

MYSTIC LIGHT

Trinitarian God in the Gospel of St. John

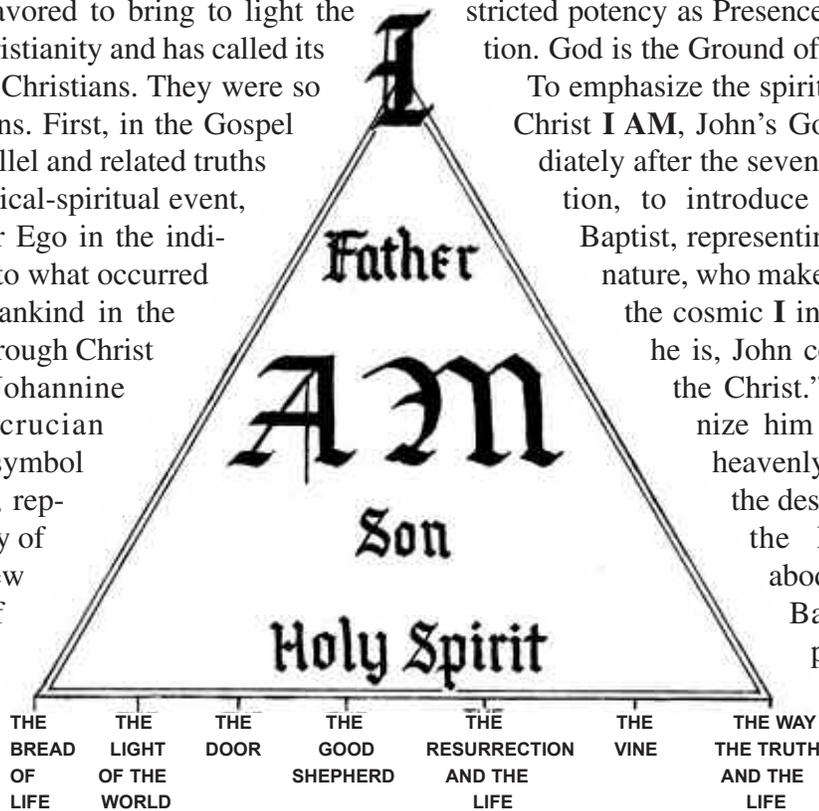
THE INITIATE Rudolf Steiner calls the Gospel of St. John “the most important Christian document.” Apparently the Rosicrucian community has thought so too. Since the 14th century it has endeavored to bring to light the deepest truths of Christianity and has called its members Johannine Christians. They were so called for two reasons. First, in the Gospel of St. John, two parallel and related truths are revealed. A mystical-spiritual event, the birth of a higher Ego in the individual, corresponds to what occurred in history for all mankind in the event of Palestine through Christ Jesus. Second, Johannine Christians, the Rosicrucian Brothers, whose symbol was the Rose Cross, representing the mystery of the reborn God, knew that the writer of John’s Gospel was the first human to be initiated by Christ Jesus, to be raised from the death of mortal-ego consciousness. They knew that Lazarus was Christed and renamed John, and that John was subsequently embodied in the 14th century as the Founder of the Brotherhood of the Rose Cross, Christian Rosenkreuz.

St. John’s Gospel, the New Testament’s most esoteric account of the life of Christ Jesus, alone

elaborates and meditates on the three Persons of God: the Spirit of Truth or Comforter, the **I AM** or Christ Logos, and the Father. Only in John is the **I AM** nature of Christ explored. **I** denominates God’s *eseity*, pure Being. **AM** reflects God’s unrestricted potency as Presence in holy Self-cognition. God is the Ground of any and all being.

To emphasize the spiritual sublimity of the Christ **I AM**, John’s Gospel begins, immediately after the seventeen-verse introduction, to introduce another John, the Baptist, representing the purged desire nature, who makes clear that he is not the cosmic **I** incarnate. Asked who he is, John confessed, “I am not the Christ.” Nor did he recognize him (“I knew him [the heavenly Ego] not”) but by the descent (like a dove) of the Holy Spirit, who abode upon him. The Baptist, as Christ’s precursor, instructs his disciples to prepare the way in themselves by changing their minds.

The Greek word *metanoia* does not, as normally piously translated, mean to repent (punish oneself), but to change (*meta*) the mind (*nous*), or the way one thinks, to transform selfish or egotistic thinking. The personal ego must decrease and the objective Christ Ego must increase. What is this Christ Ego? It is, the **I AM** is, the water of eternal



Flancy Schwenk



Illustration for the Bible, 1866. Gustave Doré

“They see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid; but he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid”—John 6:19-21.

life (4:10-14), the life spirit. While the Jews, with genealogical pride, called Abraham their father, Christ called God His Father (5:17-18), to the Jews a blasphemy. But this pure Ego does nothing of Itself; the Father, He doeth the works. The personal ego does everything of itself; that is, it thinks it does. It is this erroneous thinking that needs changing, *metanoia*. The personal self bears witness of itself. Such is the role of this self-appointed god. But “If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true” (5:31). But the Father, the divine spirit, bears witness to the Christ Ego as the only begotten, Whose will is the Father’s. Paraphrasing Christ’s words: He that speaks of himself seeks his own glory, but when the chastened and humbled personal self seeks the glory of the divine Self that sent him, then is he true—a messenger, a gospel bearer. The personal ego speaks of the earth and is earthly. The Christ(ed) Ego cometh from heaven and is above all.

While His disciples foundered at night on the Sea of Galilee, as the boat of their soul bodies was tossed by the waves of emotion in the desire world, Christ walked on the water toward them, in command of the forces of that realm, and they were doubly afraid. But He comforted their souls, “It is I; be not afraid” (6:20): The impersonal I can and does quiet the emotional tempest that constantly threatens to capsize and inundate the unseaworthy personal ego.

The Christ Self is available to each. It is the bread of life (6:35), the living bread, the spiritual substance which comes down from

heaven and truly and literally gives life to the material world, which alone is but an aggregate of inert, unordered atoms. It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. The Christ Self is the light of the world (8:12), the light of truth, the light that lights each soul that takes on a physical body. The **I AM** is eternal. Before Abraