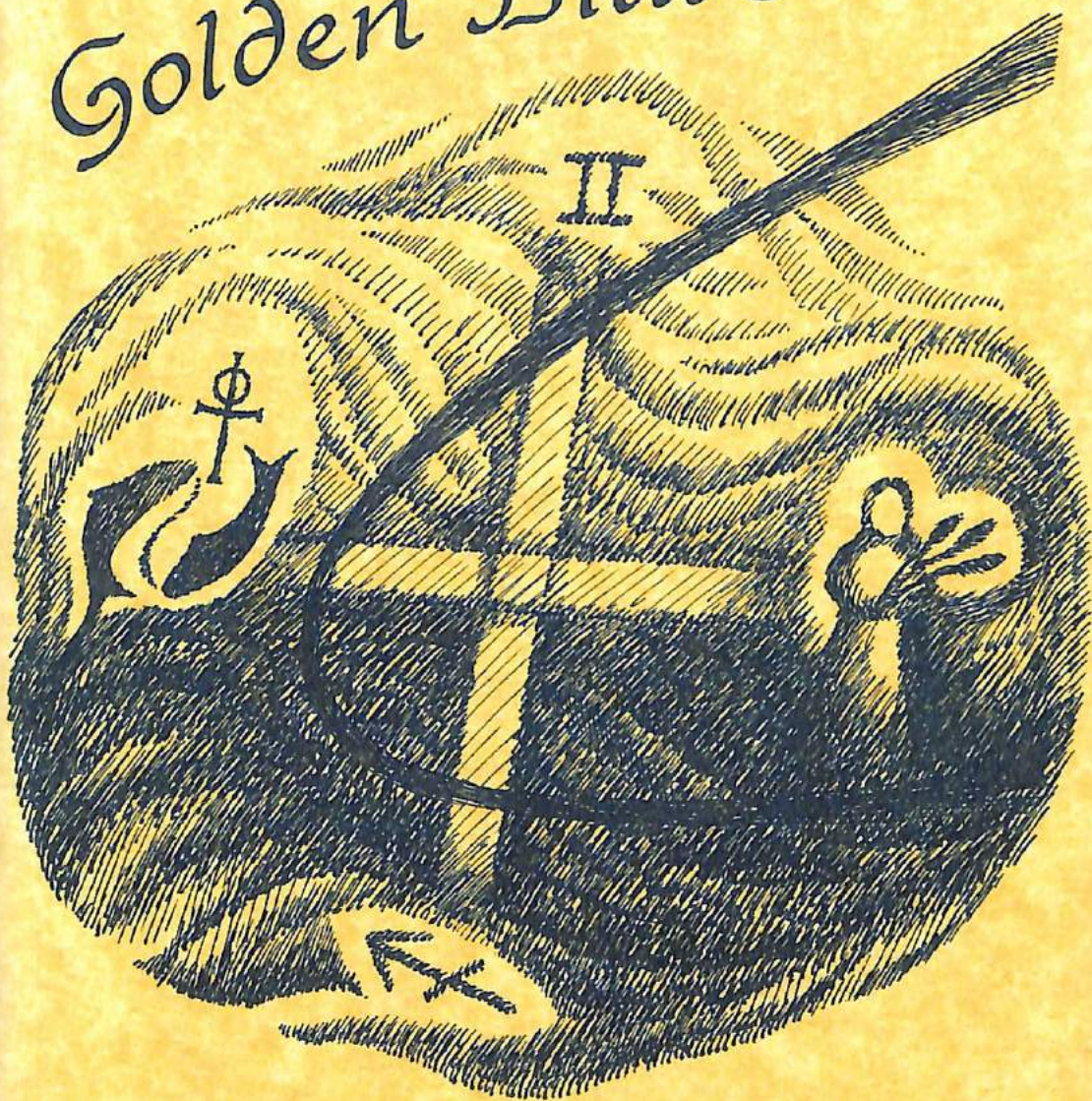


The Golden Blade 1985



Good and Evil Halley's Comet
Light and Darkness
in the Work of Albert Steffen

Douglas J. Jones 9.95

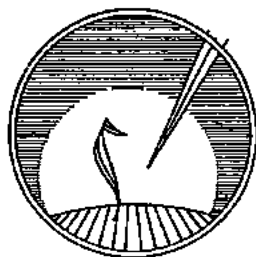
The Golden Blade

THIRTY-SEVENTH (1985) ISSUE

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Edited by Adam Bittleston and Daniel T. Jones



Anthroposophy springs from the work and teaching of Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925). He described it as "a path of knowledge, to guide the spiritual in the human being to the spiritual in the universe".

The aim of this Annual is to bring the outlook of Anthroposophy to bear on questions and activities of evident relevance to the present, in a way which may have lasting value. It was founded in 1949 by Charles Davy and Arnold Freeman, who were its first editors.

This issue is mainly concerned with the problem of Good and Evil. It includes a small selection from the writings of Albert Steffen, who was born a hundred years ago on December 10th 1884. Within the limits available the selection cannot be other than inadequate; his writings include plays, novels, and more than a thousand poems. They present special difficulties for the translator. For the English reader we would like to recommend the centenary issue of *The Journal for Anthroposophy*, edited by Mrs Christy Barnes, published by the Adonis Press, New York.

We owe special thanks for help in the preparation of this issue of *The Golden Blade* to Mr Charles Davy, Dr. Friedrich Behrmann and Mr Theodore van Vliet. Through the generous help of the Albert Steffen-Stiftung we are able to publish reproductions of sketches by Albert Steffen, some of them hitherto unpublished.

EDITORIAL NOTES

If the listeners to William Golding's Nobel lecture, delivered at Stockholm on December 7th 1983,* really expected, as he suggested in his opening words, a "half-hour of unrelieved gloom", they were surprised. On such an occasion he could not pass by the great, justified anxieties of humanity. But when he comes to speak of them, just before the warm and humble humour of his ending, it is not with despair. Hope is to be found, after all, in the mysterious power of words.

"Words may, through the devotion, the skill, the passion and the luck of writers, prove to be the most powerful thing in the world. They may move men to speak to each other because some of those words somewhere express not just what the writer is thinking but what a huge segment of the world is thinking. They may allow man to speak to man, the man in the street to speak to his fellow until a ripple becomes a tide, running through every nation, of common sense, of simple healthy caution, a tide that rulers and negotiators cannot ignore, so that nation does truly speak unto nation. Then there is hope that we may learn to be temperate, provident, taking no more from nature's treasury than is our due. It may be by books, stories, poetry, lectures that we who have the ear of mankind can move man a little nearer the perilous safety of a warless and provident world. It cannot be done by the mechanical constructs of overt propaganda. I cannot do it myself, cannot now create stories which would help to make man aware of what he is doing, but there are others who can, many others. There always have been. We need more humanity, more care, more love. There are those who expect a political system to produce that, and others who expect the love to produce the system. My own faith is that the truth of the future lies between the two, and we shall behave humanly and a bit humanely, stumbling along, haphazardly generous and gallant, foolishly and meanly wise until the rape of our planet is seen to be the preposterous folly that it is.

"For we are a marvel of creation. I think in particular of one of the most extraordinary women, dead now these five hundred years, Juliana of Norwich. She was caught up in the spirit and shown a thing that might lie in the palm of her hand in the bigness of a nut. She was told it was the world. She was told of the strange and wonderful and awful things that would happen there. At the last, a voice told her that all things should be well and all manner of things should be well and all things should be very well.

"Now we, if not in the spirit, have been caught up to see our earth, our mother, Gaia Mater, set like a jewel in space. We have no excuse now for

supposing her riches inexhaustible nor the area we have to live on limitless because unbounded. We are the children of that great blue-white jewel. Through our mother we are part of the solar system and part, through that, of the whole universe. In the blazing poetry of the fact we are children of the stars."

Many people today might find it very difficult to take William Golding's tentative hope, or the deep faith in the future of Juliana of Norwich – which was also expressed at a time of great darkness and conflict – at all seriously. Evil seems so powerful in the world, and human good intentions so weak and shortsighted, that the destruction of the earth and of humanity in one way or another, within the next two centuries at most, seems to be the realistic probability. On what actually observable facts can hope for the future be based? Our time tends to limit "observable facts" to things that can be counted. No statistics can promise that humanity will not be destroyed. But we observe much in life which cannot be put into numbers, and yet of which we are confident. We have our own experience of how good or evil work in people we have encountered, and in ourselves. No-one has direct experience of all humanity, but it does seem that different societies, whether in East or West, whether "primitive" or sophisticated, do not vary very much in this respect. Some societies appear happier and more harmonious than others, but in general what is found in the individual life seems to be true for the world as a whole. And surely what we find in the people we actually know, and in ourselves, is genuinely good intentions – and where evil or something akin to it develops it is because a *part* of the human being, an idea or a desire or an impulse to act in a certain way, has become obsessive, and usurped power over the whole, destroying its balance and harmony. People in general want to help, and not to harm, each other; and when they become cruel it is because something has taken charge of their minds or feelings which at least for a time blots out everything else.

So far ordinary observations can go, and some justified hopes for the future can be founded on this. But ordinary observation, including the kind of insight described by William Golding, does not answer the question "Why do human beings become obsessed?" It is a crucial question; for before very long relatively small fanatical groups and societies may possess atomic weapons, so that we are not only concerned with the confrontations of the super-powers. What causes obsession – when harm to others, even to oneself, seems of little account compared to the fulfilment of some plan or some desire? Shakespeare makes many profound studies of this; but though he makes the question peculiarly vivid, he is far from answering it. ("The Winter's Tale" is a good example; what really causes the jealousy of Leontes?).

Only a kind of knowledge which breaks through the limits of ordinary observation and thinking can answer. And what this knowledge says may be hard to understand and to use. This is the knowledge achieved by Initiates

through the selfless development of organs of perception beyond those used by the ordinary consciousness. While psycho-analysis draws conclusions from human behaviour about the subconscious mind, Initiate knowledge breaks through to the powers which are still more hidden from us, of whom both our unconscious and our conscious soul-life show the effects. To these beings Initiates raise their steady, humble vision; and bring through the ages the results to humanity. Without being able at once to share such vision themselves, their hearers can test their words with the powers of their own minds and hearts.

That so few people have recognised that a great Initiate lived among us in Rudolf Steiner is due to a deep unwillingness to make the necessary efforts of mind and heart, among many who might have interpreted him to others – so that millions have hardly heard his name. For so many of his contemporaries it would have meant a radical change in their habits of thought, to conceive human beings as encompassed by countless spiritual powers, whom we can and should begin to understand.

According to Rudolf Steiner's account (and all the older traditions) some of these beings are good, and some evil; or, it can be said, some help human beings, and have helped them from the beginning, to develop their whole nature harmoniously, and some try to obsess them. It would not be enough if we could distinguish which are which, and accept the influence of the good beings and reject the influence of the bad. We have to find how good use can be made of the evil beings, and how to prevent the gifts of the good beings from falling into misuse. For these tasks, every effort of which the human soul is capable will be needed.

Contrary to its custom, the Golden Blade is printing in this issue a lecture by Rudolf Steiner that has appeared in its pages before: 30 years ago, in the 1955 issue. It is so important, and so difficult to understand, that it seems right to bring it into the context of these present years, which are still more deeply troubled.

This lecture (given by Rudolf Steiner a fortnight before the outward ending of the first World War) describes four capacities which human beings will develop in the future. These are power to grow warm or cold in perceiving the eternal Ego in the form and movement of each other's bodies; the vision of each other's thinking in living colours, through and beyond what is said; the sharing, in the rhythm of our breath, of each other's joys and sorrows; and the digestion of each other's will. Rudolf Steiner makes clear that we can hardly yet begin to imagine how intensively these capacities will be experienced, when they have developed through many centuries to come. But *already*, because of our resistance to their development, they show themselves in us as every kind of inclination towards evil.

It is an immense paradox. To put it crudely, we are told that we can become evil through the misuse of gifts offered to us by powers unknown to us, because we refuse to develop capacities which we cannot imagine and of

which we have never heard. Goethe said: "God gives us nuts, but he does not crack them for us"; and it is clear that the great Initiates follow this example.

And yet if we look at the events of our time, it can all begin to make sense. We may start from the second capacity; to see through the words of another into the living colours of his thinking, which reveal his relationship to his own Angel, to the true Spirit of his country, and to the Spirit of our time. In nearly every conflict going on in the world, down to the long and grievous strike in the British coal industry, we can see how both sides could hardly hear at all what the other said, or find any sense in it. Numbers are supposed to bring objectivity; but in these conflicts each side believes passionately, and only, in its own set of statistics. In conflicts between nations, thoroughly materialistic theories are taken hold of by violent, deep-seated emotions, so that national brands of socialism and communism develop, and possess whole peoples, to the exclusion of every other way of thinking. And yet truly, individually, we are interested in what the other person thinks – not in what he repeats from his television or newspaper, but what he has made his own, through living. And the clearest colours come when conceptions are developed about spiritual realities, loved without personal emotion. Once again, it was Goethe who wrote:

"Grey, my dear friend, is every theory,
And green the golden tree of life."

Newton's theory of colour is itself grey. But Goethe's teaching about colour – it should not be called a theory – is in itself filled with colour, like the rest of his thinking; it is in quality worthy of its subject. Thus he can help us to see thoughts in the way Rudolf Steiner describes.

In the twentieth century we can study a man who *did* listen to, and understand, the Initiate: Albert Steffen, the centenary of whose birth comes at the end of 1984. He lived from 10th December 1884 to 13th July 1963. The outstandingly gifted son of a doctor in a small Swiss country town, he was a member in his 20s of a young pioneering group of writers and painters in Munich shortly before the First World War. And we find that then, and throughout his life, his thinking had as basic theme the encounter of light and darkness in the colours. As Dr Behrmann shows later in this issue, his first play "The Manicheans" was conceived from beginning to end in terms of colour. And in the same years, after he had met Rudolf Steiner, he seized eagerly on what he had to say about colour, for example about the magnificent hues of autumn. Soon after Steiner's death, a rich collection of his short writings on and round this subject, most of them originally written for the weekly "Das Goetheanum", which he edited from 1922 to the end of his life, was published under the title "Geist-Erwachen im Farben-Erleben" – Spirit Awakening in the Experience of Colour. These writings can help us quite directly in approaching the colours of thought; the blue of its

reverence, the yellow of its wonder and joy, the red of its courage. All through Steffen's life these qualities can be found in his writings; but it was only in his last years that a few books began to be accompanied by sketches of his own, which in a very satisfying way complete them. To many people they appear – at least at a first glance – child-like; and it should be remembered that they *are* sketches (like the sketches made by Rudolf Steiner) not finished paintings. But a sketch which appears simple can be found to express, if we stay with it, very deep thoughts and feelings. We are led out, free from the realm of physical objects, into the experiences of the soul, particularly those it may pass through after death, looking back at the beauty of the earth.

When we feel beauty, we make one great step towards the soul's freedom; when we recognise true goodness, we make a second step. Albert Steffen was intensely concerned with these two steps – the relation between them, and how they can be expressed in words, in colours, and in forms. In this way he sought the Christ.

The perception of each other's thinking is intimately related to the renewed vision of Christ in our time. A few months after his lecture on "The Mystery of Evil", Rudolf Steiner gave a series of lectures in Dornach on "The Inner Aspect of the Social Question". And here he stresses this directly. "Christ said 'What you do for the least of my brethren, you have done for me'. Christ does not cease to reveal himself for human beings, constantly, unto the end of the earth! And so he says today to those who are willing to hear him: 'What one of the least of our brethren thinks, you have to regard as thought by me in him – and know that I feel with you, when you measure the thoughts of the other with your own thoughts, developing a social interest for what goes on in the other soul. What you find as opinion, as conception of life, in one of the least of your brethren, – therein, you seek me myself'. Thus the Christ speaks into our life of thought; Christ who will reveal himself in a new way – the time draws near – to humanity in the 20th century . . . This is the way, which must be regarded as the way to Christ through thinking".

This does not contradict the fact that human thinking can be captured by a proud light, or imprisoned by a scornful darkness. Goodness works *between* the powers of Lucifer and Ahriman – as Rudolf Steiner named them – to redeem both. And when men lose themselves in dazzling light or bitter darkness, Christ suffers with them, in them.

Thus it can dawn on us that all four of the coming capacities described in "The Mystery of Evil" have to do with the renewed manifestation of the Christ, which will continue and be more thoroughly grasped through coming ages. Here we may consider the fourth capacity – the "digesting" of each other's willing; have the troubles and the great possibilities of the present anything to do with this?

In our time we have an instinctive conviction that it should be possible to

avoid conflict. When people are quite unable to see into each other's minds, those looking on feel in a sense outraged; it seems unworthy of human beings to confront one another in such a way. But it is also unworthy simply to despise such groups for their lack of understanding; we may well be called to penetrate much more deeply than we have yet done into the roots of the conflicts. These can be even harder to understand when they are less a matter of differences in thinking than of habitual will; for in thinking, we are more awake than in our willing.

We can take a very simple example from the review of Fritz Schumacher's biography in this issue. When, at the outbreak of the Second World War, he had suddenly to work as a farm labourer, his tempo was very much faster than that of the men who had done such work all their lives. He would have made himself very unpopular if he had not found quite quickly that he got too exhausted and that the others were right.

But there can be much more complicated differences of temperament and behaviour, which can thoroughly sour working relationships without anyone bringing them clearly to consciousness. And with the best intentions it may not be possible to solve them by discussion. They may have to be "digested". Many may find such a description unacceptable, because physical digestion is often regarded simply as a chemical process. But it has been known for many years now how sensitively the digestive process in man reacts to states of mind – or if we accept the wonderfully comprehensive picture of three-fold man given by Wolfgang Schad in this issue, "states of will". Late in his life, when he made his most penetrating studies of human physiology, Rudolf Steiner showed that in the process of digestion not only the human unconscious soul-life is at work, but quite consciously the highest realm of spiritual beings, belonging to what he called the First Hierarchy. We could have a much greater reverence for the processes of eating and digestion, and all that goes with them, if we took this seriously enough. Children often have such reverence quite naturally – but may lose it quickly under adult influence.

When religious or cultural traditions from the past are continued without change, without taking into consideration, and practice, the significance of humanity's changing consciousness, these traditions work in the social order precisely as *poison*. Tragic examples are the conflict in Northern Ireland, which is no theological difference (as perhaps still raged in Europe in the 17th century) but a matter of deep-seated, largely unconscious attachments and aversions. And the war between Iran and Iraq, where the fundamentalist Muslim belief in the absolute sovereignty of their religion confronts a mixture of Islam and modern political patterns – not just as theories, but as passionately adopted ways of life. In such conflicts mutual compassion almost entirely disappears.

But all human beings must eat – and if they work together, it is good if they eat together as well. And fundamentally, everyone works together –

Iraqis and Iranians many of them in the same industry – and the great Mother spreads one table for us all. But like unruly children, we do not attend to her wishes about sharing the food, but each larger or smaller group grabs what it can, and calls this proceeding "the Market". By a cruel paradox, the groups that can grab most are those who do the least actual work on the soil to produce food.

In measurable terms, there has been a continuous drop (in Britain lasting for at least four centuries), in the richer countries, in the proportion of the economically active population working in agriculture. It is possible to distinguish (though such distinctions are fuzzy at the edges) those engaged in agriculture, or industry, or providing services. There is an almost world-wide trend for the proportion in agriculture to decrease, while those providing services increase. When a country begins to industrialise, there is generally a steep growth of those in industry at first, which slows down, and then goes into reverse. Thus the percentage of the economically active population employed in industry started to fall in the USA and Britain in the late 1960s, followed in the 1970s by other affluent countries. This need not mean increased unemployment, so long as those displaced in declining industries are absorbed by developing industries or into services. But hardly anywhere has this been entirely achieved, and the failure has been most evident wherever heavy industry – steel, coal-mining and ship-building are principal examples – has been strongly localised. But average "real incomes" go on increasing – the amount of purchasable goods and services per head of the population. Figures for five characteristic countries illustrate this. In the United States of America the process has in most respects gone furthest. Britain is not so affluent; Hungary can be taken as a fairly characteristic moderately developed Communist state; Brazil is a newly industrialising country; Pakistan much less developed, with many people at or below subsistence level. The table illustrates the enormous abyss between rich and poor; but also how the rich countries obtain more food than they need through the work of very few people in highly mechanised agriculture and through the sale of manufactured goods (and, to a less extent, of services, for example insurance and banking).

	Agriculture	Industry	Services	Average Income (pa)
	%	%	%	\$
USA	3	23	74	10,610
Britain	3	29	68	7,390
Hungary	19	36	45	
Brazil	30	17	53	1,770
Pakistan	51	10	39	270

(1980 figures from OECD and other sources)

It might be said: "This is not grabbing by the richer countries, it is earning by hard work and inventive intelligence". But historically the cheap food was largely obtained from colonies won by military power, and the intelligence frequently achieved its results by damaging the life of the earth and the health of human beings.

To speak of the Earth as "Great Mother" is not just an ancient tradition or a poetic fancy. She who was once called Demeter is a real though very mysterious being, who will be found afresh, and to whom men will learn to dedicate all their knowledge of the visible world. What is done to the Earth without gentleness and reverence, all that is thought by human beings in an abstract, "reductionist" way about earth and space, brings her suffering. At present many economists think that a large-scale, highly mechanised agriculture is the only practical policy, but in the long run it is not practical. It is slowly becoming evident that where vast areas of land are devoted to the growth of a single crop, pests and plant diseases get out of control, though pesticides are multiplied. Reasons can be found for this at different levels; but among the deepest reasons it may come to be recognised, by those prepared to open their eyes to such ideas, that the Great Mother has a host of helpers, the elemental beings, who are very important for the health of plant life on earth. And it does not require any deep penetration to feel how alienating monoculture is for the elementals. As we tried to point out last year, they love good encounters – light and shade, forest and meadow, one species of plant and another. The English hedge, now so much imperilled, has been a haven for them. For Mother Earth the increase in the numbers of those employed in industry, and the relative decrease of those working on the land, have on the whole brought harm. For her, the relative or absolute decrease in those employed in industry, which is happening in the affluent countries, is on the whole a healthy thing – as it may well be for human beings too. But an increase in the number and proportion of those working on the land might well be beneficial. It is not now happening yet, it seems, in any of the affluent countries. There are very considerable obstacles in the way of it happening at all on a considerable scale. The financial and social difficulties might well seem prohibitive. And yet it seems unlikely that the affluent countries will be able to absorb their unemployed in a healthy way without many of them moving into agriculture.

One way in which this could be done would be through some form of collective responsibility in each industry for those rendered redundant by altered technologies. Eventually, for example, miners, dockers, shipbuilders and printers, all will have to accept that a smaller labour force will be called for by their industries. But they could all attempt, fantastic though it may sound, to create a smallholding agriculture cooperative in which those who have accepted early retirement or who have been displaced could find something thoroughly worth doing. They need not contribute to butter mountains or milk oceans; they could hope to wean us from our acute

addiction to eating out of imported tins.

At present the processed food industry is menacing both the affluent countries and the third world, pushing on an enormous scale foods that are hardly foods at all, but have attractive names (like potato 'whirls') and delightful tastes. Parents can come to rely on giving such things to their children from babyhood onwards. Thus it is necessary for the smallholder to recover confidence not only where he is fairly rare but also where he is very common; and unless he does so, and plants trees, most of Africa will become a desert in the next half century. The appalling consequences of drought in Ethiopia and elsewhere in Africa must be largely put down to human lack of care, not to freaks of the weather; it will be better to regard them as symptoms of a vast ecological imbalance of which the long term trend is towards calamity. Many students of ecology who are not just specialists but truly dedicate their work to the Great Mother will be needed to advise and inspire, treading in the footsteps of Richard St Barbe Baker and others.

As yet, it is almost only *families* who work together on smallholdings. But for several reasons, among them the general drop in the number of children born in each family, it will not be possible to depend on this in the future. In agriculture the patriarchal form of community will have to be replaced, and it will not be at all easy to do this in ways that achieve stability and mutual respect. Communities friendly to the elementals, sympathetic to their needs, must be created. (Miners, who have an age-old relationship to the gnomes, of which traces still linger, might prove good at this).

In the coming years it will be deeply necessary that human beings draw upon new sources of devotion – or discover again, much more consciously than in the past, ancient allegiances. It will matter very much that these are not attached to the blood, to nation or race, but are universal – as is the love of the great Mother who has been described. In such devotion we shall find how earth has its place among the stars. We shall find among the constellations of the Zodiac the noble image of the Mother, traditionally called Virgo, bearing her spray of wheat.

In the past the spiritual forces of this constellation were known to work in the human processes of digestion. Significantly, in the opposite direction of the universe shines the constellation of Pisces, the Fishes; and the powers coming from this direction are manifest in our hands and feet. What comes from this polarity does not produce conflict, but harmonious interaction; these are, on many different levels of our existence, the powers of healing. We shall need to understand this very much better before we move into what many people already feel as promise, the new age of Aquarius.

Rudolf Steiner connected the healing forces of Pisces with reawakened vision of the Christ, renewing Paul's experience on the road to Damascus. It was not just a mystification when the early Christians used the symbol of the Fish for the Christ. The learned heads of Christendom often failed grievously

to understand the Christ's Incarnation and Resurrection; but the power of his deeds worked immediately in human hands and feet. And today the possibility lies open before us of leading our thoughts out of their prison in the head, to find those living thoughts of destiny which work in hands and feet.

There are powers that work in the world which oppose the spirits of healing that are the streams from Pisces and Virgo; and of these opposing powers a manifestation can be found in the sky, repeated at regular intervals of about three-quarters of a century. According to Rudolf Steiner's description, given in 1910, the influence of Halley's Comet is to harden the I of man in materialism. Much will be said and written in the next few years about all that is being achieved technologically to observe and analyse the physical nature of the Comet, but it will be very much less understood that this is really a sinister guest, impeding the spiritual progress of humanity, unless we are able to call in the right way upon the forces of Pisces, of which Rudolf Steiner said that they are "even stronger" than those of the Comet ("The Etheric Vision of the Future" given at Hanover, May 10 1910 – printed in English in "The Reappearance of Christ in the Etheric", published by the Anthroposophical Press, Spring Valley, New York. The reference to Pisces is on page 114).

At right angles to the constellations of Pisces and Virgo are Gemini and Sagittarius. Their forces will be used increasingly in East and West by groups of occultists in a self-seeking way harmful to humanity. Of course, there are the good and creative powers bestowed on mankind from every direction of the zodiac. But at particular times opportunities arise to misuse what is offered. "The forces of midday", from Gemini, can be misused by dragging down knowledge about all that can be measured and numbered to be the tool of onesided, selfish purposes. The immense development of the computer can become a very threatening example, where the living and feeling human being can be lost in a maze of information. The West need not succumb to this temptation; in the life work of Elizabeth Kübler-Ross can be seen how the claims of the dying human individual can be re-asserted against all institutionalism and soul-less routine. Self-seeking Eastern occultists can use "the forces of midnight", coming from Sagittarius, which manifest themselves in what makes man into a centaur, the lower astral nature; and by so doing they can hinder the development of the true higher self of humanity.

Looking at the world as it appears at this moment, the misleading influences may appear to us overwhelmingly powerful, the resources of real healing very slight. But once more – when we think of the actual human beings we encounter, we often see a deep desire to find and serve the paths of healing. Active students of Rudolf Steiner's work need to recognise this desire everywhere, and through this grow in confidence and courage.

EVIL AND THE FUTURE OF MAN

Rudolf Steiner

*A Lecture given at Dornach on October 26, 1918**

Even within the limits in which it is permissible to speak to-day, we in the fifth Post-Atlantean period of civilisation – this period of the Spiritual Soul in which we are living – cannot refer without deep emotion to those things which concern the mystery of evil. For in so doing we touch upon one of the deepest secrets of this fifth Post-Atlantean period, and any discussion of it comes up against the immaturity of human faculties: the right powers of feeling for such things are as yet little developed in present-day mankind. It is true that in the past certain hints or indications of the mystery of evil, and of that other mystery which is connected with it – the mystery of death – were attempted again and again in picture form. But these pictorial, imaginative descriptions have been taken very little in earnest, especially during the last decades – since the last third of the nineteenth century. Or else they have been cultivated in the way of which I spoke here nearly two years ago, in relation to very important events of the present time. What I said then had also a deeper motive, for anyone who has knowledge will be well aware what untold depths of the human being must be sounded when one begins to speak of these things. Alas, many signs have shewn how little real good-will there is even now for an understanding of such things. The will to understand will come in time, and we must see that it does come. In every possible way we must see that it does come.

In speaking of these matters, we cannot always avoid the appearance of wishing to pass criticism on the present time in one way or another. Even what I lately said about the configuration of philosophical strivings within the bourgeoisie or middle class, especially since the last third of the nineteenth century (though it also applies to a considerably longer time) – even this may be regarded as mere criticism by those who wish to take it superficially. Nevertheless, all that I bring forward here is intended not as mere criticism, but as a simple characterisation, so that human beings may see what kind of forces and impulses have been holding sway. From a certain point of view, they were after all inevitable. One could even prove that it was necessary for the middle classes of the civilised world to sleep through the period from the eighteen-forties to the end of the eighteen-seventies. This cultural sleep of the bourgeoisie could indeed be presented as a world-historic necessity. Nevertheless, a candid recognition of the fact should have some positive effect upon us, kindling certain impulses in knowledge and in will – true impulses towards the future.

