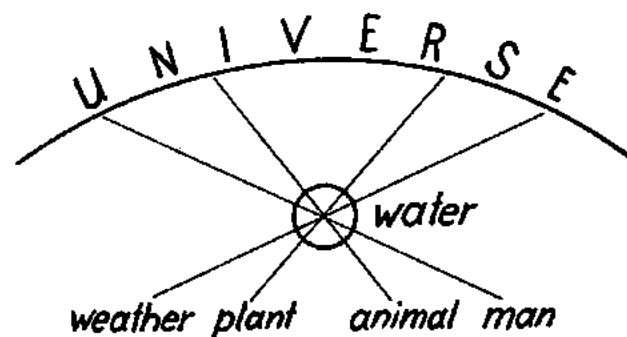
Everything in nature forms one indivisible fabric woven of living interchange. An all-encompassing world of life comes into being from the inter-play of cosmic peripheral forces, meteorological forces, forces of the elements, the earth, and all its living organisms.

A great deal of evidence has already been uncovered showing that the earth, and the various forms of life present on it, function in harmonious accord with universal processes, and every year more such evidence turns up. Almost every rhythm, from moon rhythms reflected in the hydrosphere and planetary rhythms known to meteorology right down to the numberless physiological rhythms found in every kind of living organism, is based on water's mediation. For example, woodcutters in the forests of Brazil still set the price of the wood they fell by the date of its cutting, i.e. by the moon phase, because its water content (and thus its keeping quality) depends on these cosmic influences. The patterns of movement which planets weave in universal space are also reflected in the structure of the various plant families; thus, for example, the Venus pattern appears in the regular pentagram common to all rose-plants. If it were not for the mediating role water plays, these formative forces could not work through into terrestrial manifestation. In the tides, the seas are caught up in the swing of cosmic rhythms which they then hand on to the earth and its creatures. All movement in water is affected by cosmic formative forces and serves the function of transmitting them.¹

Water thus occupies a median position between earth and universe, and is the port of entry through which cosmic-peripheral forces pass into the earth realm.

¹ Cf. the author's 'Grundlagen der Potenzforschung', 'Bewegungsformen des Wassers', and 'Sensitive Chaos'.

May we not call water 'nature's central organ', its 'heart', the pulsing, oscillating drop which lets the whole cosmos pass through it? Its functions make it indeed the primal organ; it transmits cosmic forces and activities into earth just as the heart mediates between processes of the upper and lower parts of the organism and – functionally speaking – embraces all the other organs.



Water does not grow because it is itself growth, growth-as-function, growth uncommitted to any particular growth-pattern. It is not subject to metamorphosis because it is itself the universal element of change that runs through every possible form without becoming fixed in any. While not itself subject to regulation, it serves as nature's regulator in numberless instances. Though it possesses no organs of its own, it is itself the primal organ jointly shared by everything that lives – an organ that remains at the functional level rather than presses on to the physical-organic stage. None of life's attributes come to outward expression in water, but they are all functionally present in it in the form of possibility, capacity, action.

What wisdom we find built into man and nature! – like the wisdom that controls warmth in the bloodstream and keeps the normal level at precisely 98.6°. Even a slight deviation from that temperature spells illness. How wisely it is arranged that water has the least specific warmth at exactly 98.6°, and therefore absorbs warmth most rapidly at that temperature!

But water possesses many qualities beyond those singled out above for mention, and these enable it to be the matrix of all living things. What a composition of wisdom every living

organism is, each single facet of it revealing new marvels! And water is wisdom's very element, the focus in which wisdom is concentrated and out of which its activity flows into every least and greatest living thing. Indeed, it is because life is wisdom and water wisdom's element that there can be such a thing as the water of life!

* * *

Now that we have come to know water as the functional compendium of all outer forms of life, let us look from this new angle to some of the life-attributes discussed above.

Take nutrition, for example. Not only is the movement of foodstuffs through the organism unthinkable without the help of water: over 99 per cent of all chemical and other change depends on water. Drinking-water of a quality that meets health requirements holds the balance between alkalinity and acidity.

Water of course occurs in greater volume in the ocean than anywhere else in nature. The composition of sea water is almost identical with that of blood, the only difference being that sea water contains magnesium where human blood contains iron – a fact that must be looked at in relation to the needs of air-breathing organisms.

What can be observed as the growth-process in trees, for example, is present in water as *pure function*. Moving water consists of layers which continually flow past one another at varying speeds. We find the same thing happening in the tree's cambium layer, where growth takes place. There too, newly formed cells slip past the old ones in an outward flow that widens the cambium ring without splitting it.

The vortex is the functional pattern of all the metamorphoses and shapings found in water. When layers flowing at different speeds pass one another, a process of deflection and rolling-up takes place, and this leads to the formation of a vortex. We find the same thing going on wherever growth-speeds vary in an organism. An example is the way a stem or leaf bends and starts to roll up when one side grows faster than the layer next it.

Organs are also built on the model of the vortex-forming process, as may be noted in the way they always create a boundary between an inner and an outer space.

Reproduction, in the sense of repetition, is everywhere to be found in water, again of course at the functional level. Trains of vortices are an example. Here we see a process similar to the spawning of daughter-cyclones in a water-saturated atmosphere described by P. Raethjen.

In the case of rhythm, water must be called its very element. The word 'rhythm' is derived from the Greek verb 'to flow'. And water does indeed flow rhythmically. This can be seen in the rhythmic pattern of waves and meandering water-courses, just as it can be heard in the audible rhythms of brooks and oceans. Numerical relationships found in physiological rhythms appear again in phenomena of air and water. Sound, for example, travels four times as fast through sea water as it does through air. This same proportion is found again in the rhythmic processes of man's fluid and airy organisms in the 4:1 pulse-*v.*-breathing rate.

Such facts make it evident how profoundly related water is to all life-functions, and most especially to those in the human organism.

Many of water's qualities also show a distinct relationship to soul and spiritual attributes in man. Not only does water serve the cause of bodily life, but that of the inner man as well in that, for example, the brain floats in water and is thus relieved of the pull of gravity. Physiologically speaking, it is this that makes thinking possible.

Certain descriptions of water can equally well be applied to soul capacities; we speak of the power of both to cleanse, to purify, to heal, and both water and the soul are referred to as 'in balance', 'clear', 'reflective', 'refreshing'. And just as healthy souls refrain from going to extremes, so water holds a balance between extremes of heavy and light with its buoyancy; between alkaline and acid; between warmth and cold; and – with its rainbow colours – between light and dark. And because it is so balanced an element it has the capacity to regulate, to heal, to create a mobile, living equilibrium. But when water comes into a resting state of balance, it stagnates, loses its 'life', is as though paralysed.

Since water is universal and a stranger to one-sidedness, it is the means whereby the full range of life is made possible. Hence it is truly the 'water of life'. The concept water might best be

expressed as 'universality through renunciation', 'wisdom's element.' Because of the wisdom that makes it what it is, it is fitted to be the carrier of cosmic forces.

What, then, is living water?

It is water containing the cosmic elements that radiate life into the earth sphere, but that also has an inherent relationship to man as body, soul and spirit.

Today this may sound like anthropomorphism. But there is a practical aspect to the statement. As we contemplate the civilisation of our time we can be aware of its water problems, but also of the direction we must take to solve them. If water is deprived of its universal nature by becoming tainted with substances like salts and detergents, it cannot maintain its universal function and continue to be the transmitter of nature's living wisdom. Wholesome water is water that maintains itself in active balance. But how far the sewage-laden rivers of today are from such a definition! They can no longer be recipients of cosmic forces. In many cases, indeed, the opposite is true: they can only be called chemical infernos, veritable hells.

If we are to solve the water problems facing us today – and this includes such technical measures as must be taken – there is no other path open to us than to rediscover water's cosmic aspect. And this calls for nothing less than a new sense for what life is. From now on, everything depends on our developing what one professional in the field of water sanitation recently described as 'water consciousness'. But that will have to mean recognising that water is the carrier of cosmic energies, and understanding how it can be rehabilitated to become once again their carrier.

Does this provide us with a concept of what living water is? We have come to know it as the bearer of wisdom, as the instrument of cosmic forces and orderings – in short, of life. We have found it to be living nature's primary organ, through which everything alive must pass.

While the work of our Institute takes its motivation from the restorative impulse vital to the solution of the time's great problems, it seeks that solution through a grasp of the true nature of water; seeks it, one might say, in a supersensible water-consciousness intent on taking the spirit of nature into account as the guide of its science and technology.

MAN, THE CREATION OF COSMIC POWERS

ITA WEGMAN

IT is impossible to understand man, so long as he is regarded as belonging only to the earth. For his evolution, his preservation and his life extra-terrestrial powers work together; in alliance with the forces of the earth, they have created man in the form in which he presents himself, in the perfection of his shape, in the manifold expressions of his life, and in all the complexity of his active soul and spirit.

Only when these cosmic relationships are regarded as comprehensively as possible, without attempting to limit one's vision to man as a creature of the earth, can much in man that would otherwise appear a riddle be understood and explained. If we go back to the old wisdom of the Mysteries, we find there too that man was not regarded as a single isolated being, but in connection with the cosmos, and according to the character of each of the Mysteries the relationships to the sun, to the moon, or to the other planets, were particularly emphasised.

But it was only after the event of Golgotha had come about, the Mystery of the descent of the Christ upon earth, the incarnation of the highest Sun-God in man, only after the manifestation of how the entire cosmos could be united with earthly man, so that what the clairvoyant consciousness had earlier beheld as connection between universe and earth had now become fact – only then were the portals opened for an understanding of man in his entirety.

If, however, the evolution of humanity took at first a course in which no such comprehension of the entirety of the human being was immediately apparent, this was because men had lost the capacities for the achievement of such knowledge, and had to acquire them afresh. Thus it came about that humanity to begin with forgot its connection with the extra-terrestrial, regarded itself as isolated upon the earth, and sought to explain everything only through earthly knowledge.

The other kind of knowledge, knowledge of cosmic events in connection with man, knowledge of spiritual realities, continued

indeed to exist, but had no access to humanity in general and was cultivated as a treasured wisdom by particular groups. It was, however, more and more completely forgotten and was no longer understood, or wrongly interpreted, because no human beings were prepared for spiritual conceptions any longer. Yet individuals appeared again and again, who were able from their own being to carry such knowledge further and to let it flow into the development of civilisation in a way that was in accordance with their time. Thus a new, quickening stream of spiritual knowledge could be given as anthroposophical wisdom through Rudolf Steiner to those human beings of the present time who still longed to find spiritual understanding, and who were not satisfied by a spiritually empty conception of man and of the world. Through this wisdom man can be contemplated in his relationship to the universe.

As has been said, the course of man's evolution was such that gradually he could understand the surrounding world in a physical way. He could grasp of the human being only what it has become through the earth. It is through the earth that man has become a physical being with definite outlines. No connection was to be found any longer between what modern science teaches about the universe and man himself. And so he turns away from the riddles present within him: for example, whence comes the impulse to raise his body upright and walk, whence comes speech? He refuses to occupy himself any more with all this, and falls into materialism.

But spiritual science teaches us that man has besides his physical organism a being of soul and spirit with which he is connected to the entire universe; through this it can be described how man descends from the starry world into physical existence, how soul and spirit work in his physical body, how the powers of sun and moon, of planets and fixed stars, behind which soul and spirit are also at work, influence the life of the human soul and spirit, share in the forming of his organs, and have their effect on the processes within him.

If we have to do with what has firm outlines in man, organs or organic systems with a definite shape, then earthly forces have had their effect in man, and we have before us what we call the physical body. But in the physical body not everything has definite outlines; what is fluid in it is still mobile, engaged in

circulation. And in this moving fluid-stream extra-terrestrial powers are already at work. These are forces which originate in that extra-terrestrial realm which reaches from the earth to the stars, which is called the ethereal world; these forces permeate all that is flowing, all that has not yet become solid and hardened. They bring this into circulation, and carry the tendencies towards formation and growth, in opposition to the forces of gravity. The physical body of man is filled and permeated by these formative, growing forces, working like a great plastic artist. Here the supersensible in man begins to make itself manifest; everywhere, where the movement of fluids in the human organism is present, man is raised out of the earthly forces, and the first supersensible member of man's being, the ethereal or life-body, commences its work.

The airy element too has a share in the human organism. The air which surrounds our earth is permeated everywhere by formative forces. We breathe in these formative forces with the air, and during the embryonic period these are most active in the formation of the inner organs of the developing human being; they are mediated by the maternal organism and the embryonic sheaths. These formative forces have their origin in the starry world; they are 'astral'. The regularity of the universe can be at work, when they are taken into the organism with the air. They come from the regions where the harmonies of the spheres are experienced; their regularities are of a musical kind. Forms arise from definite proportions and numerical relationships, so that the formative forces in man can be regarded as a fabric of musical tones, expressed in the development of forms. What happens in this way can be pictured through comparison with the experiment in which 'Chladni's figures' are shown. Through the sound produced in a metal plate by means of a violin bow forms appear in the sand that is strewn upon the plate, varying according to the quality and intensity of the sound. The formative forces which shape the organs – in which sound and also light in their supersensible reality are at work – represent a qualitative magnitude not to be found in space; they are supersensible, and make up the astral or sentient body in man.

After the embryonic period, when the organs have received their forms through the formative forces which come from the

universe, these forces are gradually liberated in man's inner being, and support the forces of growth, revealing themselves externally for example in the development of speech, and becoming the foundation for the life of the soul. This external manifestation becomes most evident at puberty. Thus one speaks at this time of the birth of the astral body in man's airy nature, the birth of a second supersensible human being.

The spiritual in man is experienced in warmth. It is this which forms the kernel of man for eternity, giving him again and again the impulse to descend on the earth from the life between death and new birth.

This is the force of the ego, originating in the Sun-sphere, and giving man his individual character both in form and in the expression of his soul and spirit. Warmth is the element in which this force of the ego can be effective in the human organism. Before birth the forces of the ego of man share in the shaping of the embryo. In early childhood they are revealed in learning to stand upright and walk, and in overcoming those forces of inheritance in the physical body to which the child is attached up to its seventh year. They are also at work in the development of the soul of a child, preparing him to be active as a mature being in the external world. But only with the twenty-first year is the spiritual, which works in the forces of the ego, free for its own activity and development, and man is mature for the formation of his own judgments.

Thus we distinguish in the human being an organism with definite outlines, the physical body, bearing in it the forces of the earth; a fluid organism in which the forces of the ethereal body are at work; an airy organism, which bears the forces of the astral body, and a warmth-organism, in which the forces of the ego are effective.

Besides the forces of the planets and the stars we have thus the four elements, earth, water, air and fire, which belong to the environment of the earth, and are active in man as the basis for the activity and development of the higher members of his being. Through these four elements again there arises a differentiation of the inner organs into four organic systems, the systems of the lungs, the liver, the kidneys, and of the heart and blood circulation; with these, the supersensible members of man's being have their special relationships, and a focus for their

work. These are the organic systems through which the interior of the human organism is related to the external world.

The lungs we have to bring into connection with the earth element, because they are directly influenced by the forces which shape the earth, and completely open to the effects of meteorological conditions in the earthly environment. This connection can best be understood when one realises the dependence of sick lungs upon the composition of the earth; how where silicic acid in the form of granite is to be found in the earth certain diseases of the lungs can be cured more easily, or how in such districts these diseases are less frequent.

The liver, on the other hand, is related to the fluid element. It receives the substances of the external world as nourishment for the organism, after they have been brought into the fluid condition. Here the ethereal body is strongly at work; it begins to transform those forces in food substances which are foreign to the organism so that the first stage of the assimilation of the external world into the inner world of man can be accomplished.

Diseases of the liver often arise through the absorption of substances and fluids foreign to the body which cannot be assimilated; or through components of drinking water which can prove harmful over a long period. On the other hand the treatments of liver disease by drinking the water from natural healing sources depend upon the experience of older times, when therapy was still guided by knowledge of this kind.

The kidney system, including the nervous system belonging to it, is related to the airy element. Here the astral body has a focus for its work. It carries further the activity of assimilation begun by the liver, leading over, with the help of astral forces, what is fluid into a gaseous condition, embodying into the organism what does not have to be excreted, either as carbonic acid through the out-breathed air, or as products of excretion through the kidneys. The bladder too belongs in its activity to the airy organism, and therefore to the astral body, because it draws, in a sense like a vacuum, the fluid to be excreted by the kidneys, and carries it outwards. This process can be regarded as a kind of breathing, in which through the activity of the astral body, as in a rarefied air, the fluidity present in the environment is drawn in and then appropriately excreted.

Irregular emptying of the bladder, irregularities in the mode

of life which have the effect of bringing into disorder the rhythm ruling in the interior of the organism, which is connected with the astral body, and disturbances which take place in the astral body, can thus lead also to irregularities and disturbances in the excretion of urine and the breathing.

In man, the system of heart and blood is connected with the element of warmth. In this system there stream together all that forms warmth in man, whether from the metabolism and the activity of movement, or from the feeling of devotion, joy and enthusiasm stirred by the surrounding world. It is the forces of the ego, which can manifest themselves in the heart and the blood and which live in the element of warmth. And we become conscious of these forces of the ego when the inner warmth that lives in enthusiasm takes hold of us; then we live in the spiritual, in the fulness of humanity. We experience the heart as the centre of this process, experience it in us as powerful, rhythmic life, raising us above all that is merely instinctive, connecting us with all that is noblest. If the heart is diseased, we will have accordingly to observe how the formation of warmth is proceeding in the organism, and whether the human being concerned performs sufficient active movement, and is involved with his whole being in this activity. If this is not the case, or if a man is obliged to perform more passive movements, then through a lack of the formation of individual warmth disturbances can arise in the heart.

But not only our present cosmos, with its stars and planets, and the earth and its environment, has its effects in man, but the whole evolution of this universe together with our earth, the evolution of the macrocosm, is to be found again in man, the microcosm. Just as the Saturn, Sun and Moon evolutions of the earth can be described, on which man passed through various conditions of existence, we have still today in the human organism echoes of these earlier conditions.

If we take for example the warmth-organism in man, it is important to know that the workings of Saturn are present in it. If these manifest themselves particularly in earthly man, if they are not sufficiently harmonised by other cosmic influences, disturbances in the warmth organism arise, which are expressed in phenomena of warmth exceeding the normal, in conditions of fever.

This working of Saturn, which implanted warmth into man during the Old Saturn evolution of the earth, is localised principally in the head; we must picture man's head as surrounded by a mantle of Saturnian warmth. Here the spiritual in man is at work. In fever we have really a repetition in man of the Old Saturn-evolution of the earth, where the spiritual in man revealed itself only in a warmth-organism.

The measurement of human temperature is thus an orientation about a *Quality*¹ and its *Quantity*, which have to be brought into *Relation* to the intensity of the working of Saturn. We have to measure according to qualities, not only according to visible amounts, we have to consider the quantities of the particular qualities, and relate these with one another.

But there was not only a Saturn evolution of the earth; it was followed by a Sun evolution. And as the measurement of warmth leads back to Old Saturn, the number of the pulse-beat is to be connected with the Old Sun evolution of the earth.

A Sun-like cosmic rhythm is at work in the human pulse-beat, that is, in the movement of the blood, which is again connected with the breathing. Cosmic rhythm, taking place in *Time*, where number is revealed in time, in which events follow one another in sequence, remains in the rhythmic system of man as effect of the Old Sun; what then from the temporal process is formed in *Space*, is connected with the formation of our heart from the blood. As the sun in our cosmic system represents its centre and its harmony, we find in man in the heart, the centre of the organism, the same activities, through which a harmonisation of all other forces is brought about.