Two mysteries (as I said, we can speak of these things only within certain limits) – two mysteries are of special importance for the evolution of mankind during the epoch of the Spiritual Soul, in which we have been living since the beginning of the fifteenth century. They are the mystery of death and the mystery of evil. For the present epoch, the mystery of death is closely connected, from a certain side, with the mystery of evil. Taking the mystery of death to begin with, we may ask this very significant question: How stands it with death altogether, in relation to the evolution of mankind?

As I said again only the other day, that which calls itself Science nowadays, takes these things far too easily. Death, for the majority of scientists, is merely the cessation of life. Death is regarded merely from this standpoint, whether it be in plant or animal or man. Spiritual Science cannot take things so easily, treating all things in the same standardised way. After all, we might even conceive as death the stopping of a clock – the death of the clock. Death, for man, is, in effect, something altogether different from the so-called death of other creatures. But we can learn to know the phenomenon of death in its reality only when we see it against the background of the forces which are active in the great Universe, and which – inasmuch as they also take hold of man – bring him physical death. In the great Universe certain impulses hold sway. Man belongs to the Universe; these forces therefore permeate man, too, and inasmuch as they are active within man, they bring him death. But we must now ask ourselves: These forces which are active in the great Universe – what is their function, apart from the fact that they bring death to man? It would be altogether wrong to imagine that the forces which bring death to man exist in the Universe for that express purpose. In reality this is only a collateral effect – as it were a by-product of these forces.

After all, in speaking of the railway system it will occur to no-one to say that the purpose of the engine is to wear out the rails! Nevertheless, the engine will spoil the rails in course of time; indeed it cannot help doing so. But its purpose in the railway system is altogether different. And if a man defined it thus: An engine is a machine which has the task of wearing out the rails – he would of course be talking nonsense, though it cannot be disputed that the wearing out of the rails belongs to the essence of the railway engine. It would be just as wrong for anyone to say that those forces in the Universe which bring death to man are there for this express purpose. Their bringing of death to man is only a collateral effect – an effect they have alongside their proper task.

What then is the proper task of the forces that bring death to man? It is this: To endow man with the full faculty of the Spiritual Soul. You see, therefore, how intimately the mystery of death is connected with the fifth Post-Atlantean age, and how important it is that in this fifth Post-Atlantean age the mystery of death should be quite generally unveiled. For the proper

function of the very forces which – as a by-product of their working – bring death to man, is this. To instil, to implant into his evolution the faculty for the Spiritual Soul. I say once more, the faculty for the Spiritual Soul – not the Spiritual Soul itself.

This will not only lead you towards an understanding of the mystery of death; it will also show you what it is to think exactly on these important matters. Our modern thinking – I say this once again not by way of criticism, but as a pure characterisation – our modern thinking is in many respects (if I may use the unpleasant term – it is an apt one) altogether slovenly. And this applies especially to what goes by the name of science and scholarship. It is often no better than saying: The object of the railway engine is to wear out the rails. The pronouncements of modern science on one subject or another are often just of this quality – and this quality simply will not do if we are to bring about a wholesome condition for humanity in future. And in the epoch of the Spiritual Soul this can be achieved only in full consciousness. Again and again I must emphasise this; it is a truth deeply significant for our time.

How often do we see men arising here or there, making this or that proposal for the social and economic life out of a specious wisdom, and always with the mistaken idea that it is still possible to make constructive proposals for the social life without calling in the aid of Spiritual Science. He alone thinks in accordance with the times who knows that every attempted proposal concerning the social configuration of mankind in future is the merest quackery unless it is founded on Spiritual Science. Only he who realises this, in all its implications, is thinking truly in accordance with the times. Those who still pay heed to all manner of professorial wisdom on social economics – arising on the basis of an unspiritual science – are passing through the present time *asleep*.

The forces which we must describe as the forces of death took hold of the bodily nature of man in a far distant epoch. How they did so, you may read in my book, "An Outline of Occult Science".

Only now are they finding their way into his soul-nature. For the remainder of earthly evolution, man must receive these forces of death into his own being. In the course of the present age they will work in him in such a way that he brings to full manifestation in himself the faculty of the Spiritual Soul.

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Having put the question thus, having spoken in this way about the mystery of death – that is, about the forces that are at work in the great Universe, and bring death to man – I may now also refer in a similar manner to the forces of evil. These, too, are not such that we can simply say:

"They bring about evil actions within the human order". This again is only a collateral effect.

If the forces of death did not exist in the Universe, man would not be able to evolve the Spiritual Soul; he would not be able to receive – as he must receive, in the further course of his earthly evolution – the forces of the Spirit-Self, Life-Spirit and Spirit-Man. Man must pass through the Spiritual Soul if he wishes to absorb *in his own way* the forces of Spirit-Self, Life-Spirit and Spirit-Man. To this end he must completely unite the forces of death with his own being during the course of the fifth Post-Atlantean age: that is to say, by the middle of the third millenium A.D. And he can do so. But he cannot unite the forces of evil with his being in the same way. I say again *not in the same way*. The forces of evil are so ordered in the great Universe – in the Cosmos – that man will be able to receive them into his evolution only during the Jupiter period, even as he now receives the forces of death.

We may say therefore: The forces of evil work upon man with a lesser intensity, taking hold only of a portion of his being. If we would penetrate into the essence of these forces, we must not look at their external consequences. We must look for the essence of evil where it is present in its own inherent being; that is to say, where it works in the way in which it *must* work, because the *forces* that figure in the Universe as "evil" enter also into man. Here we come to something of which I said just now that one can speak of it only with deep emotion and then only under one essential condition: that these things are received with the deepest, truest earnestness. If we would seek out the evil in man, we must seek for it not in the evil actions that are done in human society, but in the evil inclinations – in the tendencies to evil. We must, in the first place, altogether abstract our attention from the consequences of these inclinations – consequences which appear in any individual man to a greater or lesser extent. We must direct our gaze to the evil inclinations. If we do so, then we may put this question: In what men do these evil inclinations work during our own fifth Post-Atlantean period – those inclinations which, when come to expression in their side-effects, are so plainly visible in evil actions? Who are the men concerned?

My dear friends, we receive an answer to this question when we try to pass the so-called Guardian of the Threshold and learn truly to know the human being. Then we receive the answer, and it is this: Since the beginning of the fifth Post-Atlantean period, evil inclinations – tendencies to evil – are subconsciously present in *all* men. Nay, the very entry of man into the fifth Post-Atlantean age – which is the age of modern civilisation – consists in his receiving into himself the tendencies to evil. Radically, but none the less truly, spoken, this may be stated: He who crosses the threshold into the spiritual world will undergo the following experience: There is no crime in all the world, but that every single human being, inasmuch as he belongs to the

fifth Post-Atlantean age, has in his subconsciousness the inclination towards it – I say again, the *inclination*. Whether in one case or another the inclination to evil leads to an external evil action depends on quite other circumstances than on the inclination itself. You see, my dear friends, if one is obliged in our time to tell humanity the plain unvarnished truth, the truths one has to tell are by no means comfortable.

* * *

What, then, is the real purpose of these forces which bring about the evil inclinations in man? What do they seek to achieve in the Universe, when to begin with they instil themselves into the nature of man? Of a truth, they are not present in the Universe for the express purpose of bringing about evil actions in human society. They do bring them about, for reasons which we still have to consider. But just as little as the forces of death are there in the Universe in order to make men die, so, too, the forces of evil are not there in the Universe in order to entice him into criminal actions. They are there in the Universe for a very different purpose: when man is summoned to develop the conscious Spiritual Soul, their function is to call forth in him the inclination to receive the spiritual life. In the great Universe these forces of Evil hold sway. Man must receive them, and in receiving them he implants in himself the seed, the tendency, to experience the spiritual life through the conscious Spiritual Soul. These forces, therefore, which are perverted in the human social order, do not exist in order to call forth evil actions. On the contrary, they exist in order that man, when he reaches the stage of the Spiritual Soul, may break through into the spiritual life. If man did not receive into himself those inclinations to evil of which I have just spoken, he would never come to the point where, out of his own Spiritual Soul, he has the impulse to receive from the Universe, the Spirit: which from henceforward must fertilise all cultural life, unless indeed this is to die away.

We shall do best if, to begin with, we turn our attention to what is intended to *become* of those forces whose caricature you see in the evil actions of man. We shall do best to ask ourselves: What is intended to take place in the future evolution of mankind under the influence of these very forces which are at the same time the forces responsible for the evil inclinations of man?

You see, when we think of these things we come very near the central nerve of the evolution of humanity. At the same time, all these things are connected with the disasters which have overtaken mankind to-day. All the disasters that have come upon us at the present time, and are destined to come in the near future, are like the signs of an approaching storm. They are merely the signs of quite other things that are about to come over humanity – signs which at the present stage often show the very reverse of what is coming. These things are said, *not* to encourage pessimism, but as a call to awakening, an impulse to strong actions.

Perhaps the best way of attaining our present purpose is to start from something concrete. I recently said: An essential impulse in human evolution during the age of the Spiritual Soul must be the growth of interest between man and man. The interest which one man takes in another becomes ever greater and greater. This interest must grow for the remainder of earthly evolution – and especially in four domains. The first is this: Man as he evolves towards the future will behold and see his fellow-men in new and ever-changing ways. To-day, although he has passed through rather more than a fifth of the age of the Spiritual Soul, man is little inclined as yet to see his fellow-man as he must learn to see him in the course of this epoch, which as you know, will continue into the third millenium. To-day men see one another in such a way that they overlook what is most important; they have no real vision of their fellow-men. In this respect men have yet to make full use of all that has been instilled into their souls, through various incarnations, by the influence of Art. Much can be learned from the evolution of Art; I have often given indications as to the lessons we can learn from it.

It can scarcely be denied – if we cultivate the symptomatic understanding of history which I have called for in recent lectures – that artistic creation and enjoyment are declining in almost all domains of Art. All that has been attempted in Art during the last few decades reveals very clearly, to anyone who has true feeling, that Art as such is in a period of decay. The most important element of the artistic life which must pass into the evolution of humanity in future is the education which human beings can receive from it for certain ways of understanding which will be necessary for the future.

Needless to say, every branch of culture has many different branches and concomitant effects. We may say, however, that all Art contains an element tending towards a deeper and more real knowledge of man. Anyone who truly enters, for instance, into the artistic forms created in painting or sculpture, or into the essence of the inner movements pulsating through music and poetry – anyone who experiences Art in a truly inward way (which artists themselves often fail to do nowadays) will imbue himself with something that enables him to comprehend man from a certain point of view – I mean, to comprehend him pictorially. This must come to humanity in the present age of the Spiritual Soul: the faculty to perceive men pictorially. You have already heard the elements of this. Look at the human being – behold his head: it points you back into the past. Even as a dream is understood as a reminiscence of outer physical life and thence receives its signature, so for one who sees things in their reality, all physical things are as pictures – images of something spiritual. We must learn to see through the picture-nature of man to his spiritual archetype. And this will happen as we go on into the future; man will, as it were, become transparent to his fellow-man. The way his head is formed, the way he walks: all this will be seen with an inner insight and sympathy altogether different from what the men of

today are as yet inclined to evolve. For the only way to learn to know the human being in his Ego is to cultivate this understanding of his picture-nature, and thus to approach him with the underlying feeling that everything outer physical eyes can see of him is related to the true supersensible reality of man, as a picture painted on canvas is to the reality it represents.

This underlying feeling must be gradually developed; this must be learned. Man will meet man not so as to perceive in him merely the organisation of bone, muscle, blood and so forth. No, he will learn to feel in the other man the image of his eternal and spiritual being. Behold, the human being passes by us, and we shall not imagine that we can understand him unless this that passes by us awakens in us the deeper vision of what he is as an eternal and spiritual man.

In this way we shall learn to see the human being. And we shall really be able to see him thus. For everything we see when we perceive human forms, human movements, and all that goes with them, as a picture of the eternal, will make us either warm or cold. It will have to fill us either with inner warmth or with inner cold. We shall go through the world learning to know men in a very deep and tender way. One man will make us warm, another will make us cold. Worst of all will be those who make us neither warm nor cold. Thus we shall have an inner experience in the warmth-ether which penetrates our etheric body. This will be the reflex of the heightened interest which must be evolved as between man and man.

The second thing to which I must now refer will call forth still stranger feelings in the man of to-day, who has indeed no inclination at all to receive such things as these. (Although, in a none too distant future, this very antipathy may change into sympathy for these things). The second is this: men will *understand* one another quite differently. In the two thousand years which still have to pass until the end of the fifth Post-Atlantean age, this, above all, will happen – it is true the two thousand years will not entirely suffice; what I now refer to will continue into the sixth Post-Atlantean age – but during the present age the following development will occur: Besides the recognition of the Ego, of which I have just spoken, there will arise a faculty to feel and apprehend in man, even as we meet him, his relationship to the third Hierarchy – the Angels, Archangels and Archai. This will come about through a growing recognition of the quite different way in which men are now related to speech and language, compared with how it was in earlier times. The evolution of language has already passed its zenith. Language has indeed become an abstract thing; and all the efforts that are being made to classify societies in accordance with the languages of peoples represent merely a wave of deepest untruthfulness now passing over the earth. For men no longer have that relationship to language which sees *through* the language to the human being – to the inner being of man.

On various occasions, as a first step towards an understanding of this matter, I have cited an example. I repeated it recently during a public lecture

"seeing through"

in Zürich, for the time has come to bring these things before a wider public. In Dornach, too, I have drawn attention to the same point – how surprising it is to compare the essays on Historic Method by Hermann Grimm, who stood so fully within the German mid-European culture of the nineteenth century, with essays on the same subject by Woodrow Wilson. I have carried out the experiment with great care: it is possible to take over certain sentences from Woodrow Wilson and insert them bodily in Hermann Grimm's essays, for they are almost word-for-word identical with sentences in Hermann Grimm. Again, whole sentences on Historic Method by Hermann Grimm can be transplanted into the lectures subsequently published by Woodrow Wilson. And yet there is a radical difference between the two – a difference which we notice as we read. Not indeed a difference in content: literal content will be of far less importance for mankind as we evolve towards the future. The difference is this: in Hermann Grimm, everything – even passages with which one cannot agree – has been struggled for; it has been conquered step by step, sentence by sentence. In Woodrow Wilson, on the other hand, it is as though his own inner demon, by which he is possessed in his subconsciousness, had instilled it all into his consciousness. On the one hand the things spring forth directly, at the surface of consciousness; on the other, they are "inspirations" imparted by a demon out of the subconscious into the conscious life. Indeed, we must say that what comes from Woodrow Wilson's side derives from a certain state of possession.

I give this example to show that word-for-word agreement is no longer the important thing today. I always feel it with intense pain when friends of our cause bring me quotations from this or that parson, or this or that professor, saying, "Look, this is quite anthroposophical – I beg you to see how anthroposophical it is". In our period of civilisation it is even possible for a Professor, dabbling in politics, to write on an important matter something that agrees word-for-word with that which springs from a knowledge of realities; but the word-for-word agreement is not the point. What matters is *the region of the human soul* from which things spring. We must look *through* the words of speech to the region whence things derive.

All that is said here is said not merely in order to formulate certain statements. The important thing is that the way of saying it is permeated by that inner force which proceeds directly from the Spirit. Anyone who discovers word-for-word agreements without feeling how the things here said proceed from the fountain-head of the Spirit, and are permeated by it inasmuch as they are placed into the whole context of the Anthroposophical world-conception – anyone who cannot detect the *how* of what is said – has utterly failed to recognise what is here intended, even if he notes a word-for-word agreement with some choice pronouncement of external wisdom.

It is of course not very comfortable to have to point to such examples, for the inclinations of mankind to-day frequently go in the opposite direction.

Nevertheless, it is a duty and responsibility laid upon one to-day, if one is speaking in all earnestness and does not want merely to call forth a kind of torpor, making the lectures a pleasant soporific. One must not shrink from choosing such examples as are unpleasant to many people. Surely there should be willingness to listen to a serious warning of what it will really mean for the world if people fail to notice that the world is about to have its order drawn up for it by a weak-minded American Professor! It is indeed uncomfortable to speak of actualities to-day. Many people find the very opposite convenient and pleasant. In any case, one speaks of actualities only in those domains of life where it is absolutely necessary, and where it concerns men closely – or should do so any rate – to listen to these things.

To see *through* the veils of language: this must come over humanity in future. Men must acquire the faculty to perceive the inner gesture in speech. This age will not come to an end – certainly the last stages of it will go on into the following epoch – but the third millenium will not pass by till men have come to this: they will no longer listen to another man who speaks to them as they listen to him nowadays. They will find expressed in speech and language the human being's dependence on the third Hierarchy – on the Angels, Archangels and Archai. In speech they will find an expression of that whereby a man penetrates into the spiritual – into the super-sensible. Then they will hear *through* speech into the soul of man. Needless to say, we shall have an altogether different social life when men can hear through speech the inner soul of man. Much indeed of the force of so-called evil will have to be transmuted in this way, by man becoming able to hearken to the things another man is saying and to hear, through his speech, his soul. Then, when the soul is heard through speech, there will come over man a wonderful feeling of colour, and through this feeling of colour in speech men will learn to understand one another internationally. Quite as a matter of course one sound will call forth the same feeling as the sight of a blue colour, and another sound the same feeling as the sight of a red colour. Thus, what will only be felt as warmth when one sees the human being, will grow as it were into colour when one listens to his speech. One will have to enter with intimate sympathy into the sound of the speech which is borne from human lips to human ear. That is the second thing which is approaching.

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The third thing is this: Men will experience very intimately in themselves the expressions of and configurations of feeling in other men. Much of this will be brought about through speech, but not through speech alone. When one man meets another, he will experience the state of feeling of the other in himself, in his own breathing. As we approach the future of earthly evolution, in the time to which I now refer, our breathing will attune itself to the life of feeling of the other man. One man will cause us to breathe more

quickly, another man more slowly; and according as we breathe more quickly or more slowly we shall feel what kind of a man we are meeting. Think how the social community of men will live and grow together; think how intimate the social life of man will tend to become! Certainly it will take still longer for this kind of breathing to become a part of the soul of man – the whole of the sixth epoch of civilisation and part of the seventh. And in the seventh epoch a little will be achieved of the *fourth thing*, to which I will now refer.

In so far as men belong to a human community by their own act of will, then in the realm of will they will have – forgive the hard saying – to digest one another. Inasmuch as we shall have to will, or will to will, one thing or another in association with this man or that, we shall have inner experiences similar to those we now have, still in a very primitive form, when we consume one food-stuff or another. In the sphere of *willing*, men will have to digest one another. In the sphere of *feeling*, they have to breathe one another. In the sphere of *understanding through speech*, they will have to feel one another in living colours. Lastly, as they learn really to see one another, they will learn to know one another as *Ego-beings*.

All these forces, however, will reside more in the inner realm of the soul; for their *full* development, the Jupiter, Venus and Vulcan periods of evolution will have to follow. Nevertheless, Earth-evolution will require of mankind the first suggestions of these things – suggestions in the soul and spirit. And the present time, with all its strange catastrophes, is but an inner rebellion of mankind against what is to accompany the things I have now mentioned. In future, all the tendencies making for social separation have to be overcome, and mankind to-day, rising in rebellion against this need, is flinging out over the world the cheap catch-word that men should group themselves in nations. It is an instinctive rebellion against the Divinely-willed course of human evolution; a distorting of things into the very opposite of what will none the less ensue. We must see through these things if we would gain a foundation for understanding the so-called mystery of evil. For evil is in many ways a collateral effect of what has to enter into the evolution of mankind. An engine making a long journey will smash the rails if it comes to a place where they are badly laid, and for the moment its own progress will be delayed. Humanity is in course of evolution towards such goals as I have now described. It is the mission of the age of the Spiritual Soul to recognise these goals, so that humanity may strive towards them consciously. But for the moment the permanent way is badly laid, and a fairly long time will pass before it gets better, for many people are setting to work just now to replace the faulty rails – and not by any means with better ones.

Yet, as you see, Spiritual Science tends to no kind of pessimism. Its aim is to enable Man to recognise the path of evolution on which he really is. It does, however, require, at least for certain special occasions, that one should

lay aside some of the habitual inclinations of to-day. Alas, almost at once, everyone falls back into the old ruts, and that is what makes it so very difficult to speak of such things without reserve. For in doing so – and this lies in the very nature of our time – we touch upon public issues in respect of which mankind is bent on hurling itself into the abyss, and we must continually utter this warning, this call to awakening.

THE RESOLVE FOR THE EARTH

Friedrich Behrmann

The Theme of Albert Steffen's Drama, "The Manichees"

Even among young people, under the pressure of our earthly existence, the serious question may often arise: How did you land up in this world? Has your life a sense, a task, a goal? Someone who rushes on into action may be quite willing to ignore this question, while someone who hesitates and ponders may be so much troubled by it that he falls into doubt or even despair. At times painful experience may give us a dim sense that perhaps in our destiny a process of transformation is going on which did not begin in this earthly life, but in earlier lives, and which will be completed only in lives to come. This idea, in which many riddles of destiny could be cleared up, we meet repeatedly in German spiritual life, in Lessing, Goethe, Novalis, C.F. Meyer – to mention only a few significant names.

The conception of the reincarnation of the human spirit can today be regarded, thanks to Rudolf Steiner, as a matter of certain knowledge, comprehensible for everyone who examines it with unprejudiced thought. Thus it may be natural to think that we have never shown such courage as at the time when we made the resolve to enter earthly existence through birth. Behind this resolve, under whatever conditions it may have been made, there must be a task for our lives, of a quite individual kind, which should be recognised and fulfilled on our path of destiny. It is often when a human being dies that it becomes clear what had led him consciously or unconsciously through life.

Many myths, particularly from pre-Christian times, have attempted to describe the meaning of human existence. If in this connection the myth of *Mani* (216-276 AD) is re-told in its main outlines – which became possible only since 1934, because of the discovery of original Manichean documents – it is in order to put what follows into a significant light.

The Father of worlds with his twelve aeons, the regents of time, rules in the realm of Light. The demons of darkness surge up greedily from below, producing violent whirling convulsions. The Father, as true being of goodness, has to meet this attack in a way that is in accordance with his own nature. He calls into existence the archetypal human being who, as a radiant youth bearing the five weapons of Light (the five forms of ether), descends into the depths. There the demons overwhelm him and devour his weapons of Light.

In response to a sevenfold cry for help from the abyss, the Father of Light sends the Life-Spirit, who reaches out his right hand to raise the primeval human being and lead him back into the realm of Light. Because the world of darkness swallowed the Light, bringing suffering, a mixture of both elements has arisen, from which the Life-Spirit as Demiurge forthwith creates the world: the dome of the heavens with the stars, the earth with the realms of nature, and also the human being, who, because of the share which darkness has in him, binds himself more and more to matter and forgets his origin in the heavens. To rescue him, the Christ as Demiurge comes to the earth. His deed of sacrifice awakens in earthly man the knowledge of the light imprisoned in darkness (Jesus patibilis, the sufferer) and of the Way which leads back from darkness to the home in Light.

The World-Wheel moved by Christ (the Zodiac), constantly draws sparks of light from the darkness, to lead men home beyond the Moon and the Sun. Thus the possibility is created for the human being through several lives on earth, in victories and defeats, to purify not only himself but his environment as well, transforming darkness and evil, until at the end of earthly time he may become part of the resurrection body of humanity.

The Manichean spiritual movement, in which this myth lived, once extended over wide realms of Asia, Europe and Africa, but was then cruelly persecuted and apart from a few traces completely destroyed. For a long time any knowledge of it depended upon the writings of opponents, for example St Augustine.

If we look from this point of view at Albert Steffen, we see how surprisingly he represents, not only in his writings but also in the course of his life, a Manichean impulse. It appears indeed in a form appropriate for the present time, and there can be no question of an external connection with the historical spiritual movement; only in later life did he learn about the ancient documents describing it.

He was born in 1884, the son of a doctor, in the central region of Switzerland. The swiftly running river Aare flows through plains often visited by mist. Northwards the heights of the Jura are visible, to the south the Alps, with their snowy peaks brilliant all through the year. His father's calling made it possible for the boy to know the destinies of sick human beings very early in life. The injustice, that though he was obviously gifted he was put into a school class lower than his capacity warranted, awoke in him the ability to feel his way into the sufferings of retarded and rejected people. From a noble anger, from compassion, amazement and conscience his first novel was born, which describes the inner beauty of soul of a hunchback.

The 21-year-old student of sociology and philosophy chose lodgings for himself in a miserable quarter of Berlin. Looking back at that time he wrote: "The opposition I felt within me was indeed as if of oak, but just because I felt myself as a stranger, standing apart from the millstream, I could be

aware how the passers-by in the crowded streets lived in a sub-human dream state. Often the heads had something animal about them". (*Meetings with Rudolf Steiner*, 1955). The encounters with extreme social decay enhanced his will to redeem it. He adopted a life of severe self-discipline and followed a path of spiritual training, which became increasingly purposeful after his meeting with Rudolf Steiner.

It became clear to him that the moral decline towards which our civilisation is fatally tending can be transformed only if there are human beings who pass through a spiritual rebirth and are resolved to work with unshakeable faithfulness to save what is being lost. "It belongs to evolution that in the present events in humanity the spirit descends, and begins the battle with matter. For me this means: to be able to renounce. The consequence: first sorrowfulness, then victory, and finally joy . . . I accept it . . . This was the main principle of my life, from early youth going through many metamorphoses, and sustained every year, every day." (*Self-chosen Destiny II*). Later he can say of that time, when he began to purify his soul through the contemplation of the innocent plant, for the sake of his fellow-men: "I descended with the light of the heights into the deepest abysses".

According to his notes, Steffen must have considered the plan of a work, expressing the thought of such a descent in a dramatic form, already in 1908. In early 1909 he began to write it. What he is attempting to shape are those realms of the soul which have revealed themselves to him through encounters, friendships and observations of himself. Thus in 1910 he is occupied with the form of the "Queen", who is prepared to sacrifice and destroy herself. The poet's answer – in the fourth act – will be: She who is threatened by despair may find herself and the meaning of her life again through a human being who through the severest temptations keeps faith with the eternal values of purity and sacrificial love. (see "*Thirty-Three Years*" p.327).

The resolution of the drama he found only three years later, in November 1912. He expressed this memorable moment in unforgettable words: "Waves of light and darkness passed through my soul. A drama in colours, which seemed to fill the entire universe. Black and red battled against blue and gold, upon a green ground, with mighty power. The whole was surrounded by clouds tinged with the shades of corruption. – One morning, as I rested my head in my hands, exhausted by plunging ever again into the soul's waves, what was happening took the form for my vision of great crowds of people. From these there stood out typical forms. In a few minutes I have shaped out of colour the five Acts of "The Manichees". The light I owed to the new spiritual vision, the darkness to the old agnostic way of thought, bound to the senses". (*Meetings with Rudolf Steiner*, 1955).

The play was finished on 1st March 1913. Under the title "The Resolve", Steffen sent it to the publishers S. Fischer in Berlin. Steffen wrote in July of the same year: "It is the picture of an exceptional resolve which has for me

more than an earthly significance. It is the picture of the resolve which our entire civilisation is to make". Later this will be considered more in detail. First the content of the play will be described from the point of view of its original title.

Prelude. On a mountain ridge in spiritual heights, under the blue dome of heaven, stand twelve Messengers of Light, in golden robes. They have risen to these heights through constant purification of their souls under the leadership of their Master. To the peoples down below they have imparted a poetic myth, intended to awaken in them a longing for the heights.

A messenger they have sent out, robed in blue, returns from the depths. After resuming his golden mantle he reports that people who had been awakened by the myth, and had started on the upward path, had fallen into despair at the resistance they had met at the frontier. They had built a rich city and forgotten their purpose. At last their King, stirred by his wife's suicide, had dared the upward path, but his strength had failed.

One of the messengers, a youth "untried in free deeds", offers to show the lost people the way to purification. Wearing his blue robe, he goes down into the depths.

Act I. An army captain orders a storming of the heights, but the army mutinies. The King, taking the captain's place, throws himself blindly into battle and is killed. His daughter takes over as Queen: she sets out to eradicate the weak. Those suffering from pestilence are banished to a hospital prison in marshy land. The transfer of the sick people is undertaken by a stranger in a blue robe, since no-one else will do it. The Queen admires him and would like to keep him with the army, but he refuses: the misery of the poorest people in the depths must first be relieved. "I will give my life for my friends."

Act II. In the courtyard of the hospital lie the plague-stricken: for them, no gleam of light. Through a central door, which opens to give a brief glimpse of a green landscape, the blue-robed stranger enters. He interprets to the dying the meaning of their condition. "No suffering is in vain . . . Your bodies decay, but will return in a nobler form, reborn out of this Spring." A shadow falls with the entry of the army captain. Because of the hatred in him he senses in everything only what is dark. He tries to stir up the people to make a foolhardy night attack on the army. Fury, despair and a greedy longing for life are aroused. The stranger is threatened. But he promises the prisoners not to abandon them, even to share death with them. This brings the captain to himself. Appalled by his own hatred, he desires to kill himself. But the stranger shows him the consequences of his actions. "If you destroy yourself with your own hand, you will hinder the development of the world." The prisoners also begin to yearn for the endeavour to transform themselves through suffering. At this moment the Queen enters. She wishes to free the stranger from his promise to the sick and to make him her

husband but when she sees the stranger taking the side of the captain, having promised to be faithful to him and his companions, she rushes away weeping.

Act III. The stranger has himself fallen into a painful inner conflict through his understanding of the Queen's misery. He feels he owes her a debt and leaves the hospital to bring her comfort. He gives the keys to the captain as a mark of confidence and promises to be back by midnight. But as soon as the captain is left alone, his bitterness returns. Not believing that the stranger will return, he rushes out with the people, intending to make a violent attack on the army.

Act IV. The Queen has taken refuge in a rich chamber with some favourites. The Regent and a General force their way in and call on her to lead the army, which is going to attack the enemy, but they are sent away in despair. The Queen is determined to numb her pain with self-indulgent luxury. In a passionate debate with the stranger she wishes to hand over to him the leadership of the people, while seeking to hold him back from returning to the hospital. But he invokes his unbreakable loyalty to the sick people, to the Queen, to the eternal in himself. When he warns the Queen of a possible revolt by the plague-stricken, she decides upon his arrest. But news comes that the town has been seized by the rebels and that the royal army is in flight. The stranger takes over command of the troops and drives the rebels back into the marsh. At this point the last Act begins.

The stranger, unarmed, meets the captain, who throws himself to the ground deeply ashamed of his disloyalty. Since the captain has now decided that he will himself bear the harsh suffering of the people, increased by his own guilt, the stranger can make him their guardian.

Meanwhile the Queen has achieved a conquest over herself. She resigns her love for the stranger and makes him free. She orders a withdrawal of the troops. Her people shall return to their homes, to prepare themselves by acts of loving care to be worthy of the heights. Those not willing to follow her she entrusts to the stranger.

This break-through of souls to willing resignation and to redemption by acts of sacrifice enables the messengers of the Light, who have been watching it all from the heights, to descend with the harvest of their land to bless the union of the stranger with the Queen. They even ask to be received into the realm of the depths, in order that henceforth there may be created a bridge between light and darkness.

* * *

The many-coloured and powerful language of this drama (which can only be indicated very inadequately through a summary of the content) touches directly the heart of the reader, but still more that of an audience. The deep

experience of the poet stands behind every word. Fundamentally, the mythical event gives a picture of present-day mankind trying to awaken out of its enclosure in the senses, but having to feel how one is thrown back at the frontier if one tries to storm one's way across it in too superficial a mood. Unconsciously, the fear of death approaches. The attempt is made to escape it through the fulfilment of desires. But only a courageous encounter with it, through strengthening the inwardness of the soul, can penetrate through its horrifying mask into the true light.

The strong inner relationship with the Myth related earlier is all the more astonishing since Albert Steffen did not and could not have had knowledge of it. How many points of contact there are! A messenger from the world of Light descends into the depths, where souls can find no way out, because the shadows of evil have overwhelmed them. The light within him protects him when he is prepared for the last sacrifice, that of death; through his faithfulness he can arouse the same impulse in others who are ready to sink into the abyss – in the drama, the marsh. Neither the word of the Light, which is sacrificed into the darkness, nor the indication of how this makes possible the transformation of evil into good in the course of repeated earthly lives, is lacking. And then the colours: Deeds and Sufferings of the Light, as Goethe says, entirely in accord with a modern Manicheism. In the blue of the stranger's robe appears the colour of illumined darkness; in the gold of the Manicheans, darkness shone through by light. The red of the warriors: a light reddened by passion. Black: the mirror of death. Green: the balance of light and darkness in the union of yellow and blue.

But how did it happen that the title was altered? Steffen relates: "How deeply impressive it was for a young human being to encounter the passage from Rudolf Steiner's lecture series held in August 1906 (which I did not hear personally, and of which I only received an unrevised report, and read, a few weeks before the first World War), in which he describes how a future evil race would arise and how it would become the task of a community of human beings to overcome it and transform it through the spirit. This community is that of the Manicheans, so called after their founder Manes". (*Meetings with Rudolf Steiner*, 1955).

It appears to follow from these words that Albert Steffen at this time began to make a closer study of Manicheism, when through Rudolf Steiner's indication his own connection of destiny with this forgotten spiritual movement became, in a staggering way, plain to him. It must have been this that moved him to alter the title of the play. The messengers of the Light became "Manicheans".

The play appeared for the first time in the summer of 1915 in the periodical "Schweizerland" under the title, "The Manicheans: A dramatic vision". Meanwhile he had concluded the play "Flight from Egypt", begun in 1914; this he saw as having an inner connection with "The Manicheans". S. Fischer published both plays at the beginning of June 1916. In a letter to

his poet friend, Hans Reinhart, dated 22nd June 1916, Steffen summed up the essential content of both plays: In the first play ("Flight from Egypt") the human being raises himself to the Divine by an escape from decadence and everything connected with it – sickness, sin, and corruption. In the second play ("The Manicheans") he wins from the powers of death the means to transform them. In the first he says no to death; in the second, yes. In the first there is flight and abandonment; in the second, union and help. In the first there is judgement; in the second, love. They are like negative and positive poles. This is because the Christ-Event stands between them.

Through the mediation of his friend "The Manicheans" was accepted by Dr Reucker, the Director of the Zurich City Theatre, for production. At the beginning of June 1918 Steffen went from Munich to Zurich to attend rehearsals. It was the second performance on St. John's Day, 24th June 1918 in which the play achieved its full effect. "When, at the end of the performance . . . the curtain fell, there was complete silence for several minutes. In this interval I felt: There are many present, with whom the poet is connected for always. A heavenly sorrow, which filled the space, conveyed this." (*On Spiritual Paths*). They were days of intimate happiness.

We may still consider the question: What did Albert Steffen mean by the original title of his play *The Resolve* "which our entire civilisation has to make"? We can link on to an article (*Crisis, Catharsis, Therapy*, 1944) in which Steffen gives an illuminating sketch of what Rudolf Steiner described to the teachers of the Waldorf School about the seven stages of the Will. Man experiences in the midst of his being, in the I, his Will as *Motive*. Only in the Motive – and this self-observation confirms – do we feel free from outer compulsion or inner necessity. But this motive for action meets to begin with the resistance of man's lower nature. If the I achieves mastery over the *Desires* raging in the soul, these are changed into the pure and selfless *Wish*, which springs from the higher self. But the I can take still further the much more laborious work upon itself, not generally to be achieved within a single earthly life, to transform the *Impulse* working in the life organism, so that this can grow into the *Intention* of that higher member in man's being, at present only a seed, called by Rudolf Steiner "Life-Spirit".

The will of the I can, in a future development, rise to such inner power that it can enter into the depths of the physical body to awaken the dimly working *Instinct* so that it becomes conscious *Resolve*. For present-day man, who has not yet developed this highest power, a resolve of this kind will not be possible in general on earth, but before birth, where he is surrounded by the realities of the spiritual world and where a higher I gives him the courage for resolves towards earthly existence, which have eternal value. "The Resolve which stands above Desire, Impulse and Instinct – that is to say, is guided by the Eternal and no longer limited by the transitory – arises in the Spirit-Man. In the way in which man remains faithful to this in spite of

physical hindrances, even in the face of death, the individuality which goes through different earthly lives can live."*

With his first play Steffen raised his own resolve for his life, made in the spirit, into an artistic theme, and regarded in the light of humanity in general. Faithfulness to the Spirit-Man "in defiance of physical hindrances, even in defiance of death", is movingly demonstrated.

In 1965, after an interval of nearly 5 decades, "The Manicheans" was shown at the Goetheanum. The reviewer from the Basle *National-Zeitung*, H.R. Schatüblin, regretted that Albert Steffen could no longer experience the performance of his play, "which he wrote at a most difficult time, sustained by a consciousness of responsibility for his fellow men". "The play has lost none of its contemporary quality since the first World War. On the contrary: it is perhaps in our time, when the human being is trying to penetrate out into the cosmos – in both a spiritual and spatial sense – that it is specially topical".

What this topicality means can be made clear, for example, by a note from the year 1951. In accordance with an indication by Rudolf Steiner, Steffen describes two movements in humanity: one runs horizontally as the historic movement of peoples, the other strives upwards from the depths of the masses towards social leadership. And Steffen adds, as a third movement, "The approaching migration of spirits in humanity from above downwards. (What is expressed in the last Act, the descent of the Manicheans, who have the will to transform evil into good)". In a somewhat altered description of this (from the *Portfolio of a Spirit Seeker* – German edition, p.300), he speaks of the last extending in the form of a sphere "It is the return of the I-endowed human beings, spiritually awakened".

Entirely in accordance with the Manichean myth, Steffen is concerned to call to his side (in the sense of the Greek *parakalein*, which means both to call to one's side, and to comfort), those who hear the call in need sounding out of the depths of humanity, who descend bravely and decisively, armed with the divine powers of Light, into the depths. This is described in his own verses, which can be rendered very tentatively into English:

* Rudolf Steiner's original words to the teachers are available to English readers in the fourth lecture of "Study of Man" (Second edition, Rudolf Steiner Press reprinted 1981). There "Entschluss" is translated "Resolution". In this context "Wish" has a special sense; not the everyday wish for this or that, but for example, the noble wish to fulfil an ideal. (Translator's Note)

The firm resolve to work is hard to make.
What now is made by men is built on death:
They meet in answer from created things
Bound by necessity, the blows of hate.

Into the Elements they bring destruction.
What Gods created turns to nothingness.
Will they respond to Love's creative word?
Oh, after deeds is even less of Light!

Thou madest the resolve to do thy work
Above, upon a star, before descending
To raise the courage of the already lost.

The dead will offer thee their praise –
They see in death the triumphs of new life
And in creative man the new-born child.

(*"Wach auf, du Todesschläfer"* p.45, 1941)



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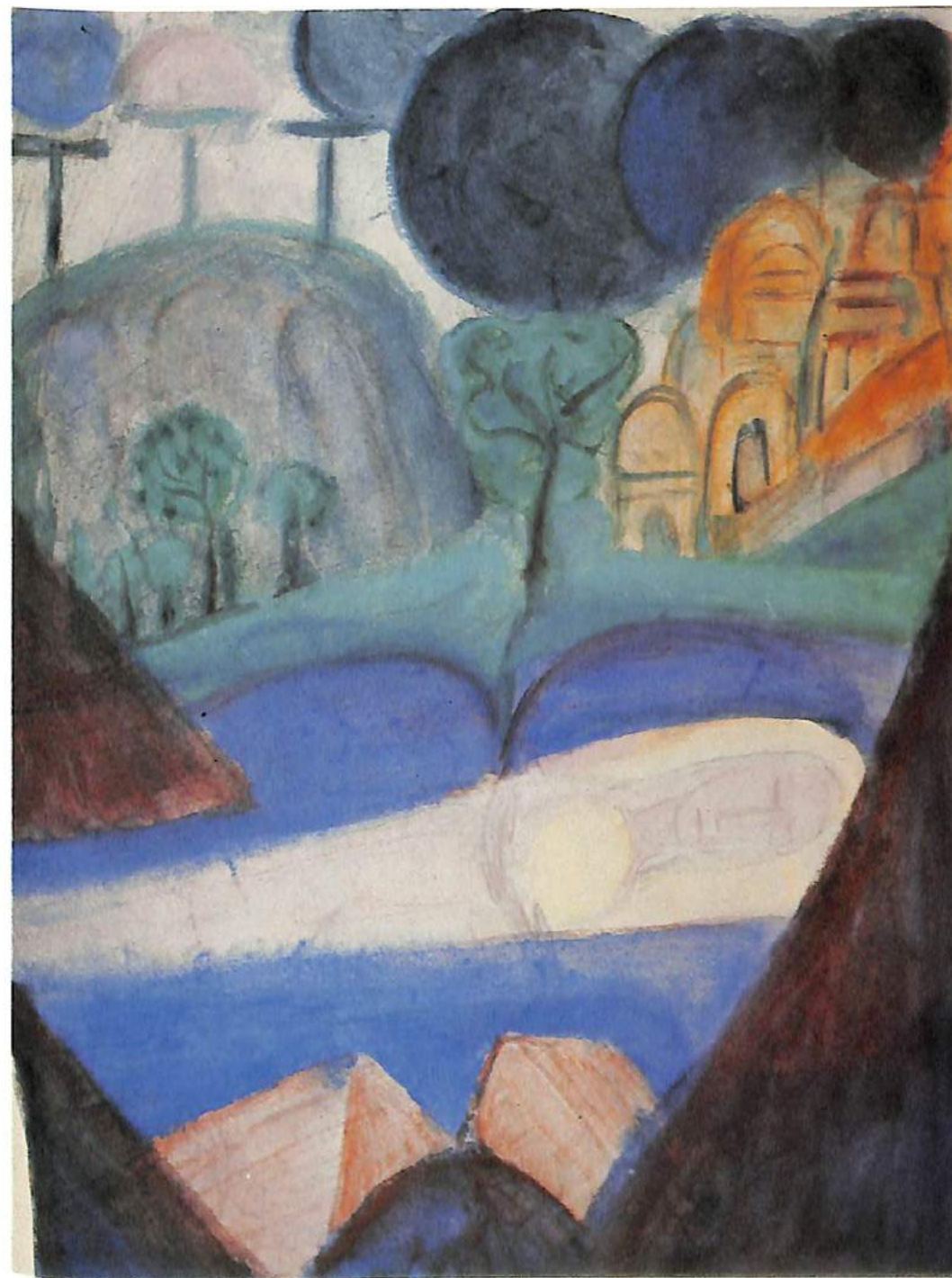
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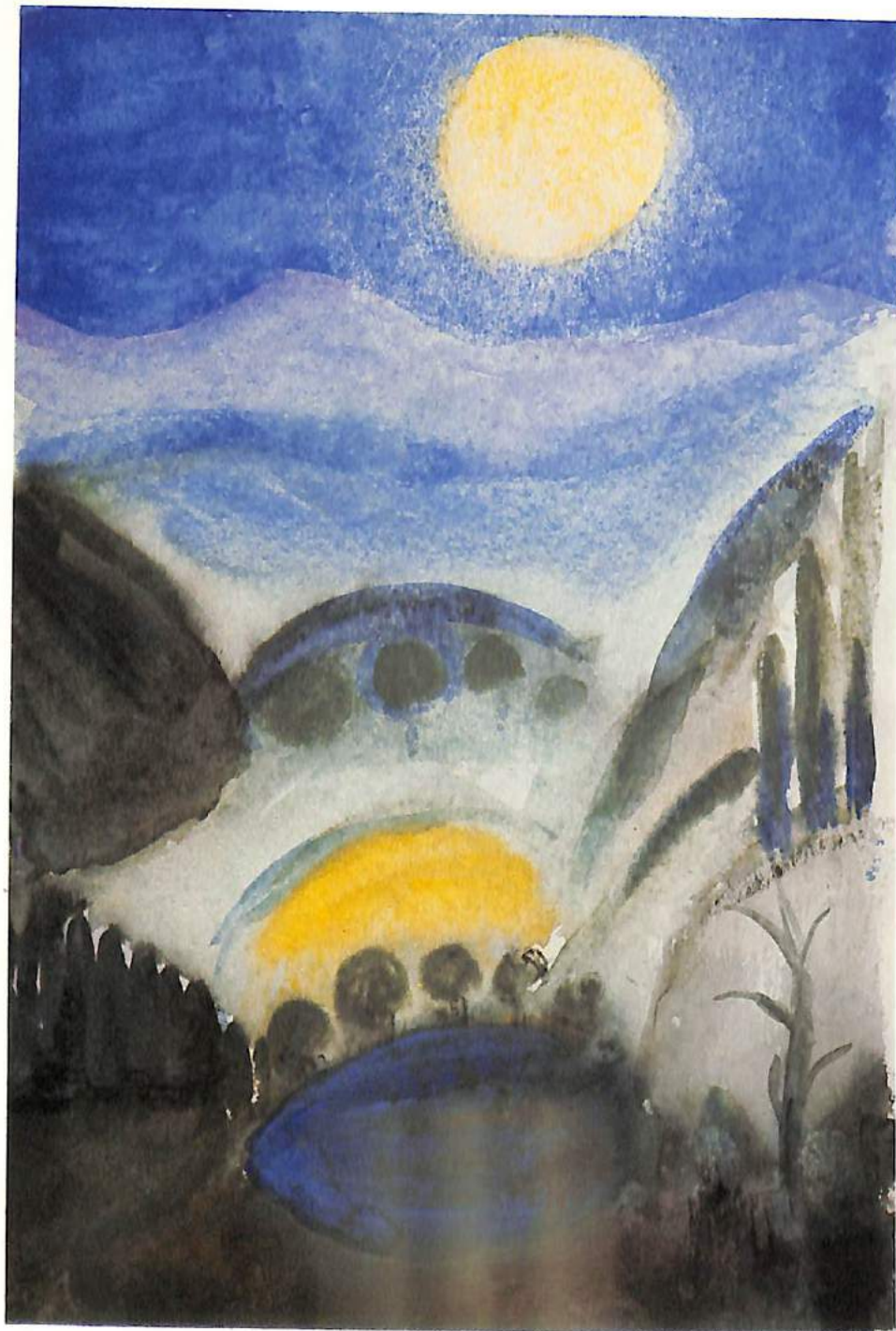
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THE HUMAN BEING

I am
more than lifeless mineral
because
the Creator-Father
fashioned me to stand erect.

I am
more than the slumbering plant
because
the Son-Logos
hallows my heart.

I am
more than the dreaming beast
because
as Cosmic Thought
the Spirit
enlightens my head.

I am man,
living and working towards
a society of free beings
to the end
that all creatures may be delivered
by way of truth,
by way of loving words,
by way of deeds which are strong.

DER MENSCH

Ich bin
mehr als das tote Gestein,
weil der Vater
als Weltengestalter
aufrechten Gang meinem Körper gegeben.

Ich bin
mehr als die schlafende Pflanze
weil der Sohn
als Weltenwort
in meinem Herzen wohnt.

Ich bin
mehr als das träumende Tier,
weil der Geist
als Weltgedanke
mein Haupt erleuchtet.

Ich bin Mensch,
Schöpfer an der Gemeinschaft
freier Wesen
Miterlöser aller Kreaturen,
durch Wahrheit,
durch liebende Worte,
durch Taten, die stark sind.

I SPEAK TO THEE

I speak to thee
With rainbow colours after storm
With stellar eyes out of the dome of night
With flower faces out of Eden's garden.

And yet thou turnest only then thy face
Towards me, when I call the Risen One,
Who went down into hell to waken Adam
When he had fallen to the sleep of death.

WONDER SEIZES ME AT NIGHT

Wonder seizes me at night
For the stars rise up
Though my eyes are closed.

Is then heaven in me? So I ask –
And it speaks: Yes, we within thee
Bring our radiance, send our sounding.

Space, illumined by the daystar,
Has become time's firmament
Now, for those who died.

Hope long guarded silently
And entrusted to the spirit
Now is utterly fulfilled.

ICH SPRECHE ZU DIR

Ich spreche zu dir
mit Regenbogenfarben nach Gewitterstürmen,
mit Sternensblicken aus dem Dom der Nacht,
mit Blumenangesichtern aus dem Garten Eden.

Jedoch, du wendest mir dein Angesicht erst zu,
als ich den Auferstandenen rufe,
der in den Hades stieg, um Adam zu erwecken,
da er dem Todesschlaf verfallen war.

STAUNEN FASST MICH IN DEN NÄCHTEN

Staunen fasst mich in den Nächten,
denn es gehn die Sterne auf
unter den geschlossnen Augen.

Ist in mir der Himmel? frag ich.
Da ertönt es: Wir in dir
bringen Helle, senden Laute.

Raum, vom Tageslicht erleuchtet,
ist zum Zeitenfirmament
der Gestorbenen geworden.

Lange schon gehegte Hoffnung,
ganz dem Geist anheimgestellt,
wurde heut in dir Erfüllung.

FROM THE BEYOND

From the beyond I hear the cry:
Your angel does not bid you fight
the enemy of love and light,
but take his measure with your eye.

By looking, to a mirror grow
wherein the demon sees his worst;
the puffing beast itself will burst,
burnt in your purifying glow.

The Lord of Destiny deems meet
that you not judge, point guilt, show proof –
but merely that you live in truth.
The spirit holds the judgement seat.

TO A ROSE

I view myself in you and you in me.
Where I am serpent, there are you the flower.
We both partook of Earth's enclaying dower:
in you ate God, in me the beast unfree.

The Earth became for you a sacred bower.
You strike deep roots and do not wish to flee,
while I go parched and hungry, longingly,
and seek within the All my place and power.

You outgrow death with colour pure and vernal
and suck from out the mould a life eternal,
while I but die, again and oft returning.
Alas, for only thus, in seeking, yearning,
and after many a tired life-time's close,
may I your nature wear, O red, red rose.

VON DRÜBEN

Von drüben tönt ein Ruf zu mir:
Dem Feind der Liebe und des Lichts
Ins Auge schauen! Weiter nichts
Verlangt der Engel jetzt von dir!

Nur, dass du wie ein Spiegel wirst,
Darin der Dämon sich erkennt,
in deiner Läuterung verbrennt,
Das Böse in sich selbst zerbirst.

Der Herr des Schicksals fordert nicht,
dass du die Hand als Richter hebst,
nur, dass du in der Wahrheit lebst:
Der Geist ist selber das Gericht.

AN EINE ROSE

Ich schaue mich in dir und dich in mir:
Wo ich die Schlange bin, bist du die Blume,
wir assen beide von der irdischen Krume,
in dir ass Gott, in mir ass noch das Tier.

Die Erde ward für dich zum Heiligtume,
du wurzelst fest, du willst nicht fort von ihr.
Ich aber sehne mich, ich darbe hier,
ich such im All nach meinem Eigentume.

Du überwächst den Tod mit deinen Farben
und saugst dir ewiges Leben aus dem Boden.
Ich kehre immer wieder, um zu sterben.

Denn ach: Nur durch mein Suchen, Sehnen, Darben,
nur durch die Wiederkehr von vielen Toden
darf ich um dich, o rote Rose, werben.

PRAYER

O Christ,
 Grant me the power
 That I may govern
 Hands, and feet, and senses, and word.
 Help me to use them
 For right deeds and right ways,
 For pure thoughts
 And loving counsel.
 Lead me,
 So that I do not build errors into my being.
 Warn me, that I should forgive
 When someone has harmed me!
 Then I shall build in such a way
 That I will the Good
 When I return.
 Warn me, that I should repent
 When I have caused someone pain.
 Then I shall build in such a way
 That I shall think the Truth
 When I return.
 Bestow it upon me, that I share the joy
 And the sufferings of others,
 That I become a fellow creator
 In harmony with each one's ways.

GEBET

O Christus,
 gib mir die Kraft
 dass ich beherrsche
 die Hände, die Füße, die Sinne, das Wort.
 Hilf, dass ich sie brauche
 zu rechten Taten und richtigen Wegen,
 zu reinen Gedanken
 und liebendem Rate.
 Und leite mich,
 dass ich nicht Fehler in mich baue.
 Mahne mich, dass ich verzeihe
 wenn jemand mich schädigte!
 Dann baue ich so,
 dass ich Gutes will,
 wenn ich wiederkahre.
 Mahne mich, dass ich bereue,
 wenn ich jemand verletzte.
 Dann baue ich so,
 dass ich Wahres denke,
 wenn ich wiederkahre.
 Schenke mir Mitfreude
 und Mitleiden mit den Menschen,
 dass ich Mitschöpfer werde
 gemäss der Art eines jeden.

THE ENCOUNTER OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS¹

Albert Steffen

A Page of Memory

About the year 1910 a remark of Rudolf Steiner's was passed on to me by friends. He had said: "In the colouring of the autumn leaves, which in the past was not so brilliant as now, beings are revealed who had not spoken before now to human hearts. In this there is, for all who can participate in such natural events, a call for active spirituality; for without a transformation of vision through the power of the spirit the eye cannot fully grasp reality as it goes through change".

That the senses themselves are transformed in their power of perception we can learn from the history of painting. Pythagoras names only four colours which need to be considered: White, black, red, and ochre. From Homer we remember the wine-dark sea and the red-cheeked ships. There were many terms for warm colours, but few for the cold colours. The phoenix, the bird of re-birth, was purple. In ritual the statue of Jupiter was coloured red, and the "Minium" of Ephesus (vermilion) gave the mood for the ceremony, in which the hymn arose.

Some artists among us sought in colour, word and note, through constant practice, to grasp the new evolution of the world. It was coming about, that we knew, but without our inner activity it did not come to human consciousness. Through a creative act, however small — perhaps a poem or a picture — to help this on, was our innermost endeavour. We were very happy about the new task which lay before us. We were to become bearers of a sense-perception not observed before, just as the painters of the early Middle Ages could impart to blue as a colour a heavenly splendour of its own, while the Greeks regarded it only as a shadow in its relationship to the light.

An endeavour began to experience the fresh colours of spring. We wished through the light of knowledge which arose in us through inner exercise to lighten the creative reddish-purple, naturally perceived by ancient men, into the colour of peach blossom. That was not a theory but an experience, for we felt this new colour when we went through the English gardens in Munich, like a loving tasting in our mouths. But it was more difficult to carry over into picture or word the healing power of this communion with nature which refreshed us from within.

We read in Aristotle that he ascribed to green as a colour value a therapeutic, but no artistic significance, as for red and yellow. The etheric experience of meadow and wood should become the foundation of the new art. The fresh growth of the plants had to become a medicament for us. We had to find in peach-blossom as a colour the healing power which Aristotle had earlier ascribed to green, and which lived in it no longer, as it seemed (as conventional landscape painting showed us).

This was like a new sense of taste in the shades of colour. We saw traces of such a birth in van Gogh and Cézanne. At that time we all passed through the experience that the artists were in danger of becoming bearers of the coming of the forces of death and thereby falling into an abyss. But art in the future should be a fulfilment, not a renunciation. We did not want simply to be onlookers, but to share in experience, and indeed in intensive creation, in the renewal of youth, and in the begetting of life. Our own work should be a rebirth — but we experienced in ourselves with painful dissatisfaction that the pictures imparted by the senses, even the most beautiful "still lifes", had something dead about them. How could they become alive and have the same refreshing power that life itself gives? We were instructed by Rudolf Steiner's exercise leading to a grasp of the etheric body of the plant. This was our rescue from the death of artistic power, the fulfilment of creativity in its truest form, because this guidance proceeded from the laws of growth in the plant itself. This exercise had a divine necessity about it, and yet it lay entirely in our human freedom to carry it out. It expressed the language of nature in human words. It led through the death of art, into which so many painters and poets fell at the time, into a genuine realm of creation.

At this time a lecture by Rudolf Steiner made an unforgettable impression upon us. He pointed to a spiritual training which starts from research into nature and carries over the exactness of sense-observation into spiritual perception, and continued something like this: "A human being on his way comes into a situation, for example before an avalanche, in which he would have certainly been killed if he had made a further step. He suddenly hears a voice or sees a vision warning him. He stops and says to himself: That was not a perception as these ordinarily come to me through the familiar senses upon earth. It is a supersensible sign. Doubts may arise indeed later and he may forget the experience. Nevertheless a mood will awaken in him which says: I owe my life to a spiritual being who warned me — and so the wish will arise to devote to this super-terrestrial power the newly won, reborn life".

Rudolf Steiner added that there are many human beings who have experienced something of this kind, without preserving it in their waking memory — but they might recognise it if they looked back over their lives. A memory can be more far-reaching and profound than the fleeting sense-impression, to which it is related. This is the case when one awakens to its full significance, often much later, and raises to consciousness what one

¹ Passages chosen from "Geist-Erwachen in Farbenerleben" and "Reisen Hüben und Druben" by kind permission of Dr Friedrich Behrmann.

experienced *in feeling* at the same time. For the sense-impression is not the whole knowledge of what happened at the time of the original perception; particularly if it is a sense-impression reaching the ear and eye *from within*, when as in the case described by Rudolf Steiner, life seemed already lost.

Our life, which had reached an abyss in civilisation, would have gone no further, if the etheric countenance of life had not looked out to us with promise from the shadow-green of death.

* * *

Inner Experience of Light

On dark days it is well-advised to picture shining things but they should not be taken from the physical world, since this itself appears lacking in light. Even the colours which appear on the surfaces of earthly objects have to be seen as shining in the soul. They should be beheld as soul-processes arising from within. In their moral effect they have just as much reality, but supersensibly visible. These can be thoughts, feelings, passions, and so on, if one develops the organs of perception for these. The inner development which consists in the liberation of thoughts from the body, the control of feelings, and the transformation of impulses, can be met by a deepening of feeling for the relationships of colour, and the experience of the moods which are thus awakened, for example devotion in the colour blue, courage in red, harmonisation in the rainbow, forming a development which comes from outside us. The painter starts from outer, the researcher from inner development. It is best when the two supplement one another.

One may come back from a museum with an abundance of impressions of colour. But it is remarkable — on this dark winter day they only illuminate the inner being of the soul for a brief time. One has to come to their help through an exercise which finds and preserves the eternal value of the paintings. In one's dark room on whose walls one has imagined them hanging they must go on shining. How is this to be done? By opening the inner source of light in oneself. This comes about through the knowledge that the world is born out of light, according to a cosmic plan of creation. Everything was once light. This has thickened into air, into water, into earth; into stone, plant, animal, and man with his thoughts, feelings and instincts. Light lives in all things, though it has hardened and grown dark, fallen and withered, dead. The light of the senses is not that original light on which the genesis of the world is founded. Yet one can say: "Wisdom lives in the Light", though one must say it in a pictorial sense.