If we go further we find that the forces of the Moon are connected with the form of man. Through these forces substances are embodied into the human form, by overcoming in the appropriate way the particular weight that belongs to physical substances. If this does not happen, then the human form is not maintained in a healthy way by the substances absorbed as nourishment; they remain in earthly gravity and keep their own weight. The consequence of a failure to overcome the forces of earthly gravity through the formative forces of the Moon is the development of diseases connected with the deposit of substances which have retained their earthly weight.

¹ Here Dr Wegman begins to introduce the Aristotelian Categories.

Suffering is thus connected with earthly weight. And *Action*, the action of the divine beings, who are at work in the formative forces of the Moon, overcomes earthly weight. Thus in the metabolic system forces of the Moon and Earth are at work, and the forces of the Moon must overcome the earthly forces, in order to preserve the human form. *Action* has to take away *Suffering*.

Thus only what has definite outlines in the human being can be simply regarded from the point of view of measure, number and weight. If one wishes to approach the whole human being, in whom there interpenetrate, permeating the solid organism, the organisms of the fluid, airy and fiery elements, and if one seeks here the revelation of the human soul and spirit – then the concepts of measure, number and weight are insufficient, and we have to add the Aristotelian Categories which are basically an extension of these concepts, and which can help us to grasp the whole of man in his relationship to the universe.

Rudolf Steiner said that the Aristotelian Categories were a cosmic writing; with them the mysteries of the universe are to be read in the macrocosm and in the microcosm, if one learns to use them. That they are once more comprehensible for us we owe to Anthroposophy.

THOUGHTS ON HEART TRANSPLANTS

B. C. J. LIEVEGOED

MANY are the questions that are asked about heart transplant operations. How can we understand the possibility of these operations? What does it mean for the receiver, to live with the heart of someone who has died? This article attempts only some steps in the direction of answers to such questions.

Several organs are now regularly transplanted. Blood, which is a flowing organ, is constantly transfused, often saving lives. But much has still to be learned about the methods of transplanting organs. Public interest has been aroused to an extent comparable to that shown at the beginning of space travel. (Today it seems to worry no-one that hundreds of satellites are orbiting the earth.)

In various lectures to doctors, for example that held in London on August 24th 1924, Dr Rudolf Steiner gave the following indications. If a doctor gives a patient a medicament taken from the mineral kingdom – appropriately prepared, so that it is therapeutically effective – this really works upon the 'I' of the patient. The healing influence of quartz, for instance, or some metal, comes about through the patient's spiritual ego. A medicament taken from the plant kingdom works through the astral body of the patient; a medicament originating from an animal source works directly on the ethereal body; while human substances, directly given from one human being to another, work only upon the physical body.

'What may be taken directly from one human being and injected into another has significance only for the human physical organisation. There is only a physical effect to be considered, when something taken from one human being is injected into another. That is very interesting. If blood for example is brought from one human being to another it is only necessary to reckon with the physical effect which blood can have upon the organism.'

There can be no objection to human skin grafts as such, as far as the effect on the receiving patient is concerned. Transfusion and transplantation are simply the manipulation of

physical substitutes. Whether through these a real healing process is being achieved is quite a different problem; for healing is a comprehensive process, involving the ego, and the astral, ethereal and physical bodies together.

When a human life comes to a standstill, this is expressed in the standstill of the life processes. This standstill can only be overcome through an encounter with something which is substantially new, in company with which a new development can follow. This encounter can be with a person, a book, or a medicament taken from one of the kingdoms of nature. The first step after the new encounter is a coming to terms with it; there follows the incorporation of it, so that it is merged with one's own organisation. Only then has the patient changed, and can begin to heal himself, out of the new constellation.

It is the task of the doctor to bring about *the right encounter*. But what happens when the patient has to meet a transplanted organ? When an organ (for example the kidney or heart) is transplanted, the donor is either clinically dead or the organ is in fact no longer permeated by his life-processes. With a heart transplant the former is always the case. What is meant by 'clinically dead'? To understand this fully, we have to look at the life-giving forces of the ethereal body, working in a hierarchy of organic systems; the form-giving power of the individual albumen molecule, the totality of each cell, of each organ, and of the system of organs in the entire human form.

Each higher connection permeates the lower one, and gives it its higher purpose; the cell serves the organ, the organ serves the whole body. In the process of dying the higher principles withdraw first from the lower ones. When a person is 'clinically dead' his whole ethereal body withdraws, and he experiences it as the panorama of his past life. Only then do the formative forces of the organs loosen their functions. Before this process has set in earnest, and the organ has become useless, remaining only an accumulation of slowly dying cells, it must become attached to another ethereal unity – in this case, have been transplanted. The time this takes varies from organ to organ. Rudolf Steiner gave the advice that preparations taken from animal nervous systems, having been potentised, should not be injected into human body longer than

twenty minutes after the animal was killed. Since this is an effect of animal substance on the human organism, it concerns the ethereal body. Nowadays the time can be extended into hours by a variety of artificial means (cooling, radiation, etc.).

When a new organ has been attached to the blood and lymph-stream of the receiving person, his own ethereal body seeks to permeate this organ with its own formative forces, to incorporate it in the whole organism. It is then confronted with the foreign structure of the donor's organ-forming ethereal forces, in cells and albumen as well. What the doctors in charge of an operation try to avoid happens at this point; that the organ is destroyed in the process of being adopted by the new organism. With a blood transfusion this does not matter as the donated blood has only to be used for a short time, giving the recipient's blood a physical opportunity to resume its function. With an organ, its function cannot be interrupted, even for a minute.

The precautions that have to be taken to avoid this 'making into one's own' of the organ (quite apart from other problems) present the following sheer technical difficulties. These precautions are:

(1) The administration of strong poisons which paralyse the general resistance (azathiopurine, actinomycine-C and corticosteroids). It is understandable that in this way the ethereal body is shattered to such an extent that resistance to infection becomes impossible too, and that the balancing of the doses becomes a continual manoeuvre between life and death.

(2) The endeavour to use specific methods. Methods are sought to isolate from the blood the lymphocytes alone, which are the 'soldiers' of the ethereal body. Experiments are made with anti-lymphocyte serum, and with radiation of the blood outside the body while it is run through a machine.

In practice one juggles with one method after another, increasing this and decreasing that. The organ must not be 'rebuilt' and the patient has to stay, if possible, alive.

Let us review what is happening. A great many people, supported by half a factory full of machines representing a large investment of capital, are occupied in keeping one person alive for a little longer with a substitute organ. In the same world

tens of thousands of people die daily, who would recover, given only a small amount of help. With whom should we have more compassion – with the patient lying uncared for on a mat in his hut, or the man with a transplanted heart, lying in his sterile ward, like the extension of a chemical factory?

With all these thoughts we have not come any nearer to an understanding of the riddle of the human heart, not even of the physical heart. This physical heart organ does not yet exist when in an early form of the human embryo the circulation of the blood begins, first hesitantly, but with a definite rhythmical pulse. Later a loop in the shape of an S is formed in the course of the blood, in which the dammed-up pulsing becomes clearly visible and where, from the flowing, in the soft substance of the embryo, the heart is formed. As in a river sandbanks are formed which change with the water's flow so the heart is an 'active sandbank' within the flowing bloodstream; it is forever changing its physical form until death, adjusting itself to the demands which are put upon the blood circulation.

After the fortieth year, man's tissues slowly begin to get less plastic. The lens of the eye is then helped by reading glasses. The hardened lung tissue causes us to get out of breath when we have suddenly to run fast. The heart also becomes less plastic, and adapts itself with more difficulty. We have to slow down a bit. In other words, we have to adapt our life to our heart.

This is the adaptation of the physical heart to human movement. But human movement is really a very personal thing. One man moves cautiously, another impulsively. Right down to our physical heart, we express our individual ego. And thus no two similar hearts exist in the world, and even one man's heart is not the same at different stages of his life. My heart has as physical organ my own 'way of life' imprinted on it, in both senses of this phrase.

Still more difficult is the approach to an understanding of the ethereal heart. Within the ethereal body as a whole, the heart is a centre from which pulsating streams proceed upwards and downwards. Our ethereal body is a time-body, a form in time. The simplest form in time is a clockwork system, a happening exactly repeated. On a higher level stands *rhythm*,

which repeats itself, but is variable in duration and intensity, growing stronger and weaker etc. Wherever rhythm works upon matter there is the creation of form. All our organs, not only the heart, are born out of rhythm; rhythm created their forms. All rhythms within our ethereal body are individual variations upon the mighty cosmic rhythms. The central rhythm of the cosmic ethereal sun is the inhalation and exhalation of the sun-ether, the cosmic heartbeat which is experienced on earth as the rhythm of the year.

In this sphere of the cosmic ethereal sun man is living between death and a new birth. In the lectures which Rudolf Steiner held in November 1923, on the occasion of the founding of the Anthroposophical Society in Holland,¹ he speaks on this subject. When man goes through the gate of death, he sheds during his passage through the Moon, Mercury, and Venus spheres everything that still binds him to the last life on earth; only then he enters as spirit being his real home in the Sun sphere, where he lives as spirit among spirits.

Life in the Sun sphere consists in 'man's living his way into the cosmic music'. 'He hears, in cosmic harmony and cosmic melody, the meaning of all the interworking of the starry worlds.' 'It is chiefly the life of *feeling* in its spiritual metamorphosis that is quickened and stimulated in the Sun existence. Every experience man has is like cosmic melody and cosmic harmony vibrating through his entire being.' Only what is left of earthly language still causes a dissonance in this cosmic music.

There follows the passage through the spheres of Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn, where the last remnants of earthly language, earthly thinking, and earthly memory are shed. Here the human spirit learns the fundamental elements of the cosmic spiritual language, thought, and memory. For a moment the human being reaches its greatest remoteness from earthly life; the moment of greatest expansion, compared with the moment of deepest incarnation on earth. From now on begins the preparation for the coming earthly life; in this the greater part of the time between death and a new birth is spent. Passing through the spheres of Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars, we absorb the first seeds of our future capacity to remember, to

¹ Rudolf Steiner, *Supersensible Man* (Rudolf Steiner Press, London).

think and to speak. Then man enters for the second time the sphere of the Sun. Here the preparation begins for our social connections, our karmic relationships with many other people, in the coming life. In communities formed from the relationships granted by our destiny we build up bodies for each other. Together, as human beings, we create one another! The first organ of our future body to be formed is the heart.

Man comes then again to the Sun. Now he begins to shut himself off more as an individual being. Very faintly the feeling dawns that he is becoming separate from the Cosmos. This is connected with the fact that the first foundations of the heart are now being laid within him. . . . All these happenings and processes take a very long time. . . . There is already an indication of a physical heart form, but it is surrounded and interwoven with all that constitutes the *worth* of the human being as the outcome of his previous earthly lives. . . . It is specially important that in this germ of the heart is concentrated all that we are morally, all our qualities of soul and spirit. Before the spirit-germ of the heart unites with the embryonic germ of the future body, the heart in man is a spiritual being, a moral being of soul and spirit out in the cosmos; only later does this unite with the embryo. This concentration, in the germ of the heart, of his whole being of soul and spirit is experienced by man in communion with the sublime Sun Beings – those Sun Beings who rule over the creative forces of the planetary system and therewith of earthly existence. . . . The moral being of soul and spirit which he has become at this moment of his experience is, as it were, a spiritual heart-beat within him. . . . And he becomes aware of a kind of circulation in connection with this heart-beat. . . . It feels to us as though streams or currents were uniting this spiritual heart-beat with the Beings of the Second Hierarchy. . . . There beats the spiritual heart of man, and it is at the same time the heart-beat of the world in which he is living. The bloodstream of this world consists in the deeds of the creative Beings of the Second Hierarchy, the forces which stream out from them. . . . It is given to man as a grace bestowed, to hold and cherish within him a cosmic heart; one of the organs of perception, one of the cosmic hearts, created out of the pulse-beat of the macrocosm.

(Lecture IV, pp. 77-79)

Even as early as this, man's gaze is falling upon the earth, surveying the series of generations down many centuries, at

the end of which there stands the parents to whom he will be born.

Only in the passage through the Venus, Mercury and Moon spheres are the other organs formed. The human heart carries in its essence, as moral being of soul and spirit, the imprint of our own innermost personal ego, which is expressed in our individual ethereal rhythm. This is our own variation on the great musical rhythm of the ethereal Sun, which floods through the world. This reaches its final expression in the characteristic physical form of the heart.

Patients who have received a substitute heart by a transplant operation have had this done because their own heart had become diseased; it had ceased to be an expression of the activity of the inner forces, and of what is required externally for human movement. A substitute heart does not solve any of the problems that have led to the disease. On the contrary, since it is so carefully screened off, the ethereal body cannot encounter the substitute heart and make it its own. There can be no new development.

Professor Jores, of Hamburg, wrote in the *Weltwoche* of 19th January 1968: 'Each man has his own heart, which attests his individuality through small differences of its anatomical construction.' And further: 'Among the normal procedures of nature, death has its place. Birth, life and death are a totality. It is in this sense not the task of the doctor to fight against death on principle, by attempting to make man immortal. Anyone who sees more deeply into human life can often recognise that death is no accidental event, but comes about when a life has come to the limit of its possibilities of development. A heart disease is no mere chance.' This well-known and experienced physician ends his article with the prayer: 'Lord, leave to each man his own heart, that he may find his own life and his own death.'

Man in his archetypal being arises from the middle, from rhythm. Only from that rhythm do the two extremes arise, of the nervous system in which he is most conscious on the one hand, and the system of movement whereby he expresses himself on the other hand. On 25th December 1923 Rudolf Steiner laid a spiritual foundation stone into the hearts of the membership of the new Anthroposophical Society. Man is invoked in

his threefold nature, in his willing, feeling and thinking, united with the powers of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This foundation was laid into the spiritual, moral soul-being of men's hearts with deeply moving words: 'Let us henceforth be mindful of the Foundation Stone, planted today in the soil of our hearts. . . . Let us seek in it the substance of cosmic Love. . . . Let us seek in it the archetype of Imagination according to which we give cosmic Love form in our hearts, let us seek the power of thought from the Heights, whereby the dodecahedral Imaginative Form of Love may ray forth in Light. Then we shall carry away what we need. The Foundation Stone will light up before the eye of our soul; that Foundation Stone that receives from the Universal and human Love its substance, from the Universal and human Imagination its living picture quality and form, and from the Universal and human Thoughts its radiating Light. And then at all times – if we are mindful of this present moment – the light of it will ray into our hearts, spurring on our action, kindling our thinking, our feeling, and our willing.'

Man has bought his freedom through his withdrawal from the spiritual hierarchies who had united him with the rhythms of the cosmos. Through this he has become prone to illness. And especially in our time, which is so heartless and morally darkened, heart disease has become a characteristic illness of our time, attacking the whole of mankind.

A true therapy for the heart begins when a man consciously unites his individual rhythm with the great cosmic rhythm of the Sun sphere. The free inward rhythm of a meditative life creates a new ethereal structure which imprints upon the physical heart that Universal and human Love from which the Foundation Stone has its substance.

The mystery of the heart is enacted on many different levels. It is the spiritual archetype of man, where in the pre-natal Sun sphere he separated his own individual rhythm from that of the cosmos. This becomes the spiritual seed, which later unites with the seed of the embryo. After this, during our whole earthly life the heart is really the central organ of our physical human existence. It is built up by the Ego, which uses the astral, starry qualities to impress upon the ethereal world the quality of our own personality. And finally the

physical heart receives its form from the ethereal heart, which is the bearer of individual rhythm and of the individualised life-forces, being thus the active centre of rhythmic man. The physical heart is therefore the last stage of a long process, which never comes altogether to an end, but ever remains active in becoming and transforming. An inability to go on with this active, transforming process is evidenced in heart diseases. Healing is only possible for these as long as the transforming process can be brought into action. To transplant a substitute heart would have meaning if the recipient's ethereal body could transform it and make it his own. Since this is exactly what has to be avoided, the lengthening of life which is achieved means creating a situation in which a man is cut off from the central expression of himself in earthly being.

Is it not comprehensible that everywhere the awe-stricken question begins to be put: what is here permitted, or not permitted, to man?

(Translated from the Dutch by Gisela Bittleston)

REINCARNATION IN CLINICAL PRACTICE

ARTHUR GUIRDHAM

IN writing this article I have had to choose between two modes of presentation. One can describe fully one or two cases in which reincarnation is dramatically revealed and be more convincing at the price of being jerky and episodic. Alternatively one can write a general essay illustrating the different ways in which reincarnation reveals itself in medical practice. I have chosen the latter course because by covering a wider field one can demonstrate more clearly how the different clinical manifestations of reincarnation are related to each other.

Perhaps the most significant symptom for our purposes is the recurrent dream. This has often a suggestive content as in the case of the patient, A, who had dreamt for fourteen years that she was being tortured by people in sixteenth-century costume. She awoke from these dreams in acute physical pain as though her bones had been broken at the joints. She also dreamt constantly of the Crucifixion. The agony she experienced from this dream was more intense than that involving her own suffering. She was referred because these dreams were becoming more frequent — they were occurring three or four times weekly — and because she was depressed and showing signs of increased tension. After the appointment her dreams diminished and finally stopped in the course of three or four weeks after fourteen years of suffering from them.

This patient's first visit was accompanied by a curious pattern of seeming coincidence. She revealed that she first had had dreams after reading a children's comic of how Robin Hood and some of his men of Sherwood were tortured by the Sheriff of Nottingham. I was going on holiday the following week and intending to visit Sherwood Forest in order to investigate the origins of my Huguenot ancestors who settled in that district. In the course of the interview, for no tangible reason, I suddenly asked the patient what was her maiden name. It transpired that the latter was that of a famous artist. The patient said she was not sure whether her ancestor was French or German and that she had never troubled to find out. I was under the emphatic

impression that he was French but on investigating the matter later I discovered that he was born in Strasbourg, a debatable territory which has changed hands several times, and also that the artist had been born a German subject and had later taken French nationality. One could hardly find more telling corroboration of the patient's doubts as to the nationality of her ancestor. One day after I saw the patient my wife switched on the television. The first thing she saw was that a horse with the rare and distinctly unsporting name of the artist had come in first. A year or more after I had first seen the patient my sister-in-law lamented that in the dispersal of her mother's library an old edition of *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* had been sold. Within two days I met by accident the patient whom I had not seen for months. She was very well and had had no recurrence of her dreams but asked if it would be a good idea if she procured a copy of *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, because she thought that if she read about what others had suffered it might act as a kind of inoculation against the recurrence of her dream.

In the next case the recurrent dream was not of particularly specific content. The patient, B, was asleep on the floor. A man entered the room from behind her head and always from the same side and approached her with intent to do her harm. She never knew the nature of the intended harm because at this point she woke up screaming. She was referred to me for the dreams alone because her screams were such that she and her husband feared that she would wake the street. I had suffered for years from an almost identical dream. The difference was that in my case I felt I was being seized by the throat. The patient's dream ceased after the first interview. My own ceased sometime just before or just after I met the patient but my irregularly kept diary does not enable me to be precise.