Here we point towards a fundamental exercise in Rudolf Steiner's spiritual science, one which can lead to Imagination.¹ It develops the power of thought without being influenced by the body. Thought liberated and strengthened in this way grasps the being of things outside the body. It

¹ Rudolf Steiner, "Occult Science and Occult Development", London, May 1st 1913.

penetrates deeper into them than sense-perception does. It experiences in colours the beings at work in them. It awakens before them into an etheric perception. Thus it experiences its pre-birthly origin, the incarnation into the physical body of man's soul and spirit from a supersensible realm.

About this the "picture colours", as Rudolf Steiner calls them, speak an eloquent language. They are black, "the spiritual picture of death"; green, "the dead picture of life"; peach-blossom, "the living picture of the soul", white, "the soul picture of the spirit". (*Colour, Three Lectures* by Rudolf Steiner at Dornach, May 6th-8th 1921. Rudolf Steiner Press). They lead out of the physical realm into the etheric.

This meditation — Rudolf Steiner continues — can be enhanced in such a way that the colours are grasped still more intensively than in the earlier experience. It must be "permeated by feeling and sensitivity". "Wisdom radiates in the Light". Not only does it live in it and awaken thereby the body of formative forces to imaginative vision, but in its radiation it works even more powerfully upon the soul, glows and flames through it, and inspires it; it grasps from the regions of the stars the feeling man with his rhythmic organs, his breath and his pulse, sounds, syllables and words. These are now "gleaming colours" which shine up and do not only intend to give form, but to speak, sing, and tell. They lead back, if the power of their light is followed, into earlier lives on earth, but only when we purify our souls continually through their rays. And we have to restrain the external word, that the word within may win back the power of its origin.

And when the meditation includes the whole world, that is to say, when we feel our human will in accord with the powers of creation and have achieved devotion in thought, reverence in feeling, and submission to the course of evolution in our will, then is revealed to our hearts the purpose of the earth, the transformation of the "star of wisdom" into the star of love, and we join in the work that builds it.

For this Rudolf Steiner gave the meditation: "The wisdom of the world radiates in the light". From these three aspects of the light one can contemplate man himself and try to understand his inner colours, which reveal how he can become a fellow-creator in the coming into being of the world and of humanity, — and thus love him in the spirit.

* * *

Knowledge of the World

The complex of desires, which works in our *willing*, pulls us down to the earth. But in the earth are the crystals, through which the I should illuminate and clarify itself. It recognises in a rock crystal mathematical and even musical laws, which raise it to the stars. Feeling sustains itself in hovering between above and below. It can succumb to the influences both of earth and heaven, of the entire surrounding sky, of all the elements, and of the times of year. It must try to secure mastery for itself. This is achieved

through the moral impression of sense perceptions, especially of colours, and quite especially of the rainbow. *Thinking* has to become world-conception, founded in the stars. As such it is *general*.

These are experiences which result when the human being leaves his body and unites with the world outside himself. Only thinking, feeling, and willing freed from the body lead him to knowledge of the world.

When the human being is outside his body he passes over into the world as a spirit being, and experiences himself as part of it. But in different stages. He recognises himself indeed as related with the stone, but he does not enter it. He is still outside it as with his own body, which he has left and now looks at from outside. Thus he only reflects himself in the mineral earth and its physical laws. Water is nearer to him, but he does not live within it, only in its effects. He shares in its metamorphosis, its passage into vapour, and back into liquid form in the atmosphere, only in an unconscious way. Only in air does he feel himself growing more conscious, breathing it in and out, and beginning to perceive certain processes of the soul accompanying this.

With the light the human being awakens. The deeds and sufferings of the light become experiences of the soul for him. They work upon his inner being, raising and lowering its consciousness. Through them he becomes cooler and warmer. They purify him.

Nature shows herself as heavenly, and raises him up, and where she appears to him only as earthly, he is able to transform her, in so far as he recognises his own divine origin, by taking her into himself and ennobling her by his spirit. It comes more and more to consciousness in him that in the past she has blessed him with her inexhaustible powers (thus the fundamental feeling towards her is devotion), and that he must lead her back to the Creator (out of gratitude). Thus in observing her creations he is moved and filled with compassion.

Both feelings awaken in him through the light itself, which in him becomes knowledge. When he breathes in the sunlit air he feels the courage which ensouls him, and that he takes in with it the spirituality of the ether; and when he breathes it out again, he feels that he can go out so far into the universe as he has purified himself inwardly.

In the spirit he meets beings of a similar kind. He lives with other entelechies in so far as they weave in the same spiritual light. He forms with them an atmosphere of soul, which grows cooler or warmer according to how far they agree. He experiences communication with the dead, whether they have gone away from the earth or are approaching it once more, and he comes to know their leaders, who originate in the stars, who guide them out of life and into life.

The teaching about colour which the earthly researcher begins to develop reveals itself as a heavenly drama enacted by the Hierarchies. It flows over into the growth and downfall of worlds. What was impossible for human beings the gods can do, who form the stones, bring the plants to growth and

to withering, and lead the group-souls of the animals. They teach this to the dead, and it is these who pour into the living love for the common Earth-mother, the daughter of God, holy Natura. They remember the great masters who painted her out of the colours, out of gold and blue, to preserve mankind from the dazzling power of Lucifer and the darkness of Ahriman.

* * *

Precious Stones

She who died had possessed a collection of precious stones. This was perhaps the dearest thing which she had to leave behind her, belonging to her earthly life. Her companion was seized by grief, when he had to look at it in his loneliness; he had given her this present for their Silver Wedding. Now he felt an unbearable pain; it was as if he ought never again to enjoy it, because she could not look at it.

Now there came to him quite unexpectedly, like a heavenly comforter, the thought that the souls of the dead could experience in the spiritual realm the origin of precious stones. Was this knowledge, which shone out to him from the splendour of a ruby, as true for her as for him? If not, since she had the jewel no longer before her eyes, how could she achieve the same certainty? This could only become an experience for her, if he brought it to her in the spirit. But how? This would have to happen through the precious stone itself and not through the one who contemplated it, who would be only able to send her an image of it. The colours themselves would have to relate it to her. And they said that they had formed themselves through measureless ages of time. But to begin with they said this only to him, as he went into their depths – and so doing, received greater and greater mysteries of the origin of the world. These he could impart again to his companion in the spirit, and she had thereby the most inward joy.

Thus the precious stone became a mediator of the Creation, and there gathered about it the heavenly Hierarchies. In this way she and he could share together the most wonderful festival hours. Death could no longer divide them. It led them more deeply together. And at last they reach the heavenly Jerusalem.

* * *

In the Baptistery at Florence

He had contemplated works of art, tirelessly practising his spiritual vision, for many decades. Once again, as often before, he had been spending time in the Baptistery at Florence, where Dante was baptized. Unexpectedly, he found his soul as if released from the body, living and weaving in the mosaics, which are born out of their golden background, as the soul of the writer of the Divine Comedy did – who brought down and assembled within himself the being of the stars. Through this such songs arose, describing the

life of the Redeemer, prepared before the Birth of Jesus and working on after the Resurrection of Christ.

But not only in the way it is done in the Old and New Testaments, in accord with the venerable traditions, but leading further; in such a way that the content of these holy books was further developed and completed — because the events of Earth were raised into the spheres of heaven so that there they could be liberated from the limitations of the temporal.

Thus a gospel came to meet the beholder, allowing him to perceive many events of the life of the Redeemer which had remained unknown. He could say to himself: revelation is not ended, but beginning. Christ Jesus still speaks today to human beings, and his apostles proclaim the history of the present Saviour who walks in spirit among human beings as He did then in the body.

After his soul had lived deeply in the mosaics, freed from the body, it returned to it once more. He left the Baptistery and went back to his hotel, which was quite near. From his room, high in the building, he looked at the cathedral. Below, on the street, many people passed by, cars blew their horns, trams rumbled along. But they could not overcome the power of the quietness, in which the heavenly colours continued to echo. He lived in this hour after hour. He gazed and listened from the heights down to the depths and perceived with heavenly senses the earth, and also his earthly body.

The earthly body was transparent, like the shadow of an eternal form, which shone from afar; with his environment, he was disappearing, and becoming more and more insubstantial. But when he was near to fading away completely, a brightness arose behind him and shone through him. Where did this splendour come from, which was growing more and more powerful, and yet still remained gentle?

Suddenly he saw that it poured from the rising disc of the moon, and that the waves of light as they came nearer revealed sequences of pictures, which appeared wonderfully familiar to him. Certainly, he had never beheld them in his present earthly life, and yet they lived within him. He knew quite clearly that he must have seen them once — but since then they had been transformed, purified and developed, as if by a painter who had indeed seen a certain motif with his eyes, but carried it about with him for a long period and given it a new form in accordance with his own being.

For long, not only for days like this artist, he had preserved within himself these pictures of a life, flooding and ebbing like the surge of tides. They had been his for centuries. They had gone with him on the way through the heavenly spheres. Destiny worked in them, which came about and took form as the consequence of his deeds and sufferings in an earlier life on earth. This would now have to be fulfilled in the present life.

As he said this to himself, what he had to call his "Inner Moon" faded away. Outside him it was entirely dark, but he felt the bright waves of feeling flowing on, and he was in the clearest way conscious that they originated not





only from within his own soul, but also from the universe. Thus the spirit and the cosmos found each other and united, indeed became identical, in this.

His consciousness was awake and yet he knew that he was dreaming. He could contemplate his dreams as if they were pictures given by the senses. Nothing evaded his vision, and he comprehended everything that was placed before his spiritual sight. He did not feel that he had fallen asleep, but that his consciousness was wakeful, indeed more than wakeful. Yet he was outside his body, motionless and at rest, because he was free from wishes and only desired what the gods would bestow on him. The wrapping of sleep about him he did not feel as woven out of darkness, but out of light, as the flowers of a meadow are woven out of the rays of the sun. He felt as if he had taken up into his soul all the flowers of the earth; but here the blossoms became eyes, looking out into the universe.

The perception of spirits springs forth from human sleep, he reflected, and I too am a spirit. In his reflections shone the sun. And then he perceived the sun herself, but transformed; not surrounded by the dazzling garment of rays, as she appears when seen from the earth, but as heavenly rose, whose petals grew out into beings peopling the universe. The noblest of these beings which shone in the reddish, passing sometimes into violet, sometimes into gold, in a hundred-petalled blossom, growing into the clearest purple, suddenly condensed into a heart. Within its chambers he at once returned into spirit-wakefulness. He found himself again in the everyday consciousness and knew: here on earth the task is now to work with the heavenly powers which have been one according to the intentions of him who came from the sun, the Christ. To transform the earth with the power granted by him, the son of the sun. To walk with feet upon the earth and guide human destinies towards the Good. To create with the hands and make the fields of the inhabitants of earth more beautiful. To show with the head the way from death to resurrection.

He found himself gazing once more at the central painting in the dome of the Baptistery: Christ raising himself from the grave, between Paradise and the Last Judgement.

But now he knew that the poet of the present time has to add to the medieval picture knowledge of repeated earthly lives.

A SKETCH

Man has acquired memories because experiences come to him from outside and have become his inner possessions. They belong to his "I", to be sure, but only as its garment. This he can lay aside — at least from time to time — if he has strength to look down upon it from the perspective of the self. Then, even though it has been modified by him, it is no longer in him — rather outside, as though pushed off from him, as though objectified. He must say to himself nonetheless: this is still my destiny, which sooner or later should show its consequences. His memories then appear above, around or below him, like the breathing heavens, the ever-transforming clouds, the quaking earth: a universe outside him.

The question presents itself: how should he relate to memories, when, despite their externality, they still intrude on him (which certainly lies in their nature) and threaten to overpower him? This can occur whenever his "I" weakens and loses the force to hold them at bay while contemplating them. This is so particularly in sleep, from which they can startle him. In dreams, where in altered form they rouse his self-reproach and appear, intensified to inhumanity, as ghouls or demons.

In contrast, the thoughts one has developed from sense impressions in the course of the day do not return in this fashion. We must have recourse to far more inward capacities for our defence. These can be awakened and carried over into the dream life, if we spiritualise our sense impressions — that is to say, not merely enlarge them through concepts but refine them through moral perceptions. Applied to the sense of sight: by transforming, say, the grandest impression the eyes can have — that of the dawn — into a living spiritual being. It is Aurora. We feel all at once how Aurora is entering our soul. We sense Aurora would make her dwelling in our hearts.

Aurora does not disappear again when it is night, beneath the terrestrial horizon, but lifts up over the spiritual. Aurora illumines the soul as it passes over into sleep and disperses there the sinister powers.

The consequence of this inner experience is that a man, on awakening the next morning, naturally beholds the outer sun as before (though still more beautiful) as it rises in the east, but now perceives in it the message it has brought over from the night, the sign by which he is to overcome the physical darkness. It is the cross, and round about it the stars that reveal his destiny. He steps forth now as a champion for the Sun-spirit against the minions of the abyss, against evil, armed for the experiences of the coming day.

But by this, everything brought forth by the sun takes on a new complexion. This is most apparent in the world of plants. From now on the flowers look at us though they wished us to take something of their colours and shapes into our soul. They speak to us like our conscience.

It is as if they wanted to become word-gestures.

Surely it is for this reason we gather them into bouquets to give away on birthdays. In truth, this should happen at a birthday of the spirit.

The nearer a man draws toward death, the more intimately do these blossoms speak to him. For he senses ever more surely that they have descended from the stars as messengers of the gods.

Wearied from the briefest way,
all your pain must longer stay.
Tulip, violet, Solomon's seal:
mirrored stars bring joy and heal.

As passion flower one is known,
but its wounds to scars have grown.
Nails of green no harm will do,
when through Eden's grove I go.

tr.. T.V.V.

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TIME PAST AND TIME FUTURE

Charles Davy

There is an old legend of a monk who went out to walk in the monastery garden and paused by a tree to listen to the singing of a bird. It sang so sweetly that he stood there listening a few minutes, but on returning to his monastery he found that many years had passed.

Variants of this story are found here and there in folklore and poetry. They speak of a longing to escape from the march of time into a realm where time is not; a realm which a modern poet, who himself knew this longing, imagined as a realm

Where blooms the flower when her petals fade,
Where sleepeth echo by earth's music made,
Where all things transient to the changeless win,
There waits the peace thy spirit dwelleth in.*

A belief that such a realm exists and can be glimpsed, however briefly, goes back to Plato and beyond. But in quite early times, I would surmise, people seldom thought of time as such. They lived naturally in the alternation of day and night, sunrise and sunset, the slow passage of the seasons.

Sundials were perfected by Arab astronomers and mathematicians during the Middle Ages, but they were rare in Western Europe until the end of the 15th century. Then they came widely into use as garden ornaments, usually inscribed with mottoes, often sombre reminders of mortality and transience. "Time tryeth troth" – "As the long hours do pass away, so doth the life of man decay" – but sometimes striking a more cheerful note – "I tell only the sunny hours".

Later on the ticking of clocks could be heard as a similar warning, and it was believed that a favourite clock would often stop at the hour of the owner's death. I used to stay in a country house where a tall grandfather clock stood on a first-floor landing and was audible through bedroom walls. To a wakeful ear its voice could sound quite ominous – tick tock, tick tock – all through the night.

The waterclock, or clepsydra, was probably invented in ancient Egypt; it was known to the Chinese and developed later by the Greeks and Romans. In mediaeval Europe the first mechanical clocks, large and clumsy, were being made in the 13th century. A little later came the widely used hourglass,

or sandglass; examples of it could be seen attached to the pulpit in old churches, for timing sermons. Clocks were improved and refined; they led on, through the invention of the mainspring instead of weights as driving power, to small clocks and pocket watches, and finally to the wristwatch, now often held in place by a metal bracelet – modern man visibly subject to the very fetters of time.

These are short-term dealings with time. Now we come to longer views of time past and time future; they have varied widely in the course of history.

India has the tradition of vast cycles of time past; the first and best was the *krita yuga*, the age of gold, while the last, the *kali yuga*, the age of iron, cast its dark shadow over the world until it came to an end in 1899.

The Australian aborigines have their traditional Dreamtime, when the gods walked on earth in totemic form and marked out sacred sites which the surviving aborigines still try to preserve for secret rites of ancestor-worship.

The Greeks had legends of a far back Golden Age. Together with their joy in physical life, they felt that twilight was falling on Olympus and that after death they had nothing to hope for but a dreary existence in the land of the shades. In some Greek thinkers, and later among the Romans, we find the idea of time returning on itself, so that everything that has happened will eventually happen again – even a Golden Age might one day return. But in the pre-Christian world it was generally thought that the best times lay somewhere in the past

The advent of Christianity gave its followers a new outlook on past and future. They took their view of time past from the Old Testament accounts of the Creation and the Fall; and they expected that in the quite early future the return of Christ to judge mankind would signalise the end of the world and the end of time.

Gradually this expectation faded, but for centuries Christians continued to believe that a Judgement Day was not far off:

Dies irae, dies illa
Solvat saecula in favilla
Teste David cum Sibylla . . .

During the Middle Ages in western Europe the attention of Christian teaching was thus very often directed towards ideas of sin and judgement – both an imminent judgement of the world and an immediate judgement of the individual after death. Lurid paintings on church walls depicted the torments of Hell and the bliss of Heaven, but it does not appear that this emphasis made much difference to the behaviour of people generally. The threat of hell-fire could be warded off, even at death's door, by confession, repentance and absolution.

* Walter de la Mare, *Collected Poems* (Faber, 1942)

* Legend has it that occasionally, when the sand had almost run through, a fervent preacher would turn the hourglass over: "Let us have another hour together, my brethren".

The Elizabethan period in England, if we take it as beginning near the end of the 15th century, brought new attitudes, new feelings. This time brought the onset of the epoch called by Rudolf Steiner the epoch of the Consciousness Soul, marked not only by new demands for freedom, religious and political, by a new self-awareness and a new impulse to explore the world, but also by something less familiar – a new close awareness of death.

One symptom of this was the sudden emergence in the 15th century of the Dance of Death motif in Western European art. We find it in paintings, murals, woodcuts, sculptures, stained-glass windows, tapestries, often showing a skeleton greeting some living people and reminding them of their mortal end.

A fundamental cause of this preoccupation with death was that in Western Europe at this time the human ego was entering more deeply into the human organism and so coming into close contact with its hard, bony parts, its skeleton. Of course, this contact was not consciously experienced, but it led to a heightened awareness of the brevity and uncertainty of human life. How often does this note sound in Elizabethan songs and poetry –

In delay there lies no plenty,
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

Of course this note was not new; something like it must have very often been felt by lovers, but in Elizabethan days it sounded with particular insistence and poignancy. And remember also the prevalence of violent death on the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage:

O proud death!
What feast is toward in thine eternal cell
That thou so many princes at a shot
So bloodily hast struck?

In those days life was indeed precarious and, by our standards, short.

Later on new influences heralded a change of mood. The 17th century saw the beginnings of modern science. The Royal Society was founded in 1660; Newton had been born in 1642. There were new grounds for hope and confidence: hope that life on earth could become much better worth living on its own account, confidence in the power of the human mind – exemplified by Newton's *Principia* – to solve almost any problem set before it. An early end to the world was no longer widely expected. A promising future, with plenty of work to be done and money to be made, seemed to lie ahead.

The past history of the earth was still believed to be fairly short. Theologians put the Creation at 4004 B.C., and Newton, at the age of 81 and

in poor health, devoted great labour to writing out a detailed chronology of subsequent events on that basis. But a drastic change in this perspective of time past was not far off.

* * *

In 1777 Desmaret showed that the river valleys in the Auvergne could have been carved by the rivers that ran through them, given a long period of time. Decisive advances came with the publication in 1830 of Lyell's *Principles of Geology* and of Hugh Miller's *Testimony of the Rocks* in 1854. By this time a great deal of evidence concerning rock strata and fossils had been gathered, especially in Britain, where examples of almost every type of large rock formation are found, and where rocks of nearly every geological age can be seen in one day's excursion from Bristol. Hence it came about that the names adopted by British geologists for rock systems and for corresponding geological periods – Pleistocene, Pliocene, Miocene, Oligocene, Eocene – were adopted, with a few variations, as an international vocabulary in this field.

The upshot of all these researches was that by the mid-century it was widely accepted that the history of the earth had to be reckoned not in centuries or millennia but in many millions or even billions of years. A further stage came with the publication in 1859 of Darwin's *Origin of Species*. The long perspective of time past was extended from geology to the evolution of plants, animals and man.

Further vast extensions of past and future were worked out by the astronomers. They found that the stellar cosmos was far older than the solar system, and that the earth, pleasantly warmed by a long-lived sun, would probably remain habitable for at least a few million years.

So there was mankind, aware now of vast stretches of time past and time future, but more than ever in servitude to clocks, schedules and timetables.

* * *

We can distinguish between two rates of time: Objective time, flowing steadily on, measured by stars and clocks; and subjective time, time experienced.

The two rates are often not in step. Subjective time seems to pass slowly when we are bored, quickly when we are strenuously active or while we are absorbed in thought.

A familiar divergence between the two rates may occur if we have a long dream full of episodes and find on waking that it has occupied only a few minutes of objective time. A wide divergence may occur also in cases where a man, on the verge of drowning, sees his past life rise before him, sometimes in sequence or, more often, as a panorama, all at once. A case is on record of a man who was rescued from near drowning and with difficulty resuscitated. "He said that the time had seemed to him of very great duration . . . He had lived his whole past over again; he had not epitomised

it; he had repeated it, as it seemed to him, in detail and with the greatest deliberation. He had great difficulty in understanding that he had been in the water only a few minutes."*

Much commoner are cases where the drowning man sees his past life rise before him all at once. This may be regarded as an anticipation of the experience that comes normally, soon after death, when a person's etheric body, the bearer of his memories, is freed from the dying physical body and spreads out before his soul's vision as a panorama for about three days, and then gradually dissolves into the cosmic ether.

Thus during life we carry time past within us, recorded in the etheric body. When an ordinary memory comes before us, it is a reflection from the etheric, mediated by the brain. The record itself does not consist of passive images, but of images instinct with etheric life, normally damped down by the brain when conscious memories arise.

It is well known that under hypnosis a person can be induced to recall and describe almost any episode from his or her past life, stretching back to infancy or, according to some claims, to embryonic or even pre-natal existence. If the hypnotist orders the patient to describe events that occurred on a given past date, the patient will do so, but there is seldom any means of checking the truth of the account or of telling whether the patient's unconscious (for the human unconscious is always fertile in invention) is making some of it up.

It has been found during certain painless brain operations that if the electrical probe used by the surgeon touches the temporal lobe cortex, the patient may suddenly hear music, or he may reenact a past experience which comes before him in full sound and colour. "A South African who was being operated on cried out in great surprise that he heard his cousins talking, and he explained that he seemed to be there laughing with them, although he knew that he was really in the operating room in Montreal". If the electrode touches an adjacent spot, some quite different scene will arise. "In summary, it may be said that the electrode, applied to the temporal cortex, recalls specific occasions or events so that the individual is made aware of everything to which he was paying attention during a specific interval of time. Such responses have followed stimulation only in cases in which the cortex has been the site of previous habitual epileptic discharges . . ."

What may be happening in these strange cases — one can only surmise — is that the electrical stimulus drives out a fragment of the etheric from the brain, so that the memory record comes before the patient without mediation, vibrant with etheric life.

* Cited in Maurice Nicoll's book, *Living Time*. (Vincent Stuart, 1952.)

* See Professor Wilder Penfield's paper, "Some Observations on the Functional Organisation of the Human Brain", Smithsonian Institution, Washington, 1956.

These are some of the ways in which time past can be re-experienced in time present. There is also good evidence that time future can be occasionally foreseen.

The first evidence of this kind to gain wide attention came with the publication in 1927 of a book, *An Experiment with Time*, by W.J. Dunne, an aeronautical engineer. From his own experience and that of correspondents he was led to believe that if anyone keeps a careful record of his dreams, together with a diary of events, however trivial, in his daily life, he will find that in his dreams glimpses of past and future are mixed up. The theory that Dunne worked out to account for precognition, involving three levels of time, has not stood up to criticism, but he should be recognised as a pioneer researcher in this baffling field.

In 1963, when J.B. Priestley appeared on a BBC television programme, *Monitor*, viewers were invited to write to him of any precognitive experiences they had had. He received a huge pile of letters concerned with such experiences, mostly in dreams but some in waking life. He quotes from and discusses the best of these letters, together with some experiences of his own, in his book, *Man and Time* (Aldus Books, 1964).

Priestley has no theory to cover all forms of precognition; but it seems to me that *some* cases may be explicable in the following way:

At any moment millions of people all over the world are making plans, forming intentions, cherishing desires which have to do with the future. We can surmise that all these plans, intentions, desires are recorded in the *akasha* and that under certain conditions a glimpse of some item in the record may come to a sensitive person, especially if it concerns him or her in some way. But only a tiny fraction of these potential events will in fact occur; only these few will find entry into earthly time and space. And it will usually not be possible for the percipient to discern whether or when a potential event will be actualised.

During the spring and summer of 1939 there was wide agreement among mediums and visionaries that a great war, though clearly threatening, would not occur. I think they were perceiving the widespread, urgent desires of countless men and women that peace should be maintained. But this potentiality was overmastered by resolves and ambitions and projects, especially those of Hitler and his associates, to pursue courses of action which brought on war.

Hence it will be seen that precognition need not imply determinism. In the time-gap between potential and actual events the free will of human beings can be active and may decide whether a given event is actualised. There are cases where someone dreams of a road accident. Later, while driving, the circumstances preceding the accident occur, but with the aid of his dream warning he is able to take swift action to avert the accident. Warnings of potential events may be given also by clairaudient messages or clairvoyant visions.

However, some of the cases cited by Mr Priestley defy any such interpretation. For example, in 1928 one of his correspondents had a vivid dream which he recorded next morning. In his dream he saw a Red Indian canoe sailing across the Town Hall square of his native city. Nine years later, in 1937, he was standing in the Lord Mayor's parlour in the Town Hall when he happened to glance out of the window, which gave him only a partial view of the Square, and there, apparently floating past, was a painted Indian war canoe. Remembering his dream, he went over to the window to get a better view. He saw a number of 'props' being carted to a local theatre, with the canoe on top.

Travelling in time has often figured in science-fiction, at least since H.G. Wells wrote his early novel, *The Time Machine*, but to my mind it is not a satisfactory theme, leading to empty paradoxes.

The only form of time-travel that can occur is when a seer is able to read the akashic records of the past. This is a rare faculty, attainable only by an initiate at great cost and by the grace of the Hierarchies.* I wish now to indicate briefly how Rudolf Steiner described the first stage of earth-evolution, called the Old Saturn Stage, before and after time began.

The Old Saturn Stage was timeless and spaceless. In order to form any – of course inadequate – conception of it we have to think of an infinite ocean of flowing energy, flowing courage, represented by the Spirits of Will, or Thrones, whose being consisted entirely of courage. Then to be observed by the seer is a raying in of yet higher Beings, the Cherubim, and to the Cherubim the Thrones offer themselves in sacrifice. Out of this sacrifice are born the Spirits of Personality, the Archai, who are Beings of time. So time is born and also warmth. "What we call the element of warmth in Saturn is, as it were, the sacrificial smoke of the Thrones giving birth to time . . . Of all the elements we have around us now, the only one we can speak of as existing on ancient Saturn is warmth. And this warmth arises as sacrificial heat offered by the Spirits of Will to the Cherubim. This should give us an indication of how we should in reality look on fire . . . The word acquires its truth only when we know that behind every development of heat there is sacrifice."^{*}

Thus time came to be, but as yet there was no space.

It would be out of context here to indicate how Rudolf Steiner went on to describe the subsequent great stages of Earth-evolution, known as Old Sun, when space and light and air came into existence; Old Moon, when the watery element arose; and, finally, the beginning of our Earth, when gradually the watery condensed into the solid.

* * *

* See the lecture given by Rudolf Steiner in Cologne on 18 December 1913.

* *The Inner Realities of Evolution*. Five lectures given by Rudolf Steiner in Berlin, October-December 1911. Rudolf Steiner Publishing Co., London, 1953.

What can we learn from reflecting on the various aspects of time? Here we have to reckon with those powers of opposition to whose leaders Rudolf Steiner gave the names of Lucifer and Ahriman. We can regard them as spiritual beings who long ago were permitted to oppose the Divine will in order that human beings might acquire some freedom of choice in face of divergent promptings and temptations. To put it briefly, Lucifer tempts us not to take time seriously; not to feel much concerned with everyday obligations; to escape from temporal pressures into self-indulgent enjoyments and agreeable dreams. Ahriman forges the fetters which keep us in bondage to time; he seeks to persuade us that there is no way out from them and no existence beyond the time of death.

Both these tempters also bring gifts. From Lucifer we can learn that there are occasions when we *should* ignore time-pressure; if for example we are listening to someone with an urgent need to talk about some personal problem at length. From Ahriman we can learn how to dispose sensibly of our time; to be 'on time' for appointments and necessary tasks.

A strong influence of Lucifer can be seen in those Eastern religions where time is not taken seriously, is regarded as an illusion which a wise man will seek to rise above. His aim will be to free himself from the earthly desires that go with life in time.