Though B's recurrent dream was in no sense unique she had other dreams and visions in virtue of which she was able to remember vividly and in detail her life in the thirteenth century. The main stream of these dreams and visions came when she was a schoolgirl in her early teens. At this time she wrote down, chiefly in history lessons at school, innumerable details of her life in the thirteenth century. These details contained accurate descriptions of Cathar ritual and, in particular, an astonishing recollection of life in a community of Cathar

women. I should point out that this patient had never heard the word Cathar till she attended out-patients for the first time in her thirties, i.e. twenty years after the main flood of her dreams and visions. Knowing that she might be kept waiting she picked up a book on medieval history at the local library en route for the hospital. She was reading about the Cathars for the first time and with great interest when she was called in to see me. The word Cathar was only mentioned because I intended to visit the Pyrenees that summer and I knew the patient had stayed in that region. My motive in asking was simply to hear her comments on the scenery but I mentioned in passing that I was interested in its historical associations and, in particular, in the vicissitudes of a sect called the Cathars.

It is beyond the realm of possibility that a schoolgirl of thirteen could have been familiar with the detailed ritual of a sect to this day little known in England. In addition twenty years ago the bibliography of Catharism was minute compared with what it has become in the last decade. Professor Nelli, an authority on the troubadours, whose reputation is at least European, and Professor Duvernoy, also of the University of Toulouse, have not only expressed astonishment at the information I have passed on to them but have also confirmed its validity. I cannot quote in an article of this length all the evidence for the authenticity of B's recollection of her previous existence. It would need a whole volume for its detailed exposition. One culminating testimony must be added. For decades all the historians of Catharism have asserted without refutation that the Cathar priests wore black robes. B has insisted for twenty years that they wore dark blue. It is only in the last two or three years that it has been established that they also had, at one time, a predilection for dark blue, but this was little known because it was only elicited at one particular sitting of the Inquisition and it is clear that the habit was not widespread.

The possibility of thought transference being operative in this case is excluded because the patient's detailed knowledge of what she did not know to be Catharism was acquired twenty years before I saw her. What detailed knowledge I have of the subject has only been acquired in the last four or five years, in part in an attempt to verify historically what B acquired through effortless channels of perception.

Again, as in the case of A, my encounter with B was accompanied by the dovetailing of attendant circumstances into a coherent and convincing pattern. The associations of Catharism in England are strictly limited. For a period of weeks I seemed to be in contact with them all. In one day at one party I encountered a distinguished officer of one of the fighting services who had felt the horror of Montsegur¹ and who described it as being drenched in blood. He had never heard the word Cathar previous to his visit and a doctor present at the same party and completely ignorant of Catharism described a Pyrenean valley in which he had stayed as beautiful but haunted. I discovered later that this particular valley was one of the last refuges of Catharism in the final persecution towards the end of the thirteenth century.

The disappearance of the dreams in these two cases can only be explained by the fact that both patients recognised, B consciously and A unconsciously, that they had encountered me before. It is interesting that both patients were victims of religious persecution. A was tortured and B burnt. B's vision revealed that in a previous existence I also had been a victim of religious persecution. It is also interesting that what might be called my orthodox ancestors left France as refugees from Catholic oppression.

These two cases are examples of patients losing their symptoms through psychic communication. Sickness in general is an attribute of the human personality which is tethered in time and place by its lusts and ambitions projected into the future and by its regrets and recriminations relating to the past. On the psychic plane, freed from the trammels of time and space, the symptoms arising in the personality are dispersed. This open phase of psychic activity is revealed in the disappearance of the patient's symptoms, in the gross dislocation of the sense of chronological time associated with the recognition of the fact of reincarnation, and in the peculiar pattern of dovetailed circumstances which so frequently accompany such cases of psychic communication as I have described.

It should be understood that the two cases I have quoted are very specific examples. It is only rarely that psychic communication between two people involves the clear recognition of their

¹ 160 Cathars were burnt here in 1244.

having previously encountered each other. Communication, in the wider sense of the word, implies merely that, unknown to himself, the individual for a time is on a plane on which, through his psyche, he establishes passive contact with what the Christian calls the Holy Spirit and which others may refer to as the universal consciousness. While on this plane he is able to establish contact with others on the same plane and in some cases to act as a passive instrument for the remission of their symptoms. In the next examples I will describe there was no question of any specific psychic recognition.

C came to my clinic seven years ago suffering from severe asthma. This began at the age of three. I treated him for three years without much success. He then admitted that he had suffered for as long as he could remember from a recurrent dream. In this dream he was staggering in great heat through a trackless and waterless desert to a solitary pole standing up from the sand of the desert. In his dream he was exhausted and gasping for breath. The asthma was associated with the dream. He would wake up from the dream gasping and often delirious. What was very significant was that he had two other recurrent dreams following the first. One still involved the desert with the addition that there was a big cavern which sucked in sand. In the other he was alone fighting the world. None of the dreams, except the first, ever appeared in isolation. They were always associated with each other, but sometimes the crisis of asthma supervened after the first dream to the exclusion of the others. He suffered also from sleepwalking. When so occupied he was difficult to arouse and would cry out, 'It is coming again.' In his recurrent dream this boy was reliving his experience in the desert. In his crises of asthma, which followed his dream, he was reproducing the agonies he endured when he gasped for breath in the desert. It was significant that this boy's symptoms were always worse in the summer and at their maximum in heat waves.

As soon as he had spoken of his dreams he began to improve. One of the common fallacies of those addicted to, but not too experienced in, analytical techniques is the belief that to talk out your symptoms is inevitably followed by some degree of improvement and that the deeper the level at which you talk the greater will be the relief you experience. It is nevertheless true

that in children in their teens the revelation by them of what one may call cosmic symptoms is in the majority of cases accompanied by considerable improvement. This certainly happened in this case. This means that in the young even words may facilitate psychic communication, because the carapace of human personality has not hardened and its connection with the psyche is looser and freer than in the already moulded adult.

There are dreams in which the question of reincarnation is directly posed. These dreams are transcendental experiences. The individual is in heaven and given the chance of either staying or descending. Such dreams are rare. They may be commoner than they would appear but they are forgotten because against the background of Western civilisation they are meaningless, or at any rate in terms of reincarnation. These dreams occur in early life, once again because the link between the personality and the psyche is loose. The memory of them is retained by the psychic individual and discarded by the others.

One case I encountered reflected directly the descent of the soul into matter. I first saw D when he was eight. He was then suffering from a disturbance of the colon. The latter organ is especially vulnerable in the psychic. He suffered also from obsessional tics. He was an extremely intelligent boy but with an in and out record at school owing to his inability or reluctance to concentrate on academic instruction. When he was fourteen he told me that from the age of six until eleven – he was curiously positive about the age of onset and cessation – he had had a recurrent and unvarying dream in which he was descending through space past the stars and planets. He remembered especially his descent past Saturn and its rings. While from the beginning I believed the boy I felt it my duty to express my scepticism. How, I asked, did he know at the age of six the appearance of Saturn and its neighbours? He replied scornfully that at the age he had naturally no knowledge of such matters and that it was only much later when he switched on the television one evening that he understood the significance of what he had seen. A lecture in astronomy was in progress and he saw immediately in a diagram which represented accurately the pattern of stars he had seen in his dream.

One of the next most important signs of the incursion of reincarnation into the life of the individual is the possession of a

long memory extending back to infancy. It may seem a crude idea that a well-developed far memory for one's own lifetime should link up with the idea of reincarnation and even with a recollection of a previous existence. Nevertheless this is true. What is more interesting is how this far memory is acquired. It may not be assumed that what I am going to say applies to all people with a memory extending back to infancy but it applies indubitably to an impressive proportion. The group of people I have in mind suffered in childhood from night terrors and obsessional tics. By night terrors I mean nocturnal illusions and hallucinations. These latter are often of archetypal content. Children of this type are more prone than others to eruptions from the racial unconscious. Now children of this type are often the product of very difficult labours. Many are breech presentations. The fact that the foetus adopts this position is, in this group, of considerable significance. It is normal for the head to present itself at the pelvic brim. That the position of the foetus is inverted expresses a reluctance to be born. Whether this reluctance is engendered in the foetal consciousness or transmitted from the mother one cannot say.

Many of these child obsessionals are born as a result of labour so protracted and difficult that they resulted in Caesarean section. Children with this memory extending back to infancy are recalling, either consciously or near the conscious level, their struggles to be born.

From the point of view of the mother the Caesarean birth, in the group of cases we are considering, is explicable as follows. The mother suffers from a conflict between her maternal desire to produce a child and her reluctance to facilitate the imprisonment of another soul in matter. This is reflected physically in a two-way mechanism. She experiences the ordinary uterine contractions as a result of which the child is expelled into the world. Unlike other cases where the labour is straightforward she experiences also reversed peristaltic waves which tend to retain the child within her. The existence of these reverse waves can be demonstrated by appropriate electrical methods. In such cases we do not find the bony malformations which impede birth and the existence of which make it possible to say before labour begins that the patient must have a Caesarean section.

Women of this type are psychic. I know one such case of a devoted and affectionate mother who had one dangerous miscarriage before she gave birth, with great difficulty, to a child after a Caesarean section. This woman was strongly telepathic and clairvoyant and a convinced believer in reincarnation. Her child suffered from night terrors from the first days of his life. It was years before his mother knew what it was to have a good night's sleep. Till an advanced age the child wandered into his mother's room at night as a result of his night terrors. He himself at the age of eight confided in his mother that he knew things were going to happen before they did. Those children with night terrors and long memories for their own lifetime often inherit the psychic propensities of their mothers. In some cases the psychic attributes of the children are more obvious than those of their mothers and the latter are only disclosed at a later date. It is quite common for a mother only to admit her own long memory after that of her child has been clearly demonstrated.

The far memory of some patients extends backwards to include their birth or even intra-uterine existence. This was so in the case of A, who remembered her struggle to be born, which incidentally resulted in a deformity. Another patient also remembered being born. In her adult life, at the age of fifty, she had crises of anxiety in which she relived not only the agony of her own struggle but the bearing down sensations experienced by her mother. E had good cause to remember her birth because not only was she unwanted but her mother made repeated attempts to get rid of her. In the case of E her crises of tension accompanied by the agonies of being born were a symbolisation of her aspiration for spiritual rebirth. In between her crises of anxiety she experienced blissful states of awareness, which she called experiences of heightened consciousness, in which she felt herself to be very close to God. (This patient's degree of culture was unpretentious and she was not given to the perusal of books of a philosophical or religious nature.)

In psychic people a crisis of anxiety or depression is very often accompanied or precipitated by a sudden incessant and detailed rush of memories extending far back to infancy. In the case of A, whose recurrent dreams terminated so quickly, there was, after a period of good health, a sudden increase of tension

immediately following the birth of her first child. The signs presented were not in any sense those of a severe and classical post-puerperal disturbance. I had regretted previously that I had been unable to round off completely my picture of this patient with some evidence of conscious far memory. This evidence was provided abundantly in the two or three days following parturition. During this short period she was overwhelmed by a recollection of what seemed to be everything which had happened in her life from the time of her birth and even before it.

This sudden backward extension of memory is exemplified in another case. F had an attack of depression which can best be described as a dark night of the soul, the attack being induced in one who radiates goodness but who is drained by those to whom she gives and is left with a sense of personal inadequacy. Before this attack she had a sensation of being reborn spiritually accompanied by a sudden recollection of previously forgotten events which occurred in her earliest childhood. F is clairvoyant, telepathic and a born emanator.

The speed with which a conviction about reincarnation manifests itself naturally varies considerably. Generally speaking the earlier in life the individual accepts the fact of reincarnation the less likely is it that there will be clinical consequences. In some cases the struggle of the conviction to reach the conscious level is responsible for the symptoms produced. G was a person who knew that she radiated at least peace and reassurance to other people. In spite of a horrifying childhood, her reactions to which were related to her anxiety-obsessive symptoms, she achieved for some years a condition of good health and cheerfulness. During this time she believed that there was no survival of any description and that death implied total obliteration. A year or so after she made this statement she appeared with a very marked accentuation of tension. In spite of this undesirable condition she was able to say quite calmly and with unaggressive confidence that it was obvious that we had successive lives. She offered no logical arguments for her conviction. It was obvious that her increased tension was a kind of spiritual growing pains and, in part, attributable to her more developed attitude to life manifesting itself at the conscious level.

In some cases the conviction about reincarnation reveals

itself with dramatic suddenness. The case of H does not quite come into this category but it nevertheless is of considerable interest. This was a girl in her twenties who, after the birth of her baby, was admitted under certificate to a mental hospital. She was described as suffering from a delusional state. This was of extremely brief duration and the depression associated with it was ephemeral and not deep seated. This girl was telepathic and had precognitive dreams and the capacity to heal. I am convinced that what were described as delusions were psychic tendencies gone slightly off beam. In addition there was, as she firmly but good-naturedly insisted when she had recovered, considerable foundation for her so-called delusions which in any case were limited in number. For example, she had insisted that her doctor had given life to her child. The latter was born practically moribund and the restorative measures in which the doctor played a part were protracted. In any case, though her brief illness had been described as schizoid in colouring I am convinced that she was an integrated personality and without any tendencies to deterioration.

In one of her later interviews with me this girl told me that just before her symptoms appeared the idea of reincarnation came suddenly and importunately into her mind. I suggested that perhaps this was a recollection of discussions she had had as a student at her university but she rejected this completely and said that her friends were not of that type. She never volunteered as to whether she believed in reincarnation and, as is my habit, I did not question her directly, but I am convinced that the surge of psychic manifestations, some a little displaced and manifested as symptoms, from which she suffered, was connected, not with merely an idea about reincarnation but with a rejected conviction of it. This girl was an intelligent creature who had read a science degree. The development of her intellectual at the expense of her intuitive faculties had produced tensions within her and prevented her acceptance of reincarnation at the conscious level. It is possible that had she not been conditioned by her education she would not only have accepted reincarnation but would also have escaped her symptoms.

In the two following cases the conviction as to the truth of reincarnation was instantaneous and quite unpremeditated. J

was a nurse who presented herself for treatment for an anxiety state. She had obvious extra-sensory capacities. She was on casualty duty during one of the blitzes on London in the last war. A moribund girl, gravely injured and who had been buried under debris, was brought into hospital. J and the casualty sister endeavoured without success to resuscitate her. J asked why God allowed such things to happen and then, taking the matter further, addressed herself to Him and demanded a sign from Him. (It is surprising she got an answer. They are not usually vouchsafed under such circumstances.) She explained to me that she was that kind of person. She had no use for theories and could only cope with what she called facts. As soon as she had asked her question she had a blinding impression of the presence of God. This can be dismissed by the credulous as hysterical and a projection of her own needs but why should it be accompanied by an instant and unshakeable conviction of the truth of reincarnation? She saw that what happens to us is a result of our past errors and that each successive life is a further step in our education. She described herself as having gained great peace from this revelation. Before this experience she had never read anything about reincarnation except a third-rate novel which she described as rubbish and the name of the author of which she had forgotten. Nor has she since had any impulse to read a word about the subject, a fact which renders her experience all the more valid.

The other case involved a woman who, in a partial remission of an attack of depression, put through a telephone call to her son who lived in another country. While waiting for the call to come through she experienced an indescribable tingling feeling in her arms and the upper part of her body. I suggested to her that such sensations were symptoms of anxiety but she denied this and said that she had had such sensations before but that these were completely different. Like J, she too had an intense awareness of the presence of God together with a conviction that we have successive lives on this earth. Once again one can dismiss the awareness of God as the projection of a need. We can put any psychiatric label we wish on the vibrating feelings. But why the conviction about reincarnation in one who had never previously displayed any interest in the subject? She admitted that she had during the previous months been

reading religious books but this was due merely to her feeling that she had lost her way and she had studied nothing related to reincarnation.

When I saw her a second time she said she had no further use for my services and that things had clicked into place. I told her that some illnesses were to be regarded as messages and that it was up to the patient to interpret them correctly. I asked her what she had learnt from her experience. She said merely that we should do unto others as we would be done by. She had no further desire to read any religious books with one exception. This was a book by a professor at the Sorbonne dealing with the errors of interpretation made, throughout the centuries, by those translating the Scriptures from their original sources. In other words her conviction about reincarnation was accompanied, as in others of her type, by a desire to seek the primitive and unadulterated essence of Christianity.

A fascinating feature of the cases I have encountered is that, among those who are convinced of reincarnation, the religious feelings of the great majority are centred on Christ. One could reasonably expect the contrary in that those for whom reincarnation is a reality would be more attracted to religions like Buddhism and Hinduism in which this belief is an accepted tenet. This seldom ever occurs. Such people may show a tolerant and even eager interest on the oriental religions but they retain their faith in their own concept of Christianity. This only adds to the validity of their experience. It proves that they have not come to believe in reincarnation by reading about it. It implies that their own exploration of the past leads them to believe that reincarnation was one of the truths of primitive Christianity. They tend also to reject the doctrine that Christ came into the world to redeem us from our sins and to act as a propitiatory sacrifice. They believe essentially that His function was to show us a way by which we might attain peace and salvation by self-purification.

In my clinical experience a belief in reincarnation is very commonly accompanied by extra-sensory capacities. These include telepathy, clairvoyance, precognitive dreams and the capacity to heal. It is clear that the repression of psychic gifts results in the production of psychiatric symptoms. Patients feel themselves to be living in an alien civilisation in which, should

their gifts be known, they would be regarded as mad or bad. It is impossible to say which factor is most operative in the production of symptoms, the repression of the psychic faculties or of the conviction about reincarnation. The question is largely academic because the two, in my group of patients, seem inseparably tied to each other. It seems indeed that in Western man strongly developed extra-sensory capacities are inevitably associated with a conviction of the truth of reincarnation. (When I say conviction I am referring to a condition of religious attitude and not to an interest in the subject or to an 'intellectual' belief of reincarnation as being more rational than the doctrine of salvation in a single life-time.) It is significant that among normal people I know who believe in reincarnation extra-sensory gifts are strongly developed.

What I have said in this article applies only in Western civilisation or, more specifically, in this country. In Eastern communities where reincarnation is accepted as an article of faith and where extra-sensory gifts are not only accepted but deliberately developed, there is no reason why clinical symptoms or syndromes should be associated with either a conviction about reincarnation or the possession of psychic attributes.

The question arises as to whether any particular disease is associated with a conviction about reincarnation or, more specifically, with its struggle to obtain acceptance at the conscious level. This is a difficult question to answer because it is more the repression of psychic capacities in general than that of a conviction about reincarnation which produces symptoms. One can say, however, that in clinical practice the question of reincarnation raises its head chiefly in those with obsessional tendencies.

BOOK REVIEWS

RECENT PUBLICATIONS OF RUDOLF STEINER'S WORKS

- The Background to the Gospel of St Mark* (Rudolf Steiner Press, 24s.)
The Occult Significance of the Bhagavad Gita (Anthroposophic Press, 25s.)
The Four Seasons and the Archangels (Rudolf Steiner Press, 18s.)
The Easter Festival considered in relation to the Mysteries (Rudolf Steiner Press, paper 10s. 6d.)
Prayers for Mothers and Children (Rudolf Steiner Press, 10s. 6d.)
The Younger Generation (Anthroposophic Press, 48s.)