Christianity is unlike Eastern religions in founding itself not primarily on any teaching but on historical events, the Incarnation, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ. But it does not usually set these events in an evolutionary perspective and has difficulty in interpreting their significance. Often it has regarded the time spent in earthly life as an occasion primarily for the individual to achieve salvation, either by faith alone or by combining faith with works. On the after-death state it speaks with an uncertain voice. In the Anglican Burial Service, as given in the Book of Common Prayer, we are told at one point that the souls of the faithful are with God in joy and felicity, and later that they are at rest until the general resurrection on the Last Day, when the graves and the sea will give up their dead. This strange idea is probably not often taught nowadays, but it was accepted for centuries, and what does happen to souls after death is now generally treated as a question best left to faith in the goodness and mercy of God.*

Christianity has suffered greatly from the suppression of the old Mystery Schools by the Emperor Justinian in 529. The mainstream of Christianity was thus cut off from esoteric knowledge which could have helped to illuminate its doctrines. Celtic Christianity, for long separate from Rome, fared better in this respect: it may have drawn something from traditions of the ancient Hibernian Mysteries. Also, it related Christ to the earth and the realms of nature and so brought Him closer to the concerns of daily life. But

* One should perhaps add that 'the resurrection of the body' points to an esoteric truth. See Rudolf Steiner's lectures 'From Jesus to Christ' (Karlsruhe, 1911).

at the Synod of Whitby in 664 Roman Christianity prevailed, and Celtic Christianity continued only as an underground stream.

In Rudolf Steiner's treatment of evolution he speaks of successive epochs of time, each with its own character and destiny, drawing mankind down more and more deeply into incarnation as time went on. But the coming of Christ marked a turning-point, the turning-point of time, when it became possible for the descending arc of evolution to turn upwards again on a long and difficult journey back towards its source. Thus, in Steiner's teaching, time is indeed taken seriously, but he spoke also of exercises whereby the will is given strength and moral direction, so that a person is not carried along on the flow of events but can control his response to them. He said also – as of course many other teachers have said – that a person will do well to set aside certain periods for reflection and meditation, while time flows by unheeded.

Here I revert to the monk who stood listening to the singing of a bird, while for him time was not. There are many ways into the garden where the bird sang. Some will find the way through meditation and religious devotion; some through the experience of works of art; some through climbing high mountains, real or metaphorical, with an endeavour that takes all they have; some through the radiance of the realms of nature; some will find it through love.

We have to be ready to leave the garden and take up the tasks of time. Faust was tempted to cry to the fleeting moment: "Remain, thou art so fair, remain", but he knew where this would lead him. And Blake wrote:

He who bends to himself a joy
Does the winged life destroy;
But he who kisses the joy as it flies
Lives in eternity's sunrise.

We have to accept time and the sadness of transiency, but after death we find that time has become space and nothing we have ever loved is lost, though many things have to be seen in a new light, under the eyes of the Hierarchies, and transformed.

THE MIDDLE REALM OF MAN¹

Wolfgang Schad

Ever since the primaeval times mankind has looked on the spiritual in the world and has thereby been able to develop a life of culture. The wide range of this spirituality could embrace both the unity of monotheism and the multiplicity of polytheism. The monotheistic religions tended more to abstraction. The polytheistic religions easily dissolved into a chaotic intermingling of countless gods. It was through the healing power of Christianity that the Divine could be discerned as at the same time threefold and onefold. God in three Persons, who were also One, emerged as a three-membered unity, far removed both from fanatical monotheism, as in Islam, and from the bewildering surfeit of spirits found in many 'nature-religions'. In the mystery of three-fold unity there could be experienced a release both from rigid fixation and from wild fragmentation in a spiritual sense.

The form in which the Middle Ages experienced the Trinity and took it as an article of faith has been completely lost to us during the last four centuries. In the Witch's Kitchen scene in *Faust*, Mephistopheles mocks at this logical nonsense:

The arts, my friend, are ever old and new,
And one art, practised down the ages,
Has been to talk of three and one and one and three,
Thus spreading falsehood in the guise of truth.

Countless symptoms of schizophrenia in our society today are connected with the formal insolubility of this contradiction.

Part of the work of Anthroposophy as a healing influence is to open a way for everyone to become conscious of the trinitarian ordering of the world. What is new and special is that this way does not lead from the first through supersensible realms, but through knowledge of man – and therefore self-knowledge – and indeed through the sense-perceptible form of man, and goes with the discovery of the threefold membering of the human organism.

It now seems to us hardly believable that this 'heart and core of Anthroposophy', as Kurt Franz David once called it, was not set forth from the beginning of the presentation of Anthroposophy through Rudolf Steiner. It was in November 1917, that world-historic year, that this threefold membering was first made public by Rudolf Steiner in his book, *Von Seelenrätseln* ('Riddles of the Soul'). His statement in the first pages of the sixth appendix to this book is well known: "I may indeed say that here I am putting on record the results of thirty years of spiritual-scientific research."

But early in 1917, in lectures to members,² Rudolf Steiner had already spoken of the threefold membering of the human organism, and he gave very exactly the date of its first conception: "Hitherto I have not formulated in this way what I have said in the last two lectures" (meaning those of 15 and 17 March 1917) but it is now exactly 35 years since, as a quite young man in Vienna, I began the researches which were to lead at last to the content of those lectures".³ Almost exactly 35 years previously, in the early part of 1882, Rudolf Steiner had completed his 21st year. Relevant to this time in his biography is the description given in *Mein Lebensgang* ('The Story of my Life'):

I came upon the sensible-supersensible form, spoken of by Goethe, which thrusts itself, both for true natural sight and for spiritual vision, between what the senses grasp and what the spirit perceives. Anatomy and physiology struggled through, step by step, to the sensible-supersensible form. And in this struggling through my glance fell, at first very imperfectly, upon the threefold organisation of the human being . . . At that time I found none to whom I could have spoken of these insights. If I spoke about them here and there, they were regarded at once as the outcome of a philosophical idea, whereas I was certain that these things had been disclosed to me through unbiased anatomical and physiological studies.

It was not through sense-perception only, nor as some kind of philosophical idea that this insight came to him, but as 'sensible-supersensible vision' (note the significance of the hyphen) which 'thrust itself between what the senses grasp and what the spirit perceives'. He finds this way of thinking only in Goethe's 'sensible-supersensible form' for 'sensible-moral effect'. One can understand the threefold membering of the human organism as an idea only if one understands by it no philosophical idea in the sense of Plato's parable of the prisoners in the cave, but in the comprehensive sense which unites the sensible with the supersensible. In his student days Steiner comes to the threefold idea as a pure Goetheanist. Then he keeps it to himself in silence for 35 years, letting his discovery ripen in the course of his life.

Directly it was given expression, the threefold-membering idea flowed with dramatic swiftness into all Rudolf Steiner's activities, and onwards after the end of the first World War. Within a year the threefold membering of the social organism was developed and expounded. From 1919 to 1924 the threefold membering of the human organism became an equally central way of thinking in the various daughter-movements which then sprang from Anthroposophy. It helped Waldorf School teachers to understand their pupils; anthroposophical doctors worked with it; the anthroposophical pharmacist gained insight into remedies; the priest could think again of the Trinity; the farmer gained a new understanding of his plants and animals, of the minerals and of the starry heavens.

* * *

The liberating effect of the threefold principle as an organ of knowledge is that the life of knowledge is no longer reductionist, directed towards one single fundamental axiom out of which the entire world could be woven — which all mechanically minded monists have dreamt of as a final formulation. Cosmic thinking looks at the paradoxes, the polaric opposites in world-processes, but does not treat them as unbridgeable, as does the dialectic of Hegel's successors, for whom the opposites are condemned to everlasting warfare. The threefold way of thinking pays attention to the opposites in their reality, in order to grasp all the better the mediating principle which unites the necessary extremes and thereby enables them to exist side by side. In the threefold idea lives the monism which can accept dualism because it knows the mediation which can bring the opposites to a lasting, newly created unity. Thus Steiner's monism is never an *a priori* assumption, but derives from the complete overcoming of previous dualism. Threefolding as a world-reality is therefore never a mystical projection of the number 3, but the fact of a differentiated belonging together. (Anyone who uses his gift for abstraction to work out a thought-scheme must find his own way through it.)

In anthroposophical life the special function and task of the *middle process* in every threefold whole is always thought of as, and felt to be, a decisive factor. But from this certain definite difficulties arise. In order to work through the problem of the middle it may be said that a remarkable over-valuation of the 'middle' can be heard. Not the head-man, nor the metabolic-limbs man — one hears — is the real man: he becomes fully human first in his 'middle'. Not thinking and willing, but feeling is to be seen as finally the most important thing. Not science and religion, but the arts are what it all comes to. In this way all the opposites can easily be ascribed to the adversary powers of Lucifer and Ahriman, with which it is better not to get involved. A retreat into the middle is then only believed to be helpful.

If one brings before one's soul the powerful thinking and willing of Rudolf Steiner himself, it becomes clear what is lost by anyone who fails to fit these forces into a biographical context and simply packs them into the middle. There are persons strong in thinking, others strong in feeling, others strong in willing. It is with this many-sidedness that we have to reckon, not with human beings all of one piece. Otherwise we come to the ideologically dubious preference for one type of individual at the expense of others. In this connection Rudolf Steiner gave a piece of advice which will apply to our continuing discussion:

"The safest and surest way for the occult aspirant is therefore to take his start from the human form. On the human form the Luciferic and Ahrimanic forces have had the least influence. Please note, I say 'least'; their influence on the inner life of soul has been very much greater. Hence the human form remains the healthiest starting-point for the occult

aspirant . . ."

* * *

The human organism, among all natural creatures, shows in the most perfect form what an organism is. To be open to everything which it is not, while at the same time it is able to follow its own laws in face of its surroundings and to protect itself. The tools of these abilities are on the one hand all the sense-organs, and on the other all the organs which transform substances from outside into the body's own substance — the metabolic organs. Sense-organs and metabolic organs form an entirely natural polarity. These polarised functions would tear apart the unity of the organism were it not that the organs of breathing and blood-circulation continually bring these activities into harmony without turning off:

Senses organisation
Rhythmical organisation
Metabolic organisation

Rudolf Steiner completes this threefold membering by placing the sense-organs into close connection with the nerve system, and the limbs with the metabolic system:

Sense-and-nerve system
Breathing and blood-circulation system
Limb-metabolic system

In this way each of the three members can be experienced as itself organically differentiated. System 'may here be taken literally, but it signifies a connectedness', and not, as out of habit we so easily suppose, a scheme uniform throughout. If we run through the qualities of this system of organs, the following will be clearly evident. In the functioning of the senses, the breathing, and the limbs, the organism is strongly connected with the surrounding world, though in conspicuously different ways. In the metabolism, the blood-circulation, and the central nervous system, the organism interiorises its functions, and on their various levels builds its own independence. Each of the three great realms is therefore polarically balanced and so fulfils the basic principle of all life: every part is a metamorphosed form of the whole. But may it not be asked whether and how in each of the three realms, between its own poles, a mediator is provided. Does each member, with its opposites, have likewise its 'middle'?

An organic membering will emerge not from spatial boundaries but from its functions. The spatial delimitations are the relics left behind by processes.

Thus the activities of senses and nerves run through the whole organism, but are concentrated in the head. Their functioning can thus give an answer, though only as a first approximation, to the question posed above. The human head is clearly divided into the main parts: the skull enclosing the

brain, and the facial bones. Between the two come the spaces permeated by the breath: the nasal space, the air cavities proceeding from it (the upper jaw, the frontal bones, the tympanic cavities and the sphenoid cavities), the pharyngeal space and larynx, and — as far as it is penetrated by the atmosphere — the mouth. The speech-organisation, linking together sense activity and thinking, mediates between the skull and the sense-organs.

Between the metabolic functions, concentrated in the abdominal cavity, and the organisation of the limbs, with the long lower limbs dominant, lies the reproductive organisation. It produces, as does the metabolism, human bodily substance, but — just as the limbs are active outside the organism — it engenders a bodily form which goes forth beyond its own organism — the successor.

Our central question now is: Does the middle system also have a middle? Between lungs and heart, with on the one side an organ open to the outer world, and on the other the self-enclosed central organ of circulation, is there an organ lying between these opposites and uniting them? No, there is not. The middle system consists precisely not in a single organ or system of organs, graspable in terms of space; it is an interplay of two organs lightly polarised, so that they can play into each other most closely.

This central peculiarity of the 'middle' can be understood in purely ideal terms. For what is the chief function of the middle system? To mediate. If a single organ of the middle were there, as an extra organ between heart and lungs, the middle system could not finally mediate at all. It would be there on its own account, always self-sufficient. It is indeed often said that the heart is the middle; or the middle of the middle is looked for in the upright spinal column. But precisely the mediating process — temporal, not spatial — which plays between two organs is the real mark of the middle. Because breathing and the pulse of the blood are able in reciprocal rhythm to adjust themselves completely to each other, they are also able by their mediation to bring into balance the great opposites of the upper and the lower man. Thus we come to the following finer differentiation of the threefold membering of man: Sense organisation — Speech organisation — Nerve organisation — Breathing organisation — Circulation organisation — Organisation of the limbs — Reproductive organisation — Metabolic organisation. In this way we gain an essential insight which can be expressed somewhat as follows: *If we find that between two polar opposites a mediation is going on, the polar opposites are true polarities. If we do not find between two polar opposites a mediating formation then the polarities themselves form a 'middle' in the threefold sense.* This connection opens up for us a very great deal that is relevant to the problem of the middle. Let us first keep to its morphological aspect.

The two-sidedness of mediation processes is found again in the organs of speech. On the one hand we have the larynx, which produces voice-tones; on the other, the air-space of the head, which provides volume both for

speaking and for singing. In spite of their diametrically different functions, the two parts work perfectly together.

Similarly, the lower system is polarised into two types of sexuality. Why should there not be three types of sexuality – a question often asked by theoretical biology? The fact that there are only two types touches on the middle element character of the sexual organisation. The generative function of one organisation and the sending forth function of the other can supplement each other. The secret metamorphosis of the genital organisation into organs of speech shows itself in the change of voice at puberty. It illustrates how the speech organisation is connected with breathing and the sexual organisation with the blood-circulation. It is typical that the speech organisation is connected through the breathing, and the sexual organs through the blood-circulation, with the central part of the middle system.

Both lungs and heart, those specially 'middle' organs, are regulated by polar conditions, such as are not found in any other organ. In the organs of movement the musculature consists of either striped fibres for the most part either striped and fibrous (and under conscious control) or smooth fibres (and not under conscious control). In breathing, however, both sorts of muscle work directly together. The musculature of the ribs and diaphragm surrounds the periphery of the lungs, is striped and governs the extent of breathing. The inner bronchial tree of the lungs is overlaid with countless rings of smooth muscle, which regulate by their tension the flow of air.

The heart-muscle fibre is a special case; it unites in itself the striped and the smooth, yet the right and the left side are very different in build and in flow of blood.⁵

The heart, as the centre of the whole blood system, takes up a remarkably positive posture towards the blood, not in order to bring the complete opposites, venous and arterial blood, into a mixture, but to keep them as close together as possible, so as to maintain them in a common rhythm. The development of the heart's dividing wall in the course of evolution is what made the heart into a heart. The opposites were not abolished, or made to play against each other, but were accepted, endured, taken hold of equally and thereby harmonised.

A primal social fact speaks to us in this organic picture. The middle processes do not bring about a neutralising and making uniform, but a recognition of the differences as enabling an amplification from opposite sides to occur. Rudolf Steiner spoke of this: "The world does not progress by always merely holding on to the middle; the middle is present in an appropriate way when the two separate sides are there . . ." This leads to the essence of rhythm. We breathe fully in and out and we would suffocate if we stopped at the half-way stage. The often used image of a balance proves to be, on closer inspection, an unsuitable analogy for the reality of the living middle. The balance can weigh only by coming to a standstill. A living middle does not abolish the opposites but activates them fully one

Balance in time, not space.

after the other, thus giving them a temporal augmentation which does not have as its aim the static moment of total completion. And so the human heart beats in the rhythm of its time. The middle of the threefold human being fulfils itself in the cosmic rhythm relationship 1:4, which produces the day-and-night rhythm of 25,920 breaths and 103,680 heartbeats.

* * *

The body of man is a real picture of his spiritual organisation. If we pay attention to what particularly distinguishes the structure of the human body from that of animal bodies, we shall find there the bodily foundations of his ego. It is true that animals possess all the corresponding organ-systems; true that every human organ has a specifically human character, yet there are organic realms which quite specially diverge from those of animals. They are the cerebrum and the limbs.

In all animals the nerve-system is backward in comparison with the sense-organisation and it functions relatively poorly. Because of this, animals are unable to be conscious inwardly of sense-impressions and are subject to their fascination. Only unconsciously do they in a self-deciding way gain mastery over their sense-perceptions at least by the vegetative nerve-system of the digestive organs. Rudolf Steiner often said that in man the digestive processes are metamorphosed into the form of the brain.⁸ We are thus able to 'digest' consciously our sense-impressions. And the human brain is much more extensive than his digestive organisation, in relation to comparable animals. In the convolutions, resembling thin intestines, of the cerebral cortex, the connection comes out in a plastic picture. The brain is thus the bearer of our ego-consciousness. The waking knowledge of the distinctiveness of our own individuality is bound up with the brain. This knowledge emerges during the third year of life, when the child's brain is far enough developed to act as a mirror of self-consciousness.

Who am I? What is my ego? This question is unique among all possible questions. It rules out the distinction implicit in all other questions between the questioner and the questioned. How far do we hereby give up objectivity, and also subjectivity? This is disclosed by the fact that one's existence is not dependent solely on self-consciousness. For after the interruption of consciousness by sleep, I know for certain that in the morning my ego is continuously identical with my ego of the previous day. Angelus Silesius was one of the first to speak of this notable experience:

Ich weiß nicht, was ich bin, ich bin nicht, was ich weiß:
Ein Ding und nicht ein Ding, ein Pünktchen und ein Kreis.

I know not what I am; I am not what I know;
A thing and not a thing, a dot and a circle.

Rudolf Steiner repeatedly called attention to the fact that the conscious ego is not the true ego, but a reflection of it in the consciousness bound to the

brain, but is itself never fettered to the body. He spoke of the lower and the higher human ego.

The ego has not only the point-like character of a definite centre, but is itself polaric. The higher ego never enters fully into incarnation, but remains spiritually active in connection with the world. This was expounded in the clearest thoughts by Rudolf Steiner in his Bologna lecture.¹⁰ The real ego take light hold of the body from the periphery and works into the activity of the limbs, which in human beings can enter with intelligent purpose into the necessities of the world. This ego of the spheres, which finally acts from the cosmos (in place of the so-called motor nerves) to take hold with the intention of the muscles, brings about the special formation of the limbs. When the first lessons in human and animal biology at the Waldorf School were being prepared, Rudolf Steiner said: "... wherein man in his external form is most perfect. It is in his limbs. No animal species is so perfectly formed as man in the organisation of his limbs. It is not true that he is a really perfect being through his head, his lazy head, but through his limbs, which are so well adapted to the world and its work".¹¹

The limbs we see in animals are like appendages of the trunk; they bind the animal firmly to its special environment. Only man has free limbs, responsive to the demands of the world around him.¹²

In this connection it is interesting that the fossil record has shown – to the astonishment of researchers – that the surest indications of a fossil's human origin are the shape of the hand, the special build of the feet, and the fully achieved upright way of walking (build of leg and pelvis), and not the jawbone or the size of the brain. It was not a consciously reflecting man, but a man who acted with moral purpose, who first set foot on solid earth. The increasing size of the head was an evolutionary consequence of that.

These arrangements of human limbs and the growing brain are the bodily results and the bodily expression of man's dual ego-nature. In so far as in man the central nervous system and the qualities of the limbs gain an equally significant value, as the senses and the digestive organs do in animals, the threefold membering of the human body finds its appropriate order. Through the equal value of the maturity of his extremities and of his metabolism, his lower organisation is much better balanced than it is in animals. And equally the head-man is in himself better integrated and more autonomous because the nerve-system keeps the life of the senses in much better balance than it can be in animals. And because the upper and lower systems have at times reached a high level of independence, which has a direct bearing on the fact of reincarnation,¹³ the heart and lungs together have their greatest task in actively bringing the upper and lower man into reciprocal collaboration. They have to be much stronger as selfless mediators than they can be in animals, and in this sense only they become in man true middle organs.

We have remarked how the animal is much more directly involved in the

opposition between sense-perception and the digestive process. In this connection Rudolf Steiner once called attention to how the tree-frog turns green. The soul's experience of green surroundings works right into his metabolism, and this engenders a green colour in his skin. This extreme example shows how much more closely the perception of the outer world and the make-up of the body are bound together. The middle organisation of the animal thus has less mediation to accomplish and is relatively free to act on its own account. Connected with this is the fact that in the threefold grouping of animal species a remarkably prominent characteristic distinguishes all middle forms, if one applies a Goethean analysis to them. A few examples may serve to illustrate this:

Group	Sense-organ animals	Middle animals	Metabolic animals
Saurians:	Birds	Crocodiles	Turtles
Birds:	Song-birds	Birds of prey	Long-legged birds and hens
Mammals	Rodents	Beasts of prey	Ungulates
Ruminants:	Giraffes	Deer	Cattle

The middle animals, within the circle of their relatives, are always pervaded by the nature of beasts of prey. Even the roe-deer, our commonest small deer, is so aggressive that in zoos it has to be kept apart; the roe-buck will promptly attack all his companions in an enclosure and will bark like a fierce dog.¹²

In the ecological balance of the landscape the predator type naturally plays a regulative role, beyond good and evil. The individual animal has no ego and can neither acquire a moral sense nor go wrong in behaviour.

But if in a man the middle shuts itself off in arrogant isolation, he will fall away into aggressive egotism, leading to a predatory cruelty and a taste for oppression which no longer lie beyond good and evil. And a shattering phenomenon of our time is that men can forfeit their clear thinking and human sympathies and out of their perverted feelings become 'more bestial than any animal'.

If we look at the three great racial groupings of mankind,¹³ we find that the middle-white-race over-valued itself in the rise of colonialism, from which came the atrocious oppression and destruction of coloured peoples which make us deeply ashamed. And just at the beginning of the middle of our century there came the total merging of the middle in National Socialism, which took as its declared idol the athletic "beast of prey man", who glorified the fury of war and domination over all other peoples. Never in a war were so many lives lost in Europe as were lost during this period. We are still suffering from the after-effects of the danger of suffocation and the halting of the circulation which occurred at that time.

The problem of the middle is an existential question for our civilisation. It is becoming clear that there is not only a duality of evil; we have to reckon with a trinity of evil. Rudolf Steiner spoke of this third form of evil which is now emerging and in the future will become more and more apparent.¹⁴ On Old Saturn the Spirits of Personality were at the human stage and came into possession of the ego. They implanted in the germinal form man, as it then was, the first outline of the ego man has today. Some of these spirits took an aberrant path of development.¹⁵ They are now appearing as Powers who spur men on to egotism and to exhaust themselves in "aimless sensuality".¹⁴

The human ego has the possibility of overcoming by its own efforts the influences of Lucifer and Ahriman. We can free ourselves from Lucifer if we accept the painful demands of life, including illness and death, and try to act in accordance with the necessities of the world. We can overcome Ahriman through living thinking, if we see through his attempt and desire to make the world, including mankind, into material automata. For the priority task of thinking is by no means that of grasping the sense-world, but that of preparing the metamorphosis of man through a succession of lives on earth. Against Ahriman the remedies are reincarnation and karma. But against the ego-dismembering power of the third evil the ego can do nothing by itself.¹⁴

The threefold membering of the human body can now become for us a higher primal picture of its spiritual design. We saw how the ego can fulfil itself, in a twofold way – in thinking with regard to the pole of the head, and in making use of the limbs. Can the ego do the same with regard to the middle organs? The moral life shows that man is man only when in freedom he carries through what the wisdom of the middle organs has given us as a model: not to live for oneself alone. In the feeling of the heart's beat and the breathing he is man only when he accepts another person as though the other were himself. In his middle region he is man only if here he is more than his ego. The ego-quality, which ought to live in the middle, is not his own individual ego, but something that can arise between all men. The split condition of his individual ego can become a threefold spiritual organisation only if his spiritual organisation is supplemented by the power of the ego of mankind, by the I AM of the Representative of humanity.

Thereby the ego experiences not only its own being healed, but – without losing itself – it leaves its isolation and moves fully into the real organism of all mankind.

The primal picture and model for mankind in this connection is the fact, revealed by Rudolf Steiner, of the two Jesus-boys. Not an ideal normal man, but two children, as different from each other 'as could be imagined',¹⁸ gave the human precondition for the life of Christ on earth. They are the two great poles of the cultural streams running through the post-Atlantean time; they culminated in the Solomon child and the Nathan child, 'the wisest human being and the most inward', at the turning-point of time, and were

first brought together by the deed of Christ.¹⁹

So does the future of the human middle, where it is human, point beyond mankind. In our own middle we shall be human only, if we belong to mankind and its progress. And through participation in this further progress a contemporary way of access to knowledge of the Trinity will be found anew.

This is the essential thing, that the Christ-Impulse does not belong to individuals but to the community of mankind.

I had; Prayer ... Give us ...

(GA = *Gesamte Ausgabe*, the complete edition of Rudolf Steiner's works.)

- ¹ Das Goetheanum Jg. 46, Nr. 33 Dornach 1967.
- ² Lectures of 21 January, 6, 15, 17, 20, 22 March 1917. See also 12 and 23 November 1917 (GA 72, 73).
- ³ Lecture of 22 March 1917 in *Geist und Stoff, Leben und Tod* (GA 66).
- ⁴ Lecture of 10 June 1912 in *Man in the Light of Occultism, Theosophy and Philosophy* (GA 137).
- ⁵ Heinz Herbert Schöffler *Die Zeitgestalt des Herzens*. Stuttgart 1975.
- ⁶ Wolfgang Schad: *Dynamische Morphologie von Herz und Kreislauf. Weleda-Korrespondenzblätter für Ärzte Nr. 92*. Schwäbisch Gmünd 1977.
- ⁷ Lecture 14 January 1913, in *The Life Between Death and a New Birth in relation to Cosmic Facts*. (GA 141). See also Erika Bettle: *Der Mensch im Spiel des Gleichgewichtes*. Mitteilungen, Nr. 103 Easter 1973.
- ⁸ Lecture of 24 March 1920, in *Spiritual Science and Medicine* (GA 312). See also Karl König: *Betrachtungen über den Zusammenhang des Verdauungssystems mit der Gehirnorganisation bei Mensch und Tier*. In *Natura* Jg. 4, S. 289-307. Dornach 1929/30.
- ⁹ Lecture of 19 December 1915, in *Die Geistige Vereinigung der Menschheit durch den Christus-Impuls*. (GA 165).
- ¹⁰ In *Philosophy and Anthroposophy* (GA 35).
- ¹¹ Lecture of 28 August 1918, in *Erziehungskunst, Methodisch-Didaktisches* (GA 294).
- ¹² See also Wolfgang Schad. *Mammals and Man* (last chapter) Stuttgart 1971.
- ¹³ Lecture of 3 May 1919, in *Geisteswissenschaftliche Menschenkunde* (GA 107).
- ¹⁴ Lecture of 22 March 1919, in *Geisteswissenschaftliche Menschenkunde* (GA 107).
- ¹⁵ Lecture of 2 June 1907, in *Theosophy of the Rosicrucian* (GA 99).
- ¹⁶ Lecture of 7 August 1916, in *Kosmische und Menschliche Geschichte* (GA 170).
- ¹⁷ Lecture of 11 February 1919, in *Der innere Aspekt der sozialen Rätsel* (GA 193).
- ¹⁸ Lecture of 17 December 1913, in *Aus der Akasha-Forschung – das fünfte Evangelium* (GA 148).
- ¹⁹ Lecture of 19 December 1910, in *Excursus des Markus-Evangelium* (GA 124).

PRISON

Yvonne Karsten and Tony Dunderfelt

Yvonne: Tony, you have worked as an assistant psychologist in a prison in Helsinki. I would like to know how you experienced the place the first time you stepped inside?

Tony: For me the first reaction was a kind of shock. The physical environment is just as 'dungeon-like' as one can imagine. High red brick walls with added security fences, very tough wardens and tight security, which nowadays includes an increasing amount of electronics and monitoring systems. Inside all is as straightforward and barren as possible: long corridors, iron bars, clatter of cold steel and echoes of hard heels on hard floors and a smell of disinfectants. It is like a combination of an army camp and a badly kept hospital.

Yvonne: What thoughts and feelings arose in you? Did you want to turn and run? Or did you feel compassion and a wish to change it all?

Tony: I had a whole range of feelings washing over me. First an exhausting depressive powerlessness in face of the magnitude of problems. Then the impulse of trying to bring healing – to the individuals and to the whole 'system'. Luckily I had some experience from different institutions, so I could hold at bay my surging feelings and thoughts. If ever, I had to be realistic. And even more: I had to find out what was real, and true in that situation!

Yvonne: One can imagine the chaos of feelings in those who don't come there voluntarily and only for a couple of hours a time, as you did. It must be quite difficult to keep a sane grasp of reality and of yourself. Did you find that the prison environment influenced the prisoners you met in any particular way?

Tony: After committing a crime and being sentenced to prison, you are marked. Either with a tattoo on your body (many people let themselves be tattooed all over the body while in prison), a social stamp in other people's minds, or with a deep wound in your conscience. In a prison environment there arises a special sub-culture with its own slang language, behaviour patterns and hierarchy among the inmates.

Yvonne: And where does the psychologist come into the picture?

Tony: There he sits in the administrative wing, well apart from the central prison area, in a room sandwiched between the priest and the social workers. There is a fair deal of organisatory and everyday matters to attend to, but also a lot of time that can be used for therapeutic counselling. But there aren't enough counsellors among the staff. Only one priest and one psycho-

logist with two part-time helpers each in a prison with about 450 'clients'!

Yvonne: So you sit there speaking – or mainly listening?

Tony: My sessions were based on discussions. Really, the essence of my role is to be still. It is very easy to feel overly altruistic and caring ('oh you poor soul') or to have antipathetic and rejecting thoughts to pop up ('this man really looks like a criminal'). In counselling situations one has to learn to withhold all kinds of personal instinctive reactions of that kind. A flashing thought or mental picture can influence the whole process in an uncontrolled way if the counsellor isn't careful to keep his own inner environment clear from these obstructions. A meeting like that is so tender, so tender. I quickly came to realize that my duty was not primarily to answer questions or provide soothing comfort. I found that the way towards healing and true help led through an attitude of the soul that I in my still and receptive consciousness could provide for in those moments of meetings. For this to happen, a certain trust is needed between two people. This can be created after a few introductory meetings.

I've learned much from Rudolf Steiner's book "Knowledge of Higher Worlds" and found out through practice how the whole atmosphere of the situation changes, for example, when I hold a picture or a notion of the person's true Self or true Individuality in my consciousness during a session. And the balance between speaking and listening is really delicate. In counselling one has to be extra careful with what one speaks. "To purge every word in thought before speaking . . ." We all know how certain phrases and the mood of a discussion appear afterwards in our memory, rather than the main topic. These small things might become the transformative agents for a person, specially in a prison situation where every possibility of help is eagerly awaited by the soul. So what is uttered in counselling has to be relevant and not said out of a theory or from a mere opinion.

Yvonne: What then did these men speak about? You see, I am sitting here wondering about 'Evil'. Were they 'evil'? Did they come to you to understand something about themselves, some reason for having committed that rape or that murder?

Tony: Yes, questions like: "why did I do that crime?", "am I anything else than an automaton that without any power of my own has to follow these impulses of evil and rage?" and other fundamental questions of man's being and of what is 'evil' and what really is 'good' and the right thing to do, did of course come up. With these issues we entered an area where common psychological knowledge stumbles and falls. All answers that eventually were to come to these questions, either from me or from the individual whose life was in question, had to be alive with freshness and uniqueness. They were creations, living insights. Maybe they were clothed in well-known words or aphoristic and biblical form, but in them they carried a quality unique for that situation and that meeting. In this way individuals could

perhaps reach an understanding of themselves.

Yvonne: How, then, did your patients see Evil?

Tony: "These hands that have done evil want now to serve the good" – this I heard from one individual who had experienced a religious conversion. He was brought up (or rather brought down) in poor social circumstances and had committed crimes from an early age up to his thirties, and then met the end of the road – in himself. After years of living out a blind rage and aggression this person suddenly stopped. He found himself able to view his life clearly, without the usual emotional confusion. This is of course the most unimaginably painful and agonizing experience, because he is filled with guilt and shame and a total helplessness in the face of it all. He feels that there is 'no way out', nothing that could forgive him for what he has done, nothing that could mend all that has been broken. He himself is the evil one, nobody else.

Here we reach a decisive point in the destiny of an individual. Is he able to go right through with the pain of this crucifixion experience, this descent into a hell that he himself has created, thus truly admitting his own sinfulness and guilt? Or does he 'draw back' from the pain, does he find a way of explaining it all to himself which satisfies his little ego, his old self – with the consequence that he is in danger of reverting to crimes again? The third possibility is sadly the one where there is no help available for him in his agony and loneliness, no beam of spiritual light that could find the way through his walls. Then suicide or some kind of madness can be the result.

Yvonne: And what is more, even outside the prison there is so little to help you bear all the feelings of guilt and shame, which you take with you when you get back home again. I think that the madness, depression and/or possible change often can come afterwards, well outside the prison walls. Within the prison you don't really have to function as an accepted and successful part of society. But once you get out, you are under the pressure of responsibility again, for your family and yourself. You must work, be somebody, be 'normal'.

My father once went to prison for a year for forgery. While he was there, he could see his life in perspective and things started to change, for instance the relationship between him and my mother deepened (they wrote to each other daily), because he didn't have his business company to worry about. But when he came out, the trouble started. He is a very skilled and gifted man and also kind and friendly. But he couldn't find work. For three years mother had to support the family (with three small children). And what had grown between her and him crumbled for good. He drank a great deal and watched TV. Finally he was able to pick himself up very successfully again, but the year in prison certainly changed his life – in his case for the better since he was strong enough to handle it without outer support.

Tony: How did he do that? Where did he find the strength?

Yvonne: I didn't understand much at the time, because I was quite young,

but looking back on those years when my father was unemployed and more or less an 'outcast', I see three things that could have helped him back on the road.

Firstly, there was his strong sense of responsibility towards his family. He urgently wanted to 'make good' what had gone wrong and so be able again to support his children and provide security. He also had a couple of good friends, who as far as I know helped him to find the good job he finally got.

A great help also came from a kind of gift that is built into his personality, a stubborn optimism – that all will end well. This optimism tempted him to take the risk of forgery, but it also helped him to stand up again after he had fallen.

It is clear that a prison sentence lasts much longer than the time you spend within the iron gates. And much seems to depend on whether you have something or somebody to live for afterwards.

Tony: It is certainly a misconception to assume that what happens behind those high prison walls is somehow separated from the rest of society and the world at large. A cell in the body or a cell in a prison is a part of the whole system. A former prisoner can meet almost unsurmountable obstacles. There are the usual problems of finding work for a 'marked man'. And for a long-term prisoner it will be very hard to find any meaning in 'normal' life. Even if he desires to join it, he will find it very stale and slow. He might have difficulties in motivating himself to work for a system that had him jailed, a system that ever since his childhood had pushed judgement and restrictions on him.

Yvonne: Can we then say that 'society' is to blame, when somebody feels compelled to do a criminal deed?

Tony: No, here lies a danger of projection, of projecting one's own deep inner conflicts on something outer. Many prisoners keep on asking these questions: whose is the blame after all? From where did my troubles start? Who is responsible? Society? Myself? My parents? God, who planned the whole mess? These are really difficult questions. Since the first third of this century the emphasis in criminal work has shifted from a patronizing punishment-centred treatment of the disobedient sinner, to a more liberal socially orientated approach. Man is no longer seen only as a two-legged animal, but also as a 'social animal'. One often hears comments such as "We cannot expect the individual to change before we've changed society". With the problem phrased in this way we will lose all perspectives of man's possibility for spiritual change.

Of course, very much good comes from these social-psychological and marxist-inspired, practice-orientated theories; such as a social care system for released prisoners and work training programmes in prisons. These are necessary steps, but for my part I looked for a real understanding of the soul and spirit nature of man. In the long run it won't be enough to fight society and put the blame on the forms and structures of society. It can become one-

sidedly political and abstract. I saw real changes in people who went through spiritual awakenings, also meetings with Christ. True ways of speaking about the spiritual, individual part in man must be created.

Yvonne: Yes, to start analysing the outer structure of society can certainly lead away from the core of the matter. But society, this many-headed entity, has eyes through which we tend to see ourselves. Most of us aren't strong enough to stand against the unspoken norms of the group to which we feel we belong. My father forged a cheque to save his company "in the eyes of society". So much violence happens in groups, when the individuals give themselves over to the faceless being of the group, who thinks and feels for them. Yes, indeed we must look for the individual, that part of us which doesn't have to depend on group-thinking and general opinions . . .

Tony: And that is so difficult to do. As human beings we need both to join others in good company and to be alone with ourselves. The ideal breathing between these polarities is what we are all looking for, and what a social structure should provide for. But . . . take for instance a prison. It is a counter-picture of this ideal – a totally hardened, earthy institution with no understanding of what an individual is (not even in theory), and where group life (both between the prisoners themselves and between prisoners and staff) is based on suspicion and control and hierarchical power. It is so easy to fall into rigidity and day-to-day greyness in that kind of an environment. Even the most spiritually minded and idealistic people get 'standardised', or then they simply find an easier place in which to do redeeming work.

Yvonne: The narrowness that you are describing reminds me of a poem by Kathleen Raine, which starts:

"Within the flower, there lies a seed,
Within the seed, there springs a tree,
In the tree, there spreads a wood."

In this poem, a narrow outer form contains a wide inner reality. But what determines the quality of our inner reality? Is it possible to overcome all emotions of hate, aggression or apathy in such a provoking atmosphere as a prison, so that the inner life isn't choked? What did you do to try and help your clients to see themselves as free individuals, in spite of it all?

Tony: With the above descriptions of the environment and the general atmosphere in a prison, you can imagine how difficult it is to speak there about "inner life". It is almost impossible with the staff: the wardens, the governors and the administrators, because they are totally occupied with the hard facts, like unbendable law paragraphs and prison violence. This I could well understand, but among my colleagues, whose job it is to look after the mental, emotional and spiritual well-being of the prisoners, there was very seldom talk of how Man really is constituted.

So I was very careful in introducing new thoughts or ideals to individuals who came for help. There is no real healing in a few concepts, or even in

revelatory experiences of "inner spaces". Even if the work towards true perceptions of our deepest humanity begins with individuals, it must be carried by a larger context, the social ground where the individual moves from day to day. So I believe that tremendous progress could be achieved if to the social reforms could be added a knowledge of Man's spiritual origin and destiny.

Yvonne: For me, as a total outsider, it seems as if the prison could be some kind of a modern 'initiation sarcophagus'. Everything is taken away from you when you go in – your titles, your work, your family and your friends, your clothes, your physical freedom and responsibility. There is hardly anything to stimulate the senses. The set up seems perfect for a transformation – or for an utter apathy or growing aggression.

Tony: A prisoner is pushed by the whole set-up of the prison, by its environment and laws of conduct, to a more restricted life with a tremendous loss of personal freedom. What we here 'outside' take for granted as natural possibilities for recreation and outer change is lacking in a prison. This is, of course, written in the law: punishment for crime (i.e. what is at this time or that time in history defined as crime) is a loss of personal freedom for such and such a length of time. But nowhere is to be found a clear understanding of the psychological and spiritual consequences of this punishment. The person grows into himself, he has to search for all help inside himself because the environment is too hostile and suspect to trust. And in himself he can only find his past, his chaotic and problematic life which fills him with either guilt, anxiety or hate towards himself or his background. So this is the great difference from any kind of initiatory spiritual transformation. A person is pushed into a sarcophagus (his own corrupted bodily existence) without any true insight into the heavy processes which are thus set into motion.

Yvonne: What do you think has happened in a prisoner who suddenly starts seeing himself, thus making change possible? And why does another just sink deeper into a vicious circle of continuous crime, despair and punishment?

Tony: As I see it, it depends on two main factors, which could be called recognition and repentance. First the individual has to be able to perceive clearly what his problem is, i.e. to see that something really is wrong in the life he has hitherto lived and learn to formulate this more and more clearly. This is a way of meeting your own 'Double', all the shadowy and forgotten parts of yourself. It is also connected with experiences of meeting the Lesser Guardian, to describe it in anthroposophical terms. Then he has to take full responsibility of what has happened, to admit that he himself is fully involved in what has happened. This then leads to an insight that there can be no turning back to old ways of behaving. He has tried all possible solutions based on his old life-style and patterns of thought. Now he must become humble and ask for help. He must see that he cannot make it by himself any more. For an individual at this point a priest can be a

tremendous help, especially if the crime has been very serious and irreversible. Then he needs the truest and deepest peace and forgiveness — his way out is finding Christ. So you see, that if a psychologist is to be of any true help, he must have some understanding of spiritual transformation. Otherwise he is prone to look at the process as somewhat abnormal and fit it into his own framework of psychoanalytic or social conditioning theory and thus miss the central concern — and really miss the individual as well. This then is the prototype of change. It is a question of 'all or nothing'. So you are in a way right, in all its toughness it reminds one of initiation journeys through a Dark Night of the Soul.

Yvonne: Doesn't this really demand that the psychotherapist himself has gone through a similar experience? What happened to yourself? Did you have to confront the dark parts of yourself, while meeting people on this frightening journey?

Tony: It is an old therapeutical maxim that you can take a person in need just as far as you yourself have gone. This is certainly true, and for my part I had to go on a soul-searching journey into myself. One can offer a certain amount of help by just being a 'friendly, supporting listener'. Then comes a point when one feels a pressing need to *understand*, in a broader spiritual context, what one hears from several struggling individuals, telling about their experiences. At this point it becomes clear that one cannot just go on being supportive to all kinds of stuff that appears through these individuals, but that the counsellor must be able, in very gentle ways, to direct the development of the individual in a way that he sees to be true, and in my case truly Christian. So here, knowledge has to back up choices of a moral nature. In a prison situation, one needs knowledge about processes that happen between people in these extreme circumstances, about how a person's destiny is influenced by imprisonment, what visions and other altered states of consciousness really are, and especially about threshold experiences and the Second Coming of Christ, which is experienced in one way or another by individuals who go through a religious conversion in prison. The list could be even longer, so you see why I was faced with a lot of inner work myself. It wasn't enough for me any more to have studied spiritual science; I myself had to start in earnest to look for a real relationship to Christ.

Yvonne: I can see that the 'slow path' of study and meditation perhaps isn't enough in a prison — that an immediate and total experience is the only thing that could counteract the effects of the prison environment. But surely, as you yourself said before, just a 'vision' or a one-time inner experience isn't enough either, to bring lasting strength to an individual who wants to change his life.

Tony: For struggling individuals, no amount of slow study of spiritual matters can bring any help. For them, to find any meaning in life, a clear guilt- and pain-releasing *experience* is needed. If a conversion experience

comes, which is a wonderful blessing, the individual still needs to maintain his sense of judgement, and his mature I-directed ability to differentiate among the further experiences and temptations that will come. Practice has shown that a spiritual experience must be followed by study and counselling, meetings with some trusted person who can integrate this new-born man with the day-to-day realities of life.

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GOOD AND EVIL EXPERIENCED THROUGH THE WALDORF CURRICULUM

Brien Masters

In the 'Mystère des Actes Apostres par personnages' in medieval France, the good was represented by angelic beings dressed in white who stood on the top tier of the stage, while black-clad devils grimacing in hell below represented evil. Between the two levels were enacted the events on earth with which the play was concerned. In a Waldorf school, between white and black, as it were, a fascinating sequence of colour-tones comes into view as the pupils move through the spectrum of more than 12 years' classroom experience. In this article an attempt is made to explore some of these shades of colour in relation to the theme of Good and Evil.

Nine-year olds in Class III receive into their changing awareness a pageant of pictures of mighty mythological power presenting primal world beginnings, including the creation of humanity, pictures conjured forth within the child's vivid imagination by the power of the teacher's spoken word. They are drawn from Genesis, the Old Testament book containing the mythology of the race 'chosen' to develop a consciousness which steps from being Paradisal, totally at one with the surrounding God-head, to a more clearly defined form of knowledge capable of discerning Good and Evil. Adam and Eve, at first united, became separate. Traditionally, Eve experiences the forbidden fruit as good, Adam – the same fruit – as evil. They are thrust out of the Paradisal plane of existence. Their bodies, hitherto sustained by the all-providing garden of Eden, now pass into a state needing outer clothing and earthly nourishment within. The former is provided by the divine, the latter through their brows' sweat.

The children hearing of these events have an element in their consciousness which recapitulates this event. The banquet table of their tender life experience is laden with the fruit of the Fall. It becomes a feast of inwardness wherein there is great joy. Also pain which surfaces in the guise of 'unusual' behaviour. Sudden silent tears. Distrust. A communal revelling in the more unsavoury aspects of the physical body. Anxiety and uncertainty. A new sense of shame. Or maybe belly-blattant defiance. And the next moment ridicule. Hardly any distinction, it seems, between the moods of the medieval scene whether on stage or amongst the watching crowds.

The nakedness of the human soul needs protection. For nakedness also perceives nakedness and it is sore to have the glory of one's idolised parents and teachers swept away and their shortcomings piercing one's newly





opened 'eyes'. If we are concerned with children of this age, our leaf by leaf inner work, unfolding round the stem of the soul's life, is vital for them. Such work, like the fig leaves of Genesis, helps to cover our own astral-nakedness with ego-strength which reflects within their hyper-sensitive souls as a curtain of protection.

It is not enough, however, merely to protect. The newly awakening forces of the child from this age through adolescence need turning to good account. (Not all the thorns and thistles of Genesis 3.18 are to be burnt. The donkey of Palm Sunday had surely tasted thistle. And many a Bethlehem shepherd used the indigenous thorn to 'crown' their hillside folds against the ravages of the hungry wolf.) Hence, the suggestions that Rudolf Steiner made for the curriculum at this age embody many wonderful opportunities, through the subjects which weave such a colourful tapestry through the year's canvas of Old Testament stories. Let us look at farming, grammar, measurement, musical notation and gymnastics from this point of view.

In farming the labourer has the opportunity not only of tilling the earth in order to bring forth its yield, but of caring lovingly for the crops and animals he husbands, and for the soil upon which all depends. Cultivating the earth is an ultimate consequence of the Fall, while at the same time providing the physical basis without which we would be unable to strive 'upward' again. To farm is also a telling picture for the children of the need to cultivate goodness within the human soul, a picture which must include burning the tares. It also enables the teacher to present the ideal of human cooperation; the work of the saddler, the blacksmith, the miller and the baker all form part of this.

Grammar, particularly the grammar of the mother tongue, has a special relationship to the Ego. By the ninth year, the child will have mastered practically all the grammatical structure of its native language, imbibed through the unconscious power of imitation. In class, that which has thus been learnt is now focused upon with a new awareness. For most children this is their first conscious entry into the hidden domain of thought-life of which the ego itself is regent. By considering the elementary grammar of the three parts of speech — say, verb, noun and adjective — the thinking-awakened ego can take sure-footed steps leading over the border into this awakening domain from a dreamier consciousness, which begins to develop this way; the power of discrimination can get its bearings. This becomes an increasing necessity in a world where stranger and stranger species of apple are cultivated assiduously by powers who would also condition the human being's appetite for the evil fruit they have on offer.

Also in this year, the year in which a study of measurement is made, the children are taught to write music, both pitch and note values. This can be an important factor in transforming the natural confidence in life, which the younger child often brings in abundance, into that positive (but not naïve) attitude of the adult which seeks for and believes in the good in every human

being. Such confidence derives from certainty of the spiritual world. In music this world flows as inspiration. Writing down music gives us recourse to that inspiration in the future. In his "Piping down the valleys wild", William Blake depicts the spiritual source of inspiration as the child upon the cloud. The piper simply acquiesced and piped the 'song about the lamb' before he 'stained the waters clear' and wrote down the music. This could be interpreted as the death of divine inspiration – and Blake certainly feels something of that sting – but we can also see the invention of musical notation as the bottom rung of a ladder which, if trodden aright, will allow us to ascend to the heights once again from the depths of our 'valleys wild'.

In Greek times gymnastics was central to education. Through his gymnastic pupillage, the youth experienced how spirit dwelt in body in a state of constantly repeated balance. A clear trace of this can be seen in all Greek art, whether it be in famous sculpture like the Wrestlers, the Nike of Samothrace and the Laocoon, or a figure scarcely noted in guide books from a vase or frieze or funerary stele. In his landscape, through the presence of the temple, the Greek was constantly reminded that the God or Goddess had an earthly dwelling place. In every aspect of 'private' life the Greek personified this. The self – such as it was then experienced – acted in balance with the bodily. So what could be more self-evident than to place athletic movement, in all its balance and beauty, at the heart of education. Graf Bothmar, in the gymnastic exercises he evolved and taught in the Waldorf school, brought a contemporary consciousness to bear upon the interplay of gravitational and levitational forces within the sphere of bodily movement. These are first introduced in Class III. Almost in play, the pupil can rejoice in a will activity which is not merely bodily, merely muscular. From rightly educated will forces, new impulses for the future can be born. It is as if from the flames of the sword of the Guardian at the Gate of Paradise there issue forth two streams. One is a stream of admonition, whereby our knowledge grows ever colder and more destructive the further away it goes. The other is a stream of courage, firing the will. The floor of the gymnasium is a fundamental part of the temple of the education of the will, will that can become a vessel for moral impulses.

Before accompanying the child further on its school journey, let us glance back at the narrative material of the two previous years: fairy story, fable and legend. An important part of the fairy story is that part which, in many modern versions, it had been the fashion to expurge. Why 'spoil' a good fairy story, it is maintained, by ending it with putting someone in a barrel lined with spikes and then rolling them in it down a hill? This point of view needs close examination. Think for a moment of Rumpelstilzkin, the dwarf who helped the boastful miller's daughter spin the straw into skeins of gold. Were his intentions good? Beneath the mask of helpfulness was a very different being who wished to rob the princess of her firstborn. And when his evil intentions were thwarted, he stamped his foot into the ground with

such violence that the force of it dragged him into the depths of his own darkness, never to be seen again. This is his *own* act. Evil destroys itself, but it often leaves a countenance distraught with suffering behind a pretence of pleasure. It may be of further help if we realise that each character of the true fairytale is only one part of the character of the human being. Viewed in this way, one can then accept it more readily when someone in a fairy story, representing less desirable or even evil qualities in the human soul, is so radically eliminated. Such incidents give children (providing they are not told in a frightening manner) confidence in the higher guidance which each of us can awaken within ourselves. The old proverb tells us: charity begins at home. We can learn from the fairytale: the conquest of evil begins at home.

In Class II the giants, witches and dragons of the fairy story appear again in the legends of the saints. Also in stranger guise, in fables. An animal's instinct is a driving force in its life of wellnigh divine power; birds migrating, the elephant skillfully at work in Malaysian teak forests, the life of the hive. In fable, in a quaint and slightly humorous way, not a burlesque, the severe *limitations* of animal instincts are portrayed. At the end of a fable we may be biologically none the wiser, yet we may know more of *ourselves*. Every cockerel worth his throat, wattles, and tail feathers epitomises overweening pride; every fox worth his snout, ears and busy tail epitomises cunning. In the fable, we smile as we see Pride crowing on Cunning's snout. But it is not so amusing when we realise that, although fox *does* dine regularly and that cockerel *is* often the main course on the table d'hôte, pride as a trait in human character is not so easily swallowed. Indeed, how often even does pride peck out the eyes of self-knowledge? We may find that we can only quieten our own 'crowing' if we watch ourselves with hungry, fox-like devotion. Such stories awaken to the need of rising above the lower animal-like instincts.

Saints are those who have made significant inner conquests in this sphere of human development, with beneficial consequences for those with whom they come into contact. Saintliness can become nourishment for those whose hunger may only be spiritual. Moreover, its healing value may reach across the Divide of death.

The confines of the present article do not call for detailed attention to that which stands behind the lessons given in Waldorf Schools right throughout a child's school career. From what has already been discussed, it can perhaps be gathered that in the earlier classes the material used for teaching is chosen so that what is 'good' in human behaviour, in social relationships, work conditions, the natural world and the spiritual world, is stressed.

As in Bach's compositions, that which is discordant in finding its firm resolution leads to a 'sweeter' harmony. We begin to savor that "there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth . . ." Without this, the child's confidence in life, difficult enough to build up in present day circumstances, may be severely shaken. In these tender years, adverse

conditions which a child experiences *at first hand* may well result in some form of maladjustment. Plainly, the early home life is a deeply influential factor. In reality, however, life contains an increasing number of incidents and situations where our confidence in it is tested (though fortunately not as high a proportion as the impression gained from the media). It may be argued: surely children need preparing precisely for this eventuality. Here, caution pays. Exposure to the harsher realities needs careful handling, even in narrative form, so that the strength of confidence built up initially is sufficient to meet the calls upon it which will undoubtedly be made. Some of the opportunities which enable the teacher to steer a healthy course between over-exposure and under-exposure will now therefore be described.

Already in Class IV, after the stirring deeds of the Norse Gods, the children hear of the fate of Baldur the Beautiful and of the fact of Ragnarok, the Twilight of the Gods, a discordant note in an otherwise God-triumphant mythology. The children have to struggle inwardly with the fact that this resolution is not immediate but encompasses vast epochs of earth existence. In the Volsung Saga, which follows in the same class, can be heard echoes of this unresolved tension: Siggeir's treachery, the werewolves, the shattering of the invincible sword, and so on. At the same time, the stamina of those representing the good can never be doubted.

In Class V a third mythology is introduced: that of the Greeks. It, too, descends from the heights of creation towards the earthly scene, where Titanic figures accomplish great deeds on behalf of humanity. In this class, a further step is taken away from the divine, as the children receive history proper. In Class VI, the history lessons pass from B.C. to A.D. and in the following two classes, to the present day.

Historical events often reveal that in spite of many who suffer, a handful ensure that the good endures. The children meet this leitmotif through the lives of individualities like William Penn and William Wilberforce, whose feeling for humanity was such a vital factor in the abolition of the slave trade; social reformers both within the factories themselves, like Robert Owen and George Cadbury, or beyond, in the social conditions ricocheting from the "dark Satanic mills" of the Industrial Revolution, of whom Elizabeth Fry – in her courageous determination to improve conditions in the prisons – and Octavia Hill – in the kind but firm way she helped to solve the problems in the appallingly overcrowded urban areas – are good examples; Florence Nightingale whose lamp and presence and indefatigable pursuit of what she felt and knew to be humane brought so much to relieve misery in hospitals; men like Helmut von Moltke and Jacques Lusseyran whose moral tenacity would have been shining examples in an age of light and splendour, let alone in one of Europe's darkest hours; and Father Borelli who found a way, acceptable in the eyes of his superiors, of lowering himself outwardly to the level of his 'scugnizzi' in the Neapolitan street gutters, which qualified him in *their* keen, searching, hunted and pleading

eyes to raise them from the very sewage pipes of morality to a way of life in which decency and self-respect could be embraced again.

Each reader could add more than one name worthy of joining these ranks. Even more important, there can be no biography which does not contain at least one deed that could stand beside such outstanding examples without lowered eyes.

Beethoven has epitomised this leit-motif in his "Fidelio", his only opera. Even before the curtain rises, the orchestra takes on the task of interpreter and with cloven tongues of fire proclaims the message of final victory which is only reached in the plot in the last scene. This is not just an opera with a happy ending; it is a testimony of good over evil. Beethoven, whether we see him as herald or ambassador, has made it possible for this message to well forth from and to pour forth into the depths of human experience.

Though similar themes will occur in the Upper School, the raised degree of consciousness now developing in the pupils is a new and important factor for the teacher to reckon with. Into the fertility of soul engendered by the teaching in the Lower School, the Upper School subject matter is sown like seeds, there to germinate through the light and warmth of the pupils' rising consciousness. How inspiring it is – challenging too – for an Upper School teacher to become aware of the new interest burgeoning in the classroom, an interest now ready to focus on contemporary problems. Some of these, of course, lead to enormous discussions about political, social, scientific, artistic, spiritual and economic walks of life. It is hardly necessary to rehearse them here. But rather to ask *Why?* Why "Solidarity"? The European butter mountain? The Olympic boycott? Anything or everything in today's or tomorrow's world can, as it were, walk into the classroom, any day of the week, jockeying for place together with the personal chips that most adolescents carry on their shoulders. To answer why, however, is only the first stage. Because of further developed faculties, intuitive and otherwise, such a first stage can become for the conscientiously enquiring *adult* a fulcrum whereby many a mountain of impasse has been removed. The adolescent, on the other hand, has an intermediate need. One can go halfway to meeting it by bringing about an actual example of *how* someone, from the developed insight referred to, is tackling the problem in question.

For example, largely as a result of EEC legislation and the standardisation that this entails in some commodities, rice farmers in Sri Lanka are turning over their paddy fields to the new "Miracle" strain of rice. There are quantifiable advantages which are easily demonstrated, mainly to do with the weight of the crop yielded and the additional marketing potential, particularly overseas. Opposed to these are two distinct disadvantages. Firstly, any saved seed from a harvest will no longer germinate after 12 months, a necessary factor in the established practice of rotation. (It is staggering to compare this with the life displayed in wheat grain found in Egyptian tombs when they were opened up.) Secondly, the new strain does

not stand up to the more severe vagaries of the weather which the two dozen or so local varieties have done for generations. Both these points, particularly the former, roused interest in a class of 17-year-olds, as infertility in animal and arable farming is an increasing problem. What then could be brought to bear upon the problem which would not blind the pupils to the magnitude of its implications and yet call upon their instilled confidence in the good in realistic terms?