WITH the help of Dr Guenther Wachsmuth's very valuable study, *The Life and Work of Rudolf Steiner*, which covers the period from 1900 to 1925, we can see how the cycles of lectures given by Rudolf Steiner are related to one another, to his journeys through Europe, and to other developments in his life and work, in the sequence of the years. Though there is often a quite striking detachment from immediate pressures and problems in the way he spoke, nevertheless it can very much enrich our reading if we can re-create in imagination something of the situation in space and in time, and sometimes this can help us to avoid serious misunderstandings. Reading the cycles on the Gospels, for example, it is very important to remember that they are not general introductions written for the public, but directed to a particular group of people, most of whom had studied theosophical writings for years, and had found these the most helpful source of understanding for the world and of themselves. They had often to be led by Rudolf Steiner to take the Gospels seriously, and weigh each word on delicate scales. If we follow such lectures attentively, it may seem at times as if the speaker is considering carefully how far he can go, how much of what is present to his spiritual vision he can share with the people who are present. Indeed, he says quite bluntly at the beginning of the lectures included in *The Background to the Gospel of St Mark* that so many people have recently joined the Berlin Group that he cannot say, during the coming winter (1910-11), what he had intended to say.

In his own life, Berlin had a very special place. It was there, just before the turn of the century, that he had achieved his spiritual discovery of the meaning of Christ's Deed for humanity and for the earth. It was there too that he had experienced some of his gravest encounters, both inward and outward, with the effects of materialistic thinking. There he had taught hundreds of working people, with

whom he developed a close and warm bond, over a number of years, until adherents of Marxism made his position impossible. Thus the visits during which he gave these lectures (apart from a few in other places included here), were something like a homecoming. The new centre in Dornach did not yet exist.

Though the Gospel of St Mark is the shortest, and is often regarded as the simplest, Rudolf Steiner approached it last. He pointed out that what he said about it had to be most carefully prepared. The actual cycle on the Gospel of St Mark was given in Basel in September 1912, nearly four and a half years after the Hamburg cycle on the Gospel of St John. The lectures printed as 'Background' (earlier 'Excursus') were part of the preparation. They link the most practical affairs of earth with mighty cosmic events; and show indeed how deeply man's soul needs that these links should be established.

Two years later, from 28th May to 5th June 1913, Rudolf Steiner was in Helsingfors, then under Russian rule, and gave there the lectures on *The Occult Significance of the Bhagavad Gita*. Earlier in May the decision had been made to build on the Dornach hill; the Foundation Stone of the first Goetheanum was to be laid in the following September. In between, the fourth Mystery Play was to be performed at Munich.

A year before, the tremendous cycle on the work of the Hierarchies in the heavenly bodies and the kingdoms of nature had been given at Helsingfors. Now Rudolf Steiner does not seem to extend his horizon so far. He speaks quietly and intimately of the soul's development, in past and present, towards an understanding of its relationship to the spiritual world. Gradually two great questions stand out from all the rest. Who is Krishna? And what is his relationship to Christ?

Immense changes – war and revolution and a peace that was only apparent, and the building and the destruction of the first Goetheanum – stand between the Helsingfors cycle and that on the *Four Seasons and the Archangels*. Rudolf Steiner's way of speaking has changed, but on a steady continuous path. Much of the framework of theosophical terminology has fallen away. In Helsingfors he had begun to speak of the mission of Gabriel. Now the four Archangels, Michael, Gabriel, Raphael and Uriel move before us in splendour, in fiery words that encompass the most intimate powers of the soul and the basic chemical processes of the earth. The essentials for a rebirth of human civilisation are to be found, in the most powerful concentration, in these five lectures. The visible Goetheanum has vanished; Rudolf Steiner is now hard at work upon the invisible Building to which he looks forward.

The Easter Festival Considered in Relation to the Mysteries are lectures given at Dornach at the Easter following the Christmas Foundation

meeting. This was the last Easter of his life. The lectures are closely connected with what he had given before and at Christmas in *Mystery Centres* and *World History*. It is shown that on different paths the ancient Mysteries led men towards an understanding and experience of a new birth; and that they prepared in this way for the central Mystery of human history, the Resurrection of Christ. Great sayings from the Mysteries of Ephesus resound afresh, as valid now as they were then. And Rudolf Steiner shows once more how significant it is that the Easter Festival should be movable, depending upon the changing rhythms of Sun, Moon and Earth, and the seven day week.

Prayers for Mothers and Children is a revised and enlarged collection of the prayers themselves (without the lecture earlier included with them). It is beautifully produced. The English is printed opposite the German; the translation, a matter of particular difficulty with verses, is by the Rev. Eileen Hersey. It is impressive in its accuracy and simplicity. This book could become a great treasure for many concerned with the upbringing of children – and for others less directly concerned perhaps, who wish to think effectively about a child's development and needs.

* * *

At the international conference for young people at Forest Row in the summer of 1968, Dr Ernst Lehrs spoke very impressively about the origin of the lectures recently published in English under the title *The Younger Generation*. The subject of the conference was 'The Awakening Self'; and Dr Lehrs showed what an awakening it had been for him, and for a group of young people who shared with him in the undertaking, to approach Rudolf Steiner about a course which would be specially for them, dealing with their problems and tasks. Nothing happened as they had expected; and yet in the end, day by day, the course was there for them, given in a particularly intimate and beautiful language, leading them towards insight into the decisions which had led them when they entered earthly existence. A great deal in the course is about childhood, and the tasks of the teacher. The course was held in Stuttgart, where some of them were to become teachers in the Waldorf School. But it was not concerned only with the generation to which they themselves belonged, and those whom they would teach. It was concerned with problems which have been acute ever since the last third of the nineteenth century, when according to Rudolf Steiner the Michael Age began. The souls who come into the earthly world find a language spoken in their schools and universities which is utterly unrelated to the words of the spiritual world which still echo in their hearts.

Might not this course have been given, for the most part, in the summer of 1968, with revolt in the universities and training colleges beginning to show itself in many countries of the world? The problems here described – lack of human relationships between teacher and taught, a form of scientific knowledge which lies heavy on the soul, the inability of older people to find living sources for moral action which would inspire those who are younger – have become much more evident.

Sometimes there are fears that young people will be too self-assertive, too sure of themselves, too insistent on change. The real danger is that they will not be insistent enough, and not look perseveringly enough for the roots of their profound discontent. To have the courage to make decisions based on insight – Rudolf Steiner did not think one was too young for this at twenty-one.

A.B.

PERSONAL LETTERS

Briefwechsel und Dokumente. 1901-1926. Rudolf Steiner, Marie Steiner-von Sivers (Verlag der Rudolf Steiner Nachlassverwaltung, Dornach, 70s.)

Briefe. Emil Bock (Verlag Urachhaus, Stuttgart, 60s.)

In the last chapters of *The Story of My Life* Rudolf Steiner wrote often of his long and rich working partnership with Marie von Sivers, who became his wife. And it can be questioned whether he himself would have wished that at any time the personal letters that passed between them would be made public. But there is in our time an intense wish, whether justified or not, to know about outstanding personalities in the most personal aspects of their lives. And these letters, though they have been edited in a way that seeks to avoid giving pain to living people, come some way towards meeting such a wish. Many of them are hurried notes written on journeys; and in these the everyday problems of travelling, packing, cold hotel rooms, disappointments and anxieties are often well to the fore. And sometimes the reader may feel that he is intruding upon a deep, matter-of-fact affection between two people that is no concern of his. And yet the book as a whole does convey something that is impressive and illuminating. In the midst of the day-to-day details, and the constant struggles with the exasperating people disguised for the moment as X, Y and Z another level of existence breaks through. Without these letters, it would not have been evident how hard a struggle had to be fought to achieve the tranquillity of which such a book as *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds* is evidence.

For twenty-five years Rudolf Steiner could rely absolutely upon

Marie von Sivers' energy, loyalty, and ruthless clarity of judgment. What he *did* could often be different from what she wished; they were indeed, on the ordinary human level, exceedingly different. That he was humanly much wider, and reached spiritually much higher, Marie von Sivers seems never to have doubted. But he never ceased to show how precious her affection and her practical support were to him.

Accepting the publication of these letters as a fact, we can almost regret that they were so seldom apart. Most of the countless journeys during the early years were taken together. But there are enough letters out of the year 1905 for example to give a vivid impression of the character of the work in these years. We suddenly encounter fascinating and far-reaching descriptions of the history of the earth and the significance of the days of the week, in the midst of impressions of the cities which were visited and the people who worked there.

But the most moving part of the book is the correspondence during the last six months of Rudolf Steiner's life, when his illness confined him to the wooden building a few steps from where the first Goetheanum had stood. He could see very few people, but for part of each day he could write. During these months, Marie Steiner went long journeys with a group of eurhythmists, performing in many places, and reporting to him their successes and their difficulties. Again and again Rudolf Steiner writes with enthusiasm about what she is achieving, and as if his own illness might soon be overcome by patient treatment. Through these letters we catch a glimpse of efforts and sacrifices the words themselves do not express. Sometimes indeed it is said clearly: he can achieve what comes from his own creative powers, but demands that come from outside work destructively upon his physical organism. Above all from these last months, there is much for us to learn.

* * *

Emil Bock was born in 1895. He was seriously wounded in Flanders in October 1914. He met first Friedrich Rittelmeyer, and then Rudolf Steiner, during the war years in Berlin. He was one of the leading founders of the Christian Community in 1922; and he became the leader of the movement after the death of Friedrich Rittelmeyer in 1938. He carried this great responsibility for twenty-one years, including the four years from 1941 to 1945 during which the Christian Community was forbidden by the Nazi government. He died in Stuttgart on 6th December 1959. His daughter, Frau Dr Gundhild Kacer-Bock, has now edited, with sensitive and loving

understanding, a large collection of his letters, almost all of them written after 1941. These letters reveal a man of extraordinary energy and exceptionally wide interests; they show too how warmly and quietly he could enter into the suffering of those who were bereaved, and how delicately he could encourage the work of others. Though these letters cover such a difficult period in world history, and for Germany in particular, there is remarkably little sense of strain in them. He had indeed a wide view; he felt often, and could speak in quite matter-of-fact tones about, the heritage of earlier lives in human beings he respected – not of course naming personalities, but characterising great streams. He is always aware of the sustaining presence of those who have died, and will gently remind others of this, as something that will be helpful for them, as a matter of course.

The letters are unfortunately difficult to quote; they achieve their effect cumulatively, through their permeating quality of human concern. Some of them are written to outstanding personalities, for example to Bruno Walter and Eugen Diesel – some of whose replies are printed here. Many are to colleagues in the Community, or active members of the Anthroposophical movement. Some illustrate his burning interest in the details of Rudolf Steiner's biography, and the discovery of the original of 'Felix Balde' in the Mystery Plays. And some show Emil Bock's ability not only to establish friendship with remarkable human beings, but also with towns and cities; their souls were for him living entities (Amsterdam he describes as having an astrality like that of 'a great enigmatic animal'). He can look up from the appalling fields of destruction in the German cities in 1945, and think about the fate of the city's soul. And he feels with confidence the approach of a civilisation much more open to spiritual realities, much more genuinely Christian, and much more conscious of apocalyptic necessities.

A.B.

The Christian Year, by Evelyn Francis Derry (Christian Community Press, 34 Glenilla Road, London N.W.3, 30s.)

THIS book is intended to serve a twofold purpose, and succeeds admirably. It is meant for meditative study through the successive festivals of the Christian year, and at the same time is a comprehensive presentation of what was once called 'the Christian scheme of salvation' or 'the drama of human existence', dealing in turn with the themes of the creation, the fall and the redemption of man. In this latter respect it provides an excellent, though necessarily compressed survey of the cosmology and Christology of Rudolf Steiner. Its style is simple, direct and straightforward. The subject is ex-

pounded in the form of simple statements with no attempt at argument. Thoughts are presented in logical sequence for the reader to ponder and endeavour to live with. Behind this simple presentation, however, is a powerful understanding, and a practical application of the ideas of Rudolf Steiner, developed over many years. The writer is a serving minister of one of the Christian Community churches in London. It is a book valuable both for the reader long acquainted with the work of Rudolf Steiner, and for one just beginning, though naturally for the latter, some of the ideas encountered here for the first time may appear somewhat unfamiliar.

For untold ages mankind has out of a deep instinctive wisdom been aware of an inner, spiritual significance underlying the year's rhythm, and has observed sacred festivals in harmony with it. In recent centuries this awareness has faded from human experience. In our time it is necessary to experience it anew. The attempt to do so, however, must be not just to recover the practice of ancient customs but to understand them afresh with their cosmic background. The writer shows how Christianity must be understood and experienced more and more not merely as a personal faith, but in its full and vast cosmic significance.

DUNCAN MACNEILL.

A New Impulse in Art, by Arild Rosenkrantz (New Knowledge Books, 30s.)

ARILD ROSENKRANTZ was a Danish aristocrat, a professional painter trained in Paris, Rome and the United States of America, with already an established reputation as an artist when, in his early fifties, he was introduced to Rudolf Steiner. This meeting proved decisive for his future development. He immediately recognised Dr Steiner's genius and henceforth his painting was transformed. Baron Rosenkrantz became one of the international group of artists who co-operated with Dr Steiner in the building of the first Goetheanum, and was commissioned by him to paint the central motive, the Christ figure in the dome. For nearly forty years, until his death at the age of ninety-five in his native Denmark, Baron Rosenkrantz continued to develop the new impulse in painting in impressive works in powerful and glowing colour. At his ancestral home, the castle of Rosenholm, a gallery of his paintings is on permanent display.

The book consists of five articles written by Baron Rosenkrantz at various times in English. He lived in England for many years, returning to Denmark after the Second World War. These articles have been collected with a number of reproductions of his paintings and prefaced by a brief explanatory introduction by John Fletcher,

himself a painter and a pupil of the new movement. A short memoir on Baron Rosenkrantz is contributed by Miss Gladys Mayer, also a pupil of Dr Steiner. Here she gives some interesting personal recollections of this remarkable man.

The introductory article, 'Colour and the Painter', describes the circumstances through which Rosenkrantz first encountered the approach to painting which was being worked out under the direction of Rudolf Steiner at Dornach. He explains the reasons for Dr Steiner's insistence on the primacy of colour in the new method of painting. Here colour *per se* is given priority in the creation of pictures, form being secondary and derivative. It was part of Rudolf Steiner's contribution to knowledge to show how colour can be experienced by one specially trained to do so as an independent reality in its own right, and can be a vehicle of communication with a supersensible world. 'Colour is a world of creative substance out of which form can arise.' The writer goes on to expound how and why this approach differs fundamentally from the traditional, academic standpoint of the schools, and also equally fundamentally from the present-day trends in painting. Rudolf Steiner endeavoured to point the way by which painters can be led to the source from which painting originates.

Next follows a revealing chapter, 'Rudolf Steiner the Artist'. It was originally written by Baron Rosenkrantz for the memorial volume of the journal *Anthroposophy* at the time of Rudolf Steiner's death. We are given an insight into the inspiring qualities of this great teacher, and his respect for each person's independence, never urging his own point of view, but always speaking individually in the way which best helped the pupil forward along his own right path; his criticisms, never destructive but always revealing the latent possibilities; his astounding imaginative faculties, and his unfailing modesty and insistence that his work was but a small beginning which awaited the contributions of others to bring it to its fulfilment.

The longest and most substantial section of the book is the article, arranged in three chapters, entitled 'The Goetheanum as a New Impulse in Art'. In this an attempt is made to give a comprehensive survey of Dr Steiner's fundamental ideas on art in general, with particular reference to architecture as exemplified in the first Goetheanum. The development of the artistic impulse in mankind through the ages is shown as corresponding to deep and far-reaching changes in human consciousness in successive epochs. 'Art is the great interpreter of the facts which we meet when we rise above the world of sense perceptions, hence it has played so great a part in the spiritual life of all civilisations.' In our time the true mission of art is no longer understood, as it has become severed from its true origin

and so become 'a mere luxury of existence'. The causes of this are to be found in the line of development which the world has taken in recent centuries, which has culminated in our present-day materialism and intellectualism. He shows how in our time, when mankind is on the threshold of another decisive change in consciousness, an appropriate new manifestation of the artistic creative powers of the soul is necessary; and how this new development may be truly fostered by a fresh awareness of spirit reality. The true function of art is to be a channel through which the soul can perceive the spiritual world and a vehicle for union with that world.

In the development of this thesis the writer goes on to explain the principles on which the first Goetheanum was built. The sources of artistic creation are to be traced to deeply hidden forces in the human body and their relation to the thinking, feeling and willing capacities of the soul. 'Everything in the Goetheanum bore a relationship to what we are as human beings. . . . In every detail of the building the laws inherent in organic forms were observed and gave the feeling of life. . . . Every line, every surface, form and colour sought to reveal what substance may become when it is imbued with the spirit.'

The remainder of the book is composed of three articles, 'A New Outlook on Painting', 'Art and Self-Knowledge', and 'The Mission of Art', in which these ideas are further elucidated. The book is handsomely produced and is obviously a labour of love.

DUNCAN MACNEILL.

Moon and Plant, by Agnes Fyfe (Rudolf Steiner Press, 25s.)

ARISING from the work of the Society for Cancer Research, Arlesheim, Switzerland, the book by Agnes Fyfe furnishes a good example of the use of the filterpaper method known as capillary-dynamolysis. Mistletoe was picked regularly and examined by this method – the material under survey covers over 70,000 consecutive test pictures. Changes that were observed in the mistletoe and two other plants, hellebore and iris, were found to be dependent not on the seasons, but on the time the plants were picked. 'The changes that appear in the sap in spite of constant working conditions are not chaotic. Variations in form and colour gradually change the whole into something new. The birth and passing away of a form or colour wave can cover weeks or only a few days. Sometimes very sudden but shortlived changes take place.' Various considerations led to the question as to whether there was a connection between these form changes in the course of time and the movements of the Moon. It is interesting to find that the connection is not simply found with the phases of the Moon: a very thorough examination of the finer

variations in the Moon's path had to be made to find the connection. The high and low lunar path within the so-called nodal cycle, and the positions perigee and apogee were found to be significant. Finally, marked changes in the mistletoe and the two other plants, hellebore and iris, were observed during the course of eclipses of the Moon. The same can be said for eclipses of the Sun, although their effects are different from those of lunar eclipses.

Agnes Fyfe's book contains far more than observations of changes in the pictures in connection with the Moon's path and positions. In a section devoted to the experimental basis of the work, the method is described, fundamental questions relating to plant tests are answered, and instructions for making the pictures are given. The Introduction describes the origin and uses of the method, and Part I, 'The Formative Force in Plant Saps', besides dealing with various aspects of the method (duplicate tests, viscosity of the saps, the weather, seasons, physical and chemical processes in the paper, the role of the reagent, stages of growth) gives criteria for evaluating form in the capillary-dynamic tests, builds up a scale of form values. These criteria are won from the fact that the filterpaper pictures – which are 'developed' with a reagent, silver nitrate or gold chloride – vary when the silver nitrate solution varies. Form changes of the same kind are found among the pictures regularly finished with the same concentration (1%). 'Experiments with the same mistletoe sap developed with increasing concentrations of silver nitrate in solution as reagent, produced a series of pictures with increasing complexity of form. Similar series with increasing form content could be put together with pictures made from mistletoe picked at different times but all finished with the same strength of silver nitrate solution. It can be said that plant saps have a variable quality that has an effect in the capillary-dynamic pictures comparable to that of silver. The hypothesis was formulated that this quality is connected with the Moon.' The latter part of the book describes and illustrates extensive experiments that confirm the hypothesis.

The work is extremely stimulating and valuable in method and results. One would like to see the results reported here taken up and carried on in further experimental work.

GEORG UNGER

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