It was a great help in understanding the problem to have worked through the various stages of plant growth. From the root through the cotyledons and leaves, we had seen further metamorphoses anticipated in changing leaf shapes (as in bristly ox-tongue, greater celandine, etc.) and then actually taking place in the higher organs of the blossom, until finally the seed matured with its power to reproduce its kind even when seemingly segregated from the life forces of the maternal plant. A parallel support to the understanding was found in the phenomenon of retrogression. The potato, for example, is a malformed, subterranean stem, its nodes in unrhythmic clusters; while tomatoes occasionally produce petal-like protuberances on the fruit. (Many other examples could be given). In the first sequence can be seen the metamorphic *ascent* of the plant with greater and greater enhancement of form as the pinnacle of achievement, the seed, is reached. Alongside this we may follow forms of *descent*, where something has 'fallen', and compare these with the relatively infertile seed in that breed of rice where the emphasis has been on yield. Such a background permits further reference to the need in our times for a form of agriculture to be researched which will enliven the soil and the dynamic life-forces which surge from it in the plant. It was helpful to be able to report on the initiative which led to the founding of the Sri Lankan seed sanctuary with its "farmer curator", its part-time labourer, and administrative assistant. On the 3 acres of land given over to this project it is possible to keep in cultivation all the local varieties – solely, in the first instance, for the sake of preservation. To be able to see contemporary events juxtaposed against a wide background of understanding can give spur to thought and deed generally. And where the young person has developed particularly strong sympathies, inclinations and concerns, such considerations can help kindle the idealism of youth while also preventing tunnels of depression from blocking out light from the future.

With such means as these on call, Waldorf teachers may seek to strengthen that within each pupil which is fundamentally disposed towards the good. To do this without trespassing on that territory which remains the sole charge of each individual, the territory of their own freedom, is one of the most important elements in the practice of that art of education which Rudolf Steiner has inaugurated to meet the needs of our time.

REFLECTIONS ON THE RETURN OF HALLEY'S COMET

John Meeks

Halley's Comet is once again approaching the vicinity of the Earth and Sun. Perhaps it is the result of a certain charisma which the comet seems to share with the year 1984, that its reappearance was widely expected to take place sometime in that year. Its first telescopic sighting in the autumn of 1982 may also have contributed to such speculations. Because I have had to address this question already on innumerable occasions – indeed, nearly every time the comet was mentioned in my presence – I should like to begin this little essay with a clarification. The first (evening) visibility of the comet will take place towards the end of 1985, while the more impressive morning visibility will reach its climax in mid-April of the following year.

A closer look at the comet's timetable had best be preceded by a more general description of its nature and movements.

Nearly a full human life span has elapsed since its last spectacular appearance in 1910. For the greater part of this time it has been totally inaccessible even to the largest telescopes. During its long sojourn in the outermost reaches of the solar system its very existence as a comet might be said to have ceased. The streaming clouds of rarified substance which rendered it visible during its passage near the sun had dissolved away, leaving behind the tiny, and still hypothetical core of solid matter to trace out the remaining part of its vast elongated elliptical orbit, stretching out well beyond the distant orbit of Neptune.

In terms of astronomical dimensions one might well say that Halley's Comet, like comets in general, resembles a homeopathic infusion into our planetary system. The solid core, which, according to the now popular hypothesis of Fred Whipple, is imagined as resembling a "dirty snowball", estimated to be no larger than $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles in diameter, while the vast sheath of gas and dust particles which it exhales as it approaches the sun can extend for many millions of miles; indeed the length of the fan-like tail can even exceed the radius of the earth's orbit. And yet this majestic apparition, which can stretch across a large part of the firmament with its diffuse, spectre-like glow, is so rarefied, that we would call it a nearly-perfect vacuum, rather than a cloud, could we produce a similar state in the laboratory.

When the comet was first sighted on Mt Palomar in October 1982 – just 300 years after Edmund Halley's own observations – this process of rarefaction had barely begun to occur. It was still little more than a condensed,

insignificant "planetoid". In the ensuing years, until its first expected naked eye visibility sometime later in 1985, it is slowly expanding into the true 'cometary' phase of its existence. Paradoxically, the birth of the comet in its characteristic form resembles an excarnation-process; at the very time it approaches the centre of the solar system, it begins in a physical sense to expand, to dissolve towards the periphery.

Having swung around past the sun in February 1986, the comet will probably become an impressive spectacle in the southern hemisphere, and northwards as far as the Tropic of Cancer. At its closest approach to the earth in mid-April its head or coma will be moving south of the brilliant constellation of the Scorpion towards the Centaur. As the comet and Earth pass one another on their respective orbits, the tail is expected to pivot dramatically from West to East in the sky. In May and June as the comet fades from sight it will pass over slowly again into its contracted, intercometary phase, its coma and tail having largely dissolved into the widths of space.

In the light of this description it will perhaps come as no surprise that Hegel, in his "Philosophy of Natural Science"* described the comet as "bodies of dissolution". In polar opposition to the cinder-like, sclerotic moons, the "bodies of material self-containment", the comets are quite incapable of holding on to their own substance — in fact the periodic comets, which return at regular intervals, are slightly smaller in mass at each approach to the sun. Their 'biography' consists in a rhythmically-repeated, irreversible excarnation process.

* * *

If we approach Halley's comet from this broader, 'biographical' perspective, we will discover a further dimension beyond the physical phenomena we have considered so far. We will find the comet as an ever-recurring companion to human history, whose appearances roughly every 76 years have always been observed, and can be traced with some certainty as far back as 240 B.C. Let us then turn to a few of the more notable returns of the comet in recent history, and try to discover whether a leading thread or motif can be recognised in its 'biography'.

A chief source for our historical knowledge of the comet are the carefully-recorded observations in the Chinese annals, first brought to the West by Jesuit missionaries in the 19th century. Surely the most memorable entry in these annals is the one concerning the appearance of 837 A.D. Astronomically speaking, it was the most spectacular and climactic return of the last two millennia. At its closest approach to the earth it was only 4,000,000 miles away, or about $1/25$ th the distance from the Earth to the Sun. The annals describe the waxing of the comet in the most dramatic terms:

* "Naturphilosophie"

22 March 837 A.D.

"A Broom-Star appeared in the east (in Aquarius) with a tail more than seven feet long pointing west, towards the Southern Dipper in Sagittarius. On 24th March the tail had become strikingly brilliant. Li Wei, Prince of Chün died on 4th April . . . On 9th April the comet had reached the Southern Dipper. Forty-eight female musicians and dancers were expelled from the palace. On 10th April the tail was 50° long, and had divided into two branches, one pointing towards Libra, and the other in Scorpius. On 11th April it was in Virgo, pointing north, with a tail 60° long and undivided. On the advice of the Astronomer Royal Chu Tzu-jung, the daily allotment of food in the palace was reduced to one-tenth of normal and all construction on the palace grounds was halted in response to Heaven's denunciation . . . On 12th April the comet was moving northwest, and on 14th April the tail was more than 80° long. On 16th April classical musicians were dismissed from the palace, and on the following day the young monarch issued a decree outlining the grave implications of the dreadful apparition, and announcing the need for further austerities, soul-searching and penance. An amnesty was declared. Wen Tsung wore only white clothing: the royal hawks and falcons were released. On 19th April the monasteries of the capital city were commanded to hold public readings from the 'Sutra of the Humane King'. By 28th April the tail was reduced to 3° in length and the comet vanished in Leo."

The Chinese term "Broom Star" for a comet with a tail is not only a pictorial term. Comets were regarded as purifiers of the heavens and earth; but the cosmic sweepers were at the same time bringers of calamity and death. Their appearance was a sign that the earthly government had fallen out of harmony with the celestial order. Moreover, like the moon, they were regarded as concentrated cosmic essences of the Yin: the female, passive principle. A comet could thus be read as an indication that the royal house had come too much under the influence of this principle — hence the expulsion of the female musicians and dancers as a remedy, a kind of blood-letting at the height of the fever.

In Europe, too, the great comet of 837 appears to have aroused similar emotions. An anonymous French chronicler of the time, known to us simply as "The Astronomer" has recorded the following account: "During the Holy Days of Easter a most distressing and baneful phenomenon appeared in the sky. The Emperor (Louis le Debonnaire) was most attentive to such portents; and from the moment he came to know of it, he gave himself no rest. He told me that the sign portended a change of reign and the death of a

¹Translated by Edward H. Schafer in: *Pacing the Void, T'ang Approaches to the Stars*, Univ. of Calif. Press, Berkeley 1977 p.113. The Chinese did not, of course, refer to the constellations of our familiar "Western" Zodiac. Schafer has substituted these in his translation to enable the reader to visualise the comet's movements.

prince".² He was advised by his bishops to pray, build churches and found monasteries, a counsel which he willingly followed. Thus it was more than a passing penance, but a profound change in policy which was effected in France through this appearance of the Comet.

One of the most celebrated apparitions of Halley's Comet took place in the summer of 1066, a few months before the Battle of Hastings. In the Bayeux Tapestry, commissioned by Mathilde, the wife of William the Norman, it is shown in a stylised representation as a star with a fan-like tail. Beneath it stand a group of Englishmen pointing up at it with the inscription "Isti mirant stella" (they are in awe of the star); while close by, Harold listens with obvious concern to news of the portent.

These two apparitions may be taken as fairly representative of virtually all recorded apparitions of Halley's comet until well into the Middle Ages. The comet is seen as a portent or the scourge of a wrathful god; it inspires fear in human hearts, and is often answered by acts of penance and austerity.

A rare and notable exception for post-classical civilization is the speculation by the early Church-father Origen (early 3rd Century A.D.) that the Star of Bethlehem might have been a comet. Origen regarded comets as special creations of God brought forth to fulfil a specific mission. Moreover, a comet can often seem to point downwards towards the earth with its head as though to indicate a certain direction on the horizon. Whether or not he was aware of Origen's suggestion, Giotto represented the Star of the Magi as a fiery, reddish comet in his fresco painting of the Adoration of the Magi in the Arena Chapel in Padua. The naturalism of its depiction represents a bold departure from the traditional iconography of the time. The coma is portrayed as a broad, radiating disc, with a bright concentration near the middle. The tail, which tapers away in the distance, displays a kind of asymmetry typical of the actual appearance of comets. It is directed away from the child, who can thus be seen as the 'Sun' towards which the comet has bent its course. Giotto's frescos in the Arena Chapel were begun in 1303, and the Adoration can probably be dated as belonging to that or the following year. Two years previously in 1301 Halley's Comet had made a bright and conspicuous appearance. No rival comet is known which Giotto could have used as a basis for the painting. In choosing to represent the Star in this way, Giotto may have brought the scene closer to his audience, in whom the sight of the comet must still have been a vivid recollection. At the same time, by raising it to such high honour, he surely helped to dispel the feelings of fear and superstition which its appearance always seemed to arouse. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that the Arena Chapel was private, and the painting's audience therefore small and select. Indeed, one may wonder whether a statement so bold and presumptuous could easily have been made in a public forum.

² C. Flammarion, *Astronomie populaire*, Paris 1880, P549.

It may seem ironical that the European Space Agency's mission to Halley's Comet in 1968 has been nicknamed "Giotto", in tribute to the first painter known to have given a more or less faithful representation of the comet. It has even been pointed out that Padua was already a centre of mathematics during Giotto's lifetime and that Galileo was to hold a chair here as Professor of Mathematics in the 16th century. While it is undoubtedly true that Giotto's 'naturalism' reflected the dawn of the new age of consciousness which would also lead to a renaissance of natural science, it always remained subordinate in his work to the inner experience he wished to portray. In the Adoration the comet is still a sign, a part of the stellar script which has first to be read to be fully understood. The star which led the Magi to Bethlehem was to them the guarantee that Ahura Mazdo, the "Great Aura" of the sun which had been worshipped in earlier times, was descended to the earth. We have arrived at a turning point in the evolution of consciousness. The fears and emotions which the comet had released must be brought to rest, in order that the stellar script may be read.

As the new scientific consciousness awakened, a fundamental change began to take place in man's relation to the world around him. What has often been described as a striving for objectivity could equally well be felt as a longing to approach the phenomena in their purity, without imposing on them preconceived ideas or subjective feelings. Goethe has described this path in the following words:

"No sooner does a man become aware of the things around him, than he regards them in relation to himself, and rightly. For his whole destiny depends on whether they please him or displease, attract him or repel, are beneficial or harmful to him. This very natural way of looking upon things and judging them would seem to be as easy as it is needful, and yet the human being is here exposed to a thousand errors — errors which only too often put him to shame and embitter his life.

Far harder is the task they undertake, whose lively quest of knowledge impels them to observe the things of Nature for their own sake and in their mutual relation. They very quickly feel the want of the standards which helped them while they observed things in relation to their human selves. They have no longer the standards of pleasure or displeasure, attraction or repulsion, use or harm. These are the very things they must forgo. With the impartiality of beings as it were divine, they are to seek and to examine what is real, and not what is agreeable. Thus the true botanist will not allow the beauty nor the use of plants to divert him; he will examine their formation and their relation to the rest of the plant kingdom. Just as they are all conjured forth by the sun's rays which shine on all, so shall he look up them and cognize them all with the same quiet gaze, taking the standards for such knowledge, the data to guide his judgement, not from himself but from the circle of the things which he observes". ("Experiment as Mediator between

Object and Subject", 1792. Translated by George Adams and reprinted in "Readings in Goethean Science", edited by H. Koepf and L. Jolly.)

The striving for this 'divine' standpoint also harbours its dangers. In renouncing all subjective criteria of judgement the scientist can be left with a deep sense of insecurity. He seeks refuge in a new, purely quantitative frame of reference. Rather than search for the true, inherent qualities of the phenomena, he tries to reduce them to number, weight and measure. What might have been a god-like survey of the whole, is reduced to an exercise in statistics.

The apparitions of Halley's Comet during the scientific age reflect the struggle between these opposing tendencies.

In the years following the invention of printing, the appearance of bright comets usually led to the circulation of pamphlets either setting out to interpret the portent, or to investigate its nature scientifically. Among the more notable publications which followed in the wake of Halley's Comet in 1531 was a book by Paracelsus raising an impassioned plea against superstition, which he was equally dedicated to eradicate from the field of medicine. In 1607 the comet was observed by Kepler, who attempted to determine its orbit, and thus to bring it into the domain of mathematical law. He concluded that the comet had followed a straight line, coming from infinity and disappearing again into infinity. This apparently drastic error may seem more comprehensible when one considers that he was able to study only a small and flat section of the orbit, which could indeed appear as almost straight when projected into a heliocentric system. It was left to a later generation of scientists, foremost among them Edmund Halley, to apply successfully Kepler's own laws of planetary motion to the comets.

In the wake of the comet's apparition of 1682 Halley embarked on a detailed analysis of all recorded observations of its movements. He calculated a highly eccentric (i.e. flattened) elliptical orbit with a period of 76 years. Moreover, he maintained that the comets of 1456, 1531 and 1607 were in all likelihood previous returns of the same celestial body. His prediction of its return at the end of 1758 was gloriously confirmed, and led to the comet being named – albeit posthumously – in his honour. As a consequence of Halley's work, it was now clear that at least some comets, long thought to be unique and totally unpredictable phenomena, are lasting members of the solar system, and subject to the same general laws of motion which apply also to the planetary and lunar bodies. They had begun to be seen not as isolated phenomena, but as parts of a continuous whole.

During the apparition of 1910 the technique of spectral analysis was applied for the first time to Halley's Comet. Since its discovery in 1859 by Bunsen and Kirchhoff, this method has contributed enormously to an understanding of the chemical constitution of comets. Here again, an important step was made towards grasping the continuity of the physical

universe. The study of cometary motions had contributed to the dynamic aspect of this problem; the study of the chemistry of the celestial bodies established the continuity of physical substance beyond the confines of the earth.

During the coming apparition of 1986 we can expect enormous strides to be taken on both these fronts. The probable launching of three separate space missions to Halley's Comet will – if successful – undoubtedly lead to an inundation of facts and data which will require years of sifting and analysis before a clear and comprehensive picture begins to emerge. The danger seems overwhelming that the advances in material, quantitative knowledge will not be met with corresponding advances on a qualitative level.

To better understand the challenge of Halley's Comet on its present approach, we must return to the last apparition of 1910 when, at the same time as such impressive advances were being made in interpreting the mysterious hieroglyphs of the cometary spectra, light of another kind began to be cast on the comets and their mission in the cosmos. On March 1910, just before Halley's Comet became an easy naked-eye object, Rudolf Steiner began to speak* about the comet and its mission in human history. He makes specific reference to the discoveries of spectral analysis, which he brings into an unexpected relationship to the past stages of our planetary evolution. The discovery of cyanogen-like ions of carbon and nitrogen in the comae of comets bears, according to Steiner, a striking resemblance to the atmosphere of the "Ancient Moon", that primeval stage of planetary evolution which preceded our present Earth. This characterises comets physically as remnants of that ancient time, as cosmic anachronisms, which are nonetheless active in the present, and in the words of Kepler "as numerous as the fishes in the sea".

That celestial bodies are not merely physical, however, was already put forward by Hegel in his *Naturphilosophie*. In the paragraphs on comets, moons and planets Hegel characterises the latter as "bodies of individuality". They are neither enclosed within themselves like the moons, which reflect the sunlight from their crater-pocked surfaces, unaltered by the moderating influence of an atmosphere; nor are they unable to retain their own bodily substance like the constantly-dissolving comets. In their axis of rotation they attain an individual orientation in the universe, and through the working of their atmosphere which moderates between the cosmic and terrestrial planes, a world of manifold change and metamorphosis can unfold, even of evolving life-forms.

The concept of the polar principles of the lunar and cometary Rudolf Steiner takes up and carries further. The sclerotic lunar bodies he characterises as an extreme development of the masculine principle in the

* 5.3.1910 in Stuttgart and 13.3.1910 in Munich (GA 118).

cosmos; the wispy cometary bodies as extreme developments of the feminine.

In the human world the masculine and feminine principles are met in a more moderate form. They are – or should be – vehicles for individuality, rather than hindrances to its achievement. Measured in human terms, the comets and moons represent pathological developments of these principles. And yet, a certain analogy taken from the most normal and healthy development in human family life nevertheless holds true for the comets. For just as the woman – out of a certain pliability and 'openness' of her physical body – is able to bring a new being to birth out of the cosmos, thus bringing a lasting change into the life of a family, the comets must also be seen as bearers of a certain cosmic mission which can bring real and lasting changes into the life of humanity.

Although this possibility is dependent on the physical constitution of the comet, it obviously transcends the physical plane. The human physical body is unthinkable as a sole product of the physical world. It bears the imprint of the soul and spirit, and thus mediates between the material and spiritual levels. The realisation of an ideal in the outer world is the expression of this mediating function. The peculiar mixture of masculine and feminine qualities, both of which are present to varying degrees in each human physical body, might be seen as establishing a physical attunement for the life of feeling. This mercurial activity, not in itself physical, yet requiring a physical vehicle for its working, is characteristic for the psychic, or soul-level – the level of receptivity or creativity in human life which allows a spiritual impulse to be 'born'.

This brings us at last to inquire of the spiritual, or teleological level of the comet. In proceeding to speak of the specific historical mission or task of Halley's Comet, Rudolf Steiner stresses that he is speaking of what is spiritual in the comet. At each successive return to the vicinity of the earth and sun, Halley's Comet endows humanity with an impulse to think more materialistically, to take hold more strongly of the earth in the whole life of thought. The seeming contradiction in this assertion that the spiritual part of the comet should become an inspiring source of materialism is resolved, when we consider that thinking itself, in its very essence, is a spiritual activity. The repeated, rhythmical returns of Halley's Comet through the last two thousand years have thus contributed to the very awakening of scientific consciousness which we have described. Thus our brief, symptomatic description of the changing experience of the comet through history has a very real bearing on the course of its spiritual biography. But like every biography, this one too has its natural boundaries. Spiritually, the comet's mission was justified only until the dawn of the new Michael Age in 1872. Undoubtedly, it was a genuine help to humanity in the development of the selfless devotion to the phenomena described by Goethe. But the awakening of interest in the physical world did not stop with Goethe.

Scientific materialism has developed with the force of an avalanche which, in gathering momentum, has swept with it countless areas of life which were formerly beyond its scope. One has but to think of the modern developments in psychology, the "science of the soul", or of the role which the computer has come to play in art and education; or again of the ecological threats to our natural environment which have resulted from the one-sided application of materialistic thinking in technology. These are but symptoms of a wide-spread crisis which becomes manifest in individual areas of life; at its root is the underlying attitude of materialism which permeates so much of our civilisation like a hidden illness. Seen from this perspective, there can be little doubt that each future return of Halley's comet represents a danger, but at the same time a challenge to mankind.

As we look forward to the present return of the Comet, we may well ask whether the end of its justified mission will be accompanied by a corresponding speeding up of its physical disintegration? We have already characterised the comets – after Hegel – as "bodies of dissolution", with a biography consisting of rhythmically-repeated stages of "excarination". On a number of occasions comets have been observed to break up and disintegrate. The most celebrated case of this took place during the last century. In January, 1846 Biela's Comet (discovered in 1826 by Wilhelm Biela) was seen to split and break up into two separate comets, each with its own tail, which moved gradually apart in the sky. In March one of them disappeared altogether. At the following return in 1852 (the Comet's orbital period being $6\frac{3}{4}$ years) both reappeared, but further apart. After this, they were not seen again; but on the evening of the 27th November 1872, after three further orbital periods, a great meteor shower took place. For the course of a few hours, the sky became filled with the glory of thousands of brilliant shooting stars, whose radiance made their origin in the orbit of Biela's comet almost certain. A part of the solid debris of the extinguished comet had thus entered the earth's upper atmosphere, where each fragment, in its meteoric flight, was finally dissolved.

Meteoric showers of this intensity are extremely rare, and yet a considerable number of annual meteor streams are thought to have their origin in the disintegration-products of specific comets. Halley's Comet is no exception to this. Two such streams – the Aquarids in early May, and the Orionids in early October appear when the earth crosses near the comet's orbit at nearly opposite times in the year. These streams appear annually, even during the comet's long absences. We could well regard them as a final metamorphosis of the comet – a metamorphosis onto an entirely new phenomenological plane. This step is no less dramatic with respect to what Goethe described as the "sensible-moral quality". Whereas comets have traditionally been regarded with fear, and their outer appearance felt as spectre-like and uncanny, the meteors with their swift, brilliant flight across the firmament have seldom failed to exhilarate, and inspire the heart to courage. It is surely

of the greatest importance that we should learn, more and more, to see the comet as a larger totality which culminates in this final process.

After Halley's Comet had swung round past the sun at its last perihelion in 1910, telescopic observers saw the bright 'core' within its head break up into three separate parts. Whether this may indeed herald the last stage in its 'biography', its final transformation into meteoric fragments, is a question which its coming apparition may help to answer.

J.S. BACH FOR NEW VOYAGERS

Cecil Cope

Brahms is reputed to have said when proposing a toast to Bach's memory, "He was not a brook (Bach) but an ocean". That says it all, in a few words, but we must take a short voyage on this mighty ocean and find out what the great man had to say that can be understood and appreciated by the non-specialist listener.

Bach is often termed an intellectual and "a musician's composer"; it must be admitted that a good deal of his music is complicated, and not easy to follow at first hearing. It seldom has the immediate appeal of, for instance, Handel's music, which is generally speaking uncomplicated, and straightway effective and pleasing, to the layman as well as to the musician. There are, of course, some pieces by Bach that appeal at first hearing — for instance several of the Brandenburg Concertos, the so-called "Air on the G string", and many others which are tuneful and straightforward. But Bach's more 'learned' style is a little tougher to come to terms with. The 'ordinary listener' finds such things as fugues, canons, choral preludes, unaccompanied violin and cello works etc., rather daunting. But this is very often a matter of prejudice against the very *names* of the forms; "the title of Fugue is enough to put someone off", they say, and this is quite understandable: after all, a fugue is a pretty complicated structure.

However, it is a fact that music is an art which can be enjoyed at more than one level. It is possible to derive not merely superficial pleasure, but deep, lasting satisfaction from music which may not be intellectually understood, but which can nevertheless appeal strongly to the feelings — to the heart rather than to the head. Of course, it is true that a musician will get the best of both worlds and take in the technical devices with delight as well as reacting emotionally, but the non-specialist should not let that deter him from enjoying the sounds at the level of feeling. After all, it isn't necessary,





in order to enjoy, say, the 5th Brandenburg, to know that the first movement is in ritornello form, that the finale is a sort of fugal gigue, that the harpsichordist plays a dual role – that of ‘concertante’ as well as ‘continuo’ player, with all that stuff about his playing from a ‘figured bass’, and so on. It certainly interests music students, especially if they are taking an O or A level examination, but it really isn’t essential that the non-musical listener should be aware of such matters. Indeed such academic considerations can often be a distraction – one thinks of the earnest, well-intentioned beginner-listener who has been advised to listen for “a marvellous moment towards the end of the first movement, when the fugue subject enters in augmentation”, and the poor uninitiate is so intent on spotting this marvellous moment (which he will probably miss anyway) that he will fail to see the wood in searching for one tree – what a waste!

Don’t be put off by learned and difficult musical terms, and don’t endanger your enjoyment of the whole by a striving to hear some detail or other. Let the music come to you in its basic essentials – the melody and rhythm are the principal forces. These will lift you up and carry you along – especially if the music is by Bach! I remember that when I heard the 3rd Brandenburg for the first time I found myself laughing aloud (but not louder than the orchestra was playing of course!) for the sheer joy and exhilaration of the swirling, irresistible rhythmic impetus. I was too young to know that the succeeding entries of the various instruments were called “imitative” or “fugal” – and I certainly couldn’t have enjoyed them more if I *had* known!

I wonder if you know the deeply moving chorus “Crucifixus” from Bach’s great Mass in B minor? The beauty of this music is so all-embracing that technical matters fade into insignificance. The fact that the movement is built on a musical device known as a “ground-bass” is a source of wonder and delight to a musician, who can appreciate the skill with which the composer has erected a superstructure of deeply expressive voices over the constantly repeated ground-bass (a short phrase of descending notes in the cellos and basses). This knowledge is a bonus of course and the music will be enjoyed at two levels simultaneously by the musician, but I feel sure that the ground-bass is gradually taken for granted, as it were, and the attention is commanded by the *general* effect of all the details equally – ground-bass, the upper strings and two flutes, and the chorus singing their solemn dirge “He was crucified for us” – in other words, the *whole* is more important than the parts, and can be fully absorbed by the untrained listener.

Finally, there is for many people a special quality in Bach’s music, a quality which can only be called *goodness*. Moreover, this shining “goodness” is surely more apparent in Bach than in any other composer. The word goodness can easily be misunderstood; regrettably it has been debased and is often contemptuously equated with self-righteousness and hypocrisy, qualities which will not be found in Bach’s music! By

"goodness" in this context is not meant morbid religiosity; for one thing it is found in secular works as well as sacred — in the Brandenburgs as well as in the Passions; in the "48" as well as the Church cantatas. Other expressions are often used about this wonderful outpouring of sublime music: 'Sanity', 'well-being', 'universality', 'inevitability' and so on. Yehudi Menuhin says somewhere: "There is no doubt that Bach's music is God's music".

Reactions to music are very personal, and no one should tell you how you ought to feel, but for myself I can only say that the goodness of Bach brings to mind the words of Juliana of Norwich "... and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well."

That is how Bach can speak to us all. He is indeed "Ein feste Burg" in these troubled times.



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CENTENNIAL ISSUE
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Christy Barnes, Editor

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ALL I CAN SAY ABOUT COMMON SENSE

Greg Richey

When asked to write an article on commonsense, the most unusual sort of blindness descended over my judgement and I agreed to do it. Had I realised at the time that what we call commonsense is only the exterior appearance of a vast unknown world hidden beneath the surface of life, undoubtedly I would have sought wiser souls to take on this task, and resumed my life in naive happiness. I did not do this, though; I jumped in head first and found myself thrashing about in darkness, gasping for breath. Periodically, a very fine old gentleman pulled me to the surface and asked me what I had discovered. In my breathless state I stammered out a few inadequate, unhelpful words. He then would throw me into blackness, asking for more. I fear if he throws me in again I won't resurface for a goodly number of years. So I will now tell, for better or for worse, what I have seen.

This fine old gentleman, when he first threw me into the darkness, said I might find that commonsense had to do with good and lack of it had to do with evil. Maybe he was right, but nowhere did I find this to be true. From what I can tell, the decisions to carry out some of the greatest acts of mankind have been made with almost complete disregard for commonsense. Pioneers, explorers, anyone who has taken a step into the unknown, have all but ignored any calls for reason and simply forged ahead, usually at great risk to themselves and others. If they, or we, only listened to commonsense we would soon have the most dull, unprogressive life imaginable. Likewise, some of the most diabolical acts ever committed have been carried out with the greatest care and practical commonsense. It is commonsense that tells the criminal that meticulous planning and a good sense of timing are essential to carry out a successful crime. The thieves with commonsense sun themselves in Spain. The ones without find themselves involved in wearisome proceedings in court. This wonderful faculty of commonsense is not reserved for the good but will serve the bad equally well.

What does this tell us? It seems that commonsense is justified and necessary in one sphere and harmful in another. At the risk of sounding ridiculous it must be said that commonsense is not justified in the sphere of setting goals or aims. Here one must be free to take a big leap, to strive for the highest, unencumbered by such a heavy weight like commonsense. But once the highest goal is seen, the top envisioned, commonsense must be fully active or sure failure will be the result. In setting goals commonsense is unjustified. In the means to reach that goal, it is not only justified but

essential. Some may say, "But you must set realistic goals". I say, "Why?". Who says we need realistic goals? Why not set the highest goal you can envision but then stand it on the most solid commonsense you can muster?

Commonsense is the counterbalance to vision. One without the other is trouble. Is it any worse to have no morality in one's goals, as in the case of a criminal, than to have a very high, moral goal but try to carry it out with the greatest lack of commonsense? That to me is as much a theft of life as a criminal dared to steal. Everywhere the force of one is either ignored or mixed with the force of the other. This much is clear: we must separate commonsense and vision, and let each breathe its own air; one equally important as the other. Because we have a right arm and a left arm, we can grab hold of something and carry it. In the same way, commonsense and vision allow us to grab hold of life and move forward.

In my further thrashing about on this theme, I bumped into a farmer muddling about in the same darkness. Here is someone, I thought, who surely must know something about commonsense. So I asked him whether he had ever made a judgement that showed good commonsense. He laughed and said "Gosh, I don't really know". So I tried to pin him down further and asked how might he know whether a decision had been good or bad. He said "If I make a good decision I am aware of less troubles. If I make a bad decision I am aware of more troubles". Have you ever heard a more accurate description of daily life? The more stupid things we do, the more things fall apart. The more things we do that are not so stupid, the more things tend to come together. So what is commonsense: not doing stupid things.

I don't know about the rest of you but I wasn't born with this ability. I have been doing stupid things all my life. But some of them have been so stupid and the consequences so drastic that I learned not to do that again. Slowly, slowly a little commonsense is beginning to sink in. Nobody expects us to come into life armed with commonsense. But to die without developing any — that is truly tragic. It seems that the whole of life is fashioned in such a way that we learn the lesson of commonsense. To fail this lesson is to fail an important part of life. Of these two forces, vision and commonsense; vision, in one respect, is a gift of the Angels to us. Perhaps when we die our gift back to the Angels is the commonsense that we developed on earth.

Whether or not this is an accurate description of the hidden mysteries of commonsense the reader must jump into the darkness and find out for himself. Hopefully someone else will see better than I can. I'm afraid the fine old gentleman who started me off on this search will have to be satisfied with these words for now, because until my eyes adjust more to the darkness I can't see any more clearly than this.

SCHUMACHER — By his daughter

Alias Papa A Life of Fritz Schumacher, by Barbara Wood. (Cape, 10.95)

This biography of Fritz Schumacher, by his eldest daughter, is a good, honest piece of work, carefully researched, which does not conceal its subject's temperamental failings — notably his tendency to intellectual arrogance. His own views on any subject at any time were so convincing to him that he could see no good reason why anyone should oppose them.

When Fritz came to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar in October, 1930, he had already visited England, but without acquiring any liking for English ways. After his first term at Oxford he wrote home despondently about the English Christmas: "It really does consist only of Christmas cards and a great gorging for lunch on the 25th in this pathetic country . . . The 25th is the most deadly day of the year and everyone is glad when it is over. There is no distribution of presents. If anyone gives a present to anyone it is pressed into the recipient's hand at any time. The servants get their presents in envelopes in the kitchen. Most people can't stand (or digest) the black, heavy Christmas pudding. But it has to be eaten".

He compared all this in his mind with Christmas in Germany. The Schumacher family "celebrated on Christmas Eve with candles and carols. The presents were ceremoniously opened together. It was a time of delicious food, delicious wine, companionship and joy".

Fritz never came to like Oxford much, finding its intellectual atmosphere as enervating as its climate, but "he left with a number of good friends to give him at least some pleasant memories". One of these friends was David Astor (a future editor of the *Observer*), who was to be his most consistently helpful friend through all later years.

As the end of his two years at Oxford approached, he was granted an extension of his Rhodes Scholarship to enable him to study the New York money market, a subject required for his degree. Soon after arriving in New York — a city he found immensely stimulating — he was enrolled as an independent research student at Columbia University under Professor Parker Willis, an inspiring teacher. Six months later he was invited by Professor Willis to give a course of lectures and seminars at Columbia in the autumn of that year, 1933. His father wrote urging him to accept this flattering proposal: it would be better for him to stay out of Germany at a time of political turmoil.

Fritz enjoyed his second year in America and he could see excellent career prospects for himself there, but he decided that loyalty to his native country must prevail.

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Fritz enjoyed his second year in America and he could see excellent career prospects for himself there, but he decided that loyalty to his native country must prevail.

Back in Germany, living with his parents, he found things were even worse than he had feared. Hitler was in power; all opposition was being ruthlessly suppressed. His father, together with many German academics, tried to believe that "the excesses of National Socialism would pass, that they were a necessary evil to be tolerated while the good in the movement gained strength". Fritz had no such illusion. He saw National Socialism as a monstrous perversion of truth.

He now had somehow to earn a living; eventually, after difficult months, he found an opening with a *Syndikat*, run by four young men, concerned with promoting foreign trade through barter deals. One of these young men had a twin sister, Muschi, who was to be Fritz's wife. She was not intellectual but brought him warmth and devotion, and in course of time bore him four children, two boys and two girls.

Fritz came to feel that his work for the *Syndikat* was indirectly helping the Nazi regime. He "began to conclude that the only possible course of action was to leave the country . . . To stay in Germany would be to risk either compromise or concentration camp. The prime responsibility of decent Germans was to survive, to be around when the Nazi nightmare came to an end, so that Germany could be morally rebuilt".

Then, out of the blue, came the offer of a post in London as financial adviser to George Schicht, a director of Unilever, a firm with which the *Syndikat* had trade dealings. He accepted the offer, and early in 1937 Muschi joined him in England; but it turned out that all Schicht wanted was advice on making money by gambling on the Stock Exchange. Various dissensions arose; late in 1939 Fritz resigned. The war had started; how was he, now an 'enemy alien', to earn a living in England?

David Astor came to his rescue. An Astor uncle, Lord Brand, owned an estate and a large farm at Eydon in Northants. He offered Fritz - whom he knew and respected as an economist - a cottage, and work as a labourer on the farm. Fritz and Muschi went to live there in June, 1940. The cottage was cramped and primitive and first Fritz found the farm work exhausting. "On his first day he was shocked at the leisurely pace of the other farm hands. They did not seem to have the first idea what hard work meant. Fritz thought he would show them and worked at twice the pace. After three days he collapsed. Physical work, he discovered, could be sustained only at a steady, rhythmic pace. After that he learnt the pace from the other workers".

Before long, after Hitler's invasion of Holland, a fifth column scare arose in England; all Germans were rounded up. Fritz was sent to an internment camp at Prees Heath on the Welsh border. There he met a fervent Marxist, Kurt Naumann, and he "found the experience a profound eye-opener . . . Suddenly he could see how he had failed to take proper account of the political dimension of the economic issues which had concerned him. Poverty and plenty, oppression and injustice, were put into a new perspective

by Marx's penetrating analysis".

After some months he was allowed to return to his farm work, now combined with intensive study and writing in the evenings. He was absorbed in working out a plan for dealing with the economic causes of war through an international trade clearing system. This brought him into contact with J.M. Keynes, whom he greatly admired; he found that Keynes was working on similar lines. Probably the Keynes plan, put forward at the famous Bretton Woods conference, owed something to Fritz's ideas.

By this time, partly under the influence of Marxism, Fritz had become a "passionate atheist", hostile in particular to Christianity as altogether incompatible with a scientific search for truth. This was hard on Muschi; he had failed to realise that "the strength and loving nature he had come to admire in her had its roots in the 'old familiar opinions' which he was trying to destroy". When in 1942 he was offered a post at the Oxford Institute of Statistics, which meant that he went to live alone in Oxford, returning to Eydon at week-ends, she felt that "her life-support system had been taken away".

It was during the last winter of the war, when I joined the *Observer*, that I first met Fritz. David Astor had brought him in as part-time adviser on economic affairs. He came to the main weekly conference, a tall, rather silent figure; I can't remember him ever saying much. Then, in 1945, he left to work for the British Control Commission in war-ravaged Germany, and there he stayed until in 1949 the offer of a job as Economic Adviser to the National Coal Board brought him back to England.

He bought a house at Caterham, a large, bleak house named Holcombe, with four acres of garden. Fritz now threw himself into garden work, making compost, "sowing comfrey to feed a cow which never came", and providing the family with vegetables and salad. He joined the Soil Association and "his eyes were opened to a whole new way of thinking". He used to drive over to Forest Row to buy biodynamically grown grain from the Andersons' farm; he ground the grain at home and baked all the family bread. The only reference to Rudolf Steiner in the book comes at this point; he is briefly mentioned as a pioneer exponent of organic agriculture.

At the Coal Board Fritz fought for the future of coal in face of a prevailing official belief that the future lay with oil and nuclear energy. He mistrusted nuclear energy. "Here unregenerate man is entering a territory which, to all those who have eyes to see, bears the sign 'Keep Out'".

Meanwhile, at home, he was breaking away from his severely scientific outlook. He began reading the Eastern mystics. "New possibilities of knowledge (and experience) have been opened to me of whose existence I had no inkling . . . All the conclusions I had come to have to be thought through again." He joined the S.P.R.; he took a serious interest in flying saucers; he took up astrology; for a time he was strongly influenced, through J.G. Bennett, by Gurdjieff; he proposed to his mother that they

should jointly translate into German Maurice Nicoll's book on esoteric Christianity, *The New Man*.

Fritz often insisted that his concern with organic husbandry had opened his mind to these new vistas. "Week by week he baked his bread, day by day he did yoga and his spiritual 'work' and those parts of the day not filled by the garden or the office were taken up by lectures and books."

During this period I met him only once, over lunch in London. He told me that he had recently been through a strict school of Buddhist meditation in Burma, hoping to experience directly the enlightenment of which he had read so much.

His visit to Burma had been in 1955. Three months unpaid leave from the Coal Board enabled him to accept an invitation from the Government of Burma to go there as economic adviser. He was enchanted by the Burmese people and their Buddhist way of life, horrified by the endeavours of Western entrepreneurs, mainly American, to sell to the Burmese a technology which threatened to transform their society and destroy their peace.

His time in Burma had a profound influence on his outlook and future work. It led him towards intermediate technology and *Small is Beautiful*. It led him also towards Buddhism, but he felt that as a Westerner he should look back to Western traditions for confirmation of the spiritual truths he had found in Buddhism. On his return home he began to study Christian sources – Aquinas, the mystics, the lives of the saints: he and Muschi found a new understanding and a path they could genuinely travel together. Then Muschi fell ill, apparently with jaundice; it turned out to be cancer of the liver. She travelled to her family home in Germany, was moved into a nearby hospital, and there, in 1960, she died. Fritz had been with her daily for several months. "He spent hours at her bedside reading to her and talking to her of the things of the spirit which had for so long torn them apart and now brought together, closer than ever before."

Meanwhile the household at Caterham was cared for by a young Swiss *au pair*, Vreni; when Fritz returned she agreed to stay on for another year. There was no thought, then, that two years later Fritz would marry her and through her would have four more children.

His situation at the Coal Board was transformed when Alf Robens became chairman in 1961. He virtually took Fritz into partnership; Fritz could now be sure that his ideas on the future of coal would get a hearing.

His intermediate technology – "we find out what people are doing and help them to do it better" – was launched in an *Observer* article in 1965. It brought a vast response; Fritz began to receive invitations from presidents and policy makers throughout the world, all wanting to know how the idea could be applied to their problems of poverty. At last, in 1970, he retired from the Coal Board and in the intervals between travels got down to writing *Small is Beautiful*; soon it became a best-seller and was translated into many languages.

Some two years earlier, in September 1971, he had been received into the Roman Catholic Church (to which Vreni and his daughter, Barbara, were recent converts). A few years later he wrote: "It has taken me a long time to discover why religion has split into so many different religions: it's so you can choose the one that is most practical for you. The most practical for me was the Roman Catholic version of Christianity". I am not sure what 'practical' means here, nor exactly why Fritz took this step, I think it was partly a feeling that the Roman Catholic Church reached back into the Middle Ages, after which, he thought, Western Europe had gone into a decline:

Great painters failed to win his approval if they were born after the Middle Ages, which he considered the greatest period of art. The great cathedrals built at that time symbolised for him the true purpose of art: both a product of man's striving towards heavenly perfection and an example to those of later generations. Twentieth century art on the other hand symbolised the meaningless existence of *homo sapiens*, and he assumed that most modern painters were laughing at the world for its absurd adulation of canvases full of meaningless marks.

The success of *Small is Beautiful* brought him various honours – a C.B.E., a private dinner with the Duke of Edinburgh at Buckingham Palace and a luncheon with the Queen, and numerous academic awards. It also set him off on the world-wide travels which were to continue with few intervals until his death. In the United States he became a guru, a benign, white-haired figure, for thousands of young Americans. In 1977 he went there for a six weeks tour from coast to coast. "In many places the biggest halls were not spacious enough for the waiting crowds and loudspeakers had to relay his words to adjacent rooms." He talked with President Carter at the White House. He returned home exhausted, but was soon off again, this time to Indonesia and Australia.

He felt that he had a mission to fulfil, a mission of warning. "Modern civilisation can survive only if it begins again to educate the heart, which is the source of wisdom; for modern man is now far too clever to survive without wisdom." This education would involve, first, "a recognition that there is something higher than man which gives point to his action"; and in practice a learning of non-violence both in politics and in economics, which would no longer countenance the reckless exploitation of the earth and its natural resources.

In September, 1977, he went to Switzerland for a week's lecture tour. On Sunday morning, September 4, he was travelling by train when he died suddenly from a heart-attack. At that same time a cup he always used at home fell inexplicably from a cupboard shelf in the kitchen at Holcombe and broke into fragments on the floor.

A few days later Vreni "had a vivid dream": She was sitting in the drawing-room at Holcombe in front of the open fire when she suddenly

became aware that Fritz was in the room with her. She looked up and saw him sitting in his chair. 'I just wanted to tell you what happened,' he said. 'On the train I suddenly felt ill and thought it was indigestion. I went to the toilets but it got worse. As I came out I saw a food vendor coming towards me. I asked her for help. Then I died.'

'Did you want to die?' Vreni asked.

'No,' he replied, 'but I was ready.'

A "dream"? It sounds more like a waking vision.

In his last book, *A Guide for the Perplexed*, published after his death, he indicated – without mentioning Rudolf Steiner – what his main objection to Anthroposophy was. He could not accept Steiner's account of the evolution of human consciousness; he believed that human consciousness had contracted and darkened since the days of St. Thomas Aquinas. But this in fact was not denied by Steiner, who often spoke of the limitations of the mode of consciousness which had come in with the rise of modern science; of its blindness to the spiritual and its interest only in what could be measured or weighed. But Steiner also emphasised – and this is what Fritz could not accept – that from this new mode of consciousness there could arise faculties which would bring renewed access to the spiritual, together now with essential freedoms which had been absent in the Middle Ages.

No matter: this excellent biography will, I hope, make better known a good man who had things of urgent import to say to our age.

Charles Davy

LIFEWAYS

Working with family questions – A parents' anthology

Edited by Gudrun Davy and Bons Voors

Illustrated by Gertraud Hofmann

Hawthorn Press 1983, reviewed by Anka Cram

Since early this spring an attractive, unusual and most stimulating book has been offered to the public. A philosophically-inclined mind may ponder over the title for some time. What does it mean: Working with family questions? The visually-inclined reader will enjoy the softly-coloured 'family boat' on the cover and the thirteen full-page black and white drawings, with sensitive moving shades, bright radiance and also deep darkness.

The list of contents promises many different aspects and styles contributed by twenty-eight authors. The book is sub-divided into three parts: parents' ways; family ways; and children's ways.

When reading the excerpt on the back of the soft cover, one sentence in particular may turn those, who only had a quick look, into serious readers: "But most of all 'Lifeways' is about freedom – and how the tension between personal fulfilment and family life may be resolved". Undoubtedly, many parents can identify this as their own, often painful, problem. New ideas on how to solve it are most welcome.

Thinking about the needs of the children and celebrating the Christian Festivals has become a part of life for those who are in contact with the Waldorf School movement. A large number of publications on the background to Waldorf education is available to parents. However, "Lifeways" is an anthology describing vividly and with deep personal involvement the side of life that is neither work nor school but that takes place at home, where a family has its centre, where "a place is created which supports all those involved, children and adults, in their life-ways".

In his book "Phases", Bernard Lievegoed wrote "I venture to suggest that the future of Western culture depends largely on whether a new family culture will be created on a wide scale". The authors of the articles spent many years trying to create their own family culture. They were developing new ideas and sharing them in groups. They found in each other the necessary support to develop, celebrate and live a life rich in enjoyment as well as in

struggles. They all realised that the task of creating a good home life is so demanding that outside support is needed. The traditional family form of the mother being responsible for the home, and the father for the financial support of the home through working elsewhere, has the tendency to pull heart (mother) and head (father) apart. The mother becomes dependent on her own resources, sometimes as much as a single parent (as described in two of the articles), and the father tends to lose his connection with life in the home.

The need for each family to find their own new and flexible form, the need to change isolation into the ability to contribute independently towards a common aim, the need, perhaps, to turn a joyless or broken family home into something positive and purposeful, are all considered in this book. The authors' various contributions together build visions of the wide range of possibilities that exist to develop a 'home' into:

1. a warm nest (articles on sleeping and waking, meals, clothes, health)
2. a stage for performing songs, funny, magic and tragic plays, and for telling stories (articles on Christian Festivals, religious life, fairy tales, story-telling, temperaments and parties)
3. a challenging centre for social learning and initiative (articles on being a mother, rôles, family relationships, money).

Mothers are given encouragement in a subtle and positive way to master their tremendously challenging task. If work and life at home with the family becomes naturally flowing as well as consciously planned and professionally organised in a balanced way, the beginnings of freedom and inner development can be experienced. Several articles describe exercises which are helpful to keep one's feet on the ground, one's heart in the right place, and one's head!

The experience of inner growth, and the freedom that can express itself in mastering the tasks taken on, can give additional energy to follow a talent or inclination alongside caring for the family. And with children growing slowly away from the house, usually from the age of four onwards, outside work can be done alongside the creation of a home. Two articles describe clearly and excitingly how work and life in the home, and life and work in a job (or as a student) can be shared and enjoyed by both father and mother. If parents feel that the way they are living is fine and see no need for a renewal of home life, the articles will still be most stimulating. The many suggestions on how to make life brighter and warmer for everyone can be enjoyed, appreciated, and sometimes even put into practice.

The idea of working with questions rather than answers is exciting in itself. In an area as personal and intimate as home life, finished answers tend to be too narrow and dogmatic, but asking questions, and sharing experiences, allows free space to develop for finding one's own solutions.

There is no doubt that many people have found this approach interesting. The 3,500 copies printed were nearly sold out within six months. A second edition will be forthcoming and a German translation is being prepared for an edition of 5,000.

"Lifeways" has been well received by those who have had no contact with Anthroposophy. Although the authors all studied Rudolf Steiner's view of Man and the Universe, understanding the book does not require the same background. In fact, the anthology is most suitable for everyone who enjoys creating new "lifeways".

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NOTES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The cover design is by Martha Claire Rowse. The starting point was a diagram (probably sketched by Rudolf Steiner on the blackboard during his lecture) which is reproduced in "The Reappearance of Christ in the Etheric" (Anthroposophic Press, New York). The lecture was given on 25th November 1917 at Dornach. The diagram indicated the twelve constellations of the Zodiac, with Pisces, Gemini, Virgo, and Sagittarius, marked out as a great cross. For our time, it will be of great significance to find how good and healing forces can come into the life of humanity through the influence of Pisces and Virgo. In our cover drawing these two are indicated, Pisces with the cross and the sun disc as this can be found in the Catacombs, Virgo with a spray of wheat as in a drawing by Emma von Eckhartstein. (There are of course somewhat similar drawings from earlier times).

In our time the forces of Gemini and Sagittarius can be misused by groups pursuing power in a way ultimately harmful to humanity as a whole. Rudolf Steiner spoke of occult brotherhoods of this kind on a number of occasions, particularly during the first World War. It is not easy to point to external evidence for the existence of such brotherhoods; and this is not surprising, if as can be expected they make every effort to keep themselves secret. But tendencies are visible in the West as an attempt to include every aspect of human life in a technology ruled by numbers, and in certain groups in the East where human instincts and mystical conceptions are confused in a way that diminishes the freedom of the individual.

On this indication of the great cosmic forces of the Zodiac has been superimposed part of the elliptical orbit of Halley's Comet as this approaches and departs from the vicinity of the Sun, during the years immediately preceeding and following 1986. This has not been done with the accuracy of an astronomical diagram, in which the turning point of the ellipse would have to be further down, more towards the region of Aquarius and Capricorn. The orbit of Halley's Comet does not lie on the same plane as Earth, Sun and Zodiac, the plane of the ecliptic, but at an angle to it; projected onto the Zodiac the Comet's movement is not in the same direction as that of the planets when retrograde, the Moon, or of the Sun's yearly course, but that of the vernal equinox. Thus we should think of Halley's Comet as coming from the upper right-hand corner of the cover design. In the quality of the lines the design seeks to express the harsh impulses into materialism coming from the Comet's visit to the solar system; these are countered by the enduring good coming from Pisces and Virgo.

The work of Albert Steffen falls into five principal categories: novels, plays, poems, essays and paintings. Many of the plays and novels belong to the rather earlier stages of his life; the essays and paintings to later times. The making of poetry was always with him; the last collection of poetry was published after his death. Dr. Friedrich Behrmann has an exceptionally complete and intimate knowledge of his work as a whole; and with other devoted colleagues has done a great deal in a practical way to make this work accessible and understandable for others.

Those who attempt to translate poetry often feel themselves confronted by impossible tasks. No word has a precise equivalent in another language. Many able translators have put their hands at least to some of Steffen's poems, sometimes aiming at a very free rendering, sometimes keeping closer to the literal sense of the original. The poems in this small selection are translated by Theodore van Vliet (one of them "The Human Being" in conjunction with William Gardner), with the exception of "I Speak to Thee" and "Wonder Seizes Me" and the Prayer. The selection of prose passages is from "Geist Erwachen Im Farben Erleben" and "Reisen Hüben und Drüben" and are translated by A.B. except for "A Sketch" translated by Theodore van Vliet.

Comparatively few of Albert Steffen's sketches were chosen by him for publication during his lifetime. Many have been preserved, without any titles given by him; and it is no easy matter to find appropriate titles. They are eminently pictures to be looked at and felt, rather than thought about. For many people they seem at first childlike, especially in their forms. It is perhaps best to look at them first only from the aspect of their colours; and if we do this, they can become sources of a special joy. We begin to feel how boundlessly significant for him each colour is, and how all of them begin to detach themselves from external objects and live in the space around them. It is evident that for him they were links with his wife after her death. It is fascinating to compare these pictures with what appears so utterly different – Italian art of the 13th and 14th centuries, to which Steffen was deeply attached. Indeed, though so much about him was very Swiss, in his last years he seemed to find a home in a special way in the north of Italy, in the cities where so many of these great works of art are preserved. Then the artists were achieving a new command over the representation of space, and of natural human movement as an expression of emotion; in the present, Steffen and other pupils of Rudolf Steiner were engaged in crossing the threshold, as it were, in the opposite direction, in their work as painters.

Wolfgang Schad is a very experienced teacher, lecturer, and writer, engaged in training Waldorf teachers in Stuttgart. Yvonne Karsten and Tony Dunderfelt are a Finnish married couple; she is studying Speech and Drama, he is working as a psychiatrist. Brien Masters teaches at Michael Hall School, trains teachers for Waldorf Schools, and edits "Child & Man". John Meeks is a member of the teaching staff of Emerson College, and

often leads students out to look at the stars. Cecil Cope was in charge of Music at Michael Hall School, Forest Row, from 1961 to 1984 and has contributed a great deal to the musical life of the area. Greg Richey is studying at the Centre for Social Development connected with Emerson College and contributed a revealing article on the experiences of a dustman, or trash-collector, in last year's Golden Blade.

Penguins, Seals, Dolphins, Salmon and Eels

Sketches for an Imaginative Zoology

Karl König

'By the end of the moulting penguins are so emaciated that they are too light to dive under water. So now they begin to swallow small stones from the beach in order to reach the necessary weight ... Now the penguin begins to turn into a fish once more.'

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König's lively and informative essays, combining biology and mythology, come close to the quintessence of the animals. He is indebted to Goethe's morphological works which taught him always to see a particular type as a variation of the ideal basic form. His other major source of thought was the theory of evolution held by Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Anthroposophy. This theory of evolution speaks of the connection between the destinies of human beings and animals from the most ancient times.

Zoology, mythology; tr from German; 1st edn Oct 25, 1984; 21 x 14cm; 96pp; sb; £4.95; 0-86315-014-4

The First Three Years of the Child

Karl König

The author approaches the early years by considering in detail the three great achievements that characterize them: the acquisition of the abilities to walk, speak and think. This means dealing with something 'more than instinct, more than adaptation, more than the unfolding of inherited faculties.'

He considers that justice has rarely been done to the dignity of these three 'spiritual gifts' and this book is an attempt to show how vital are the first three years in laying the foundation of man's true humanity. He devotes a final chapter of exploring the connection of these basic faculties with what Rudolf Steiner described when speaking of senses beyond the five usually named, as the three highest human senses: of speech, thought and ego. Although this last sense (that is for the ego of the other), which finally makes a human being what he truly is, is not fully developed until later in childhood, the author shows it is the result of the acquisition of the first three great human gifts.

Education, psychology; tr. from German; 1st edn 1969, pb reprint 1984; 21 x 14cm; 144pp; pb; £4.95; 0-86315-011-X

Christ Legends

Selma Lagerlöf

Illustrated by V & G Knapp

Floris Classics, Swedish literature, children; tr. from Swedish; This edn Sep 27, 1984; 22 x 14cm; 208pp; sb; £4.95; 0-86315-506-5

Peronnik the Simpleton

A Breton folk-tale

Illustrated by Christiane Lesch

Children (age 6-10); 1st edn Sep 27, 1984; 30 x 23cm; 28pp; 14 colour illus; hb; £4.95; 0-86315-018-7

Brothers and Sisters

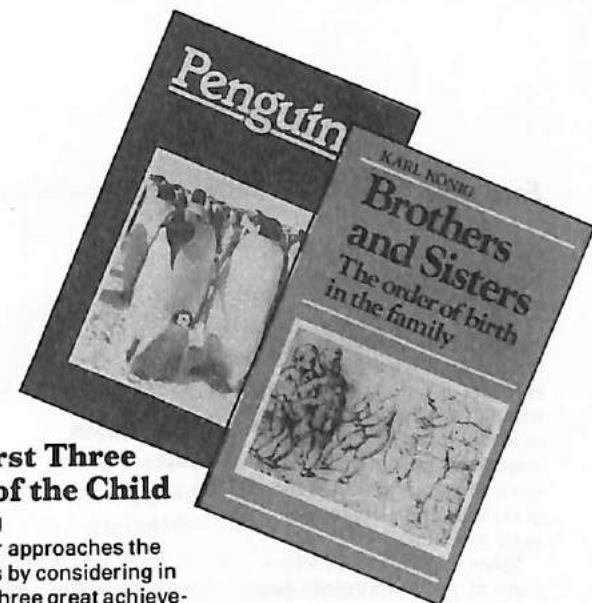
The order of birth in the family

Karl König

Education, psychology; 1st edn 1958; reprint 4th edn Sept 27, 1984; 21 x 14cm; 96pp; sb; £4.95; 0-903540-38-X



Floris Books



Sun and Cross

The development from megalithic culture to early Christianity in Ireland

Jakob Streit

The author is unique in tracing the unbroken evolution of spiritual culture in Ireland, through the ancient sun-orientated monuments of the megalithic age into the Celtic era and then into that of the great stone sun-crosses of early Irish Christianity.

Streit follows the development of the profound symbols used by the advanced megalithic culture and carried further by the Druids when they settled in Ireland three or four centuries before Christ. Early hymns and liturgical texts combining the older nature-wisdom with the new spirituality of Christianity bear witness to this symbiosis, as do also the Irish crosses and early stone circles.

The first motifs found on these crosses are enriched by rhythmic plaited and banded patterns, then with introduction of carved figures the form of the risen Christ becomes visible. Streit posits a quite independent cosmic stream of Christianity, established across Europe in the Dark Ages by such Christian monks as Columban. In the eighth century this stream was eclipsed by Roman Christianity.

This book deals with the cross from its earliest appearance in pre-Christian form to its development in early Christian times.

History, art, religion; tr. from German; 1st edn Oct 25, 1984; 25 x 18cm; 102 photos & diagrams; 224pp; hb; £14.95; 0-86315-010-1

Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians

The Letters of Paul

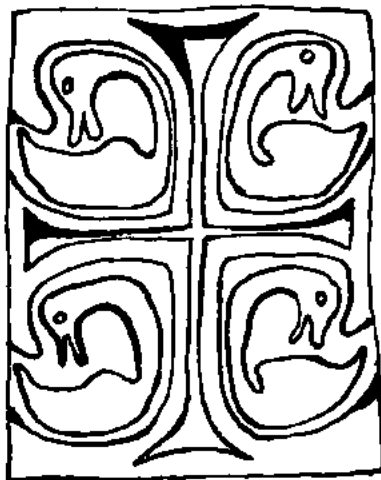
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From the Introduction to Galatians (by Michael Tapp)

Bible; tr. from Greek; 1st edn 1984; 18 x 11cm; 96pp; pb; £2.95; 0-86315-013-6



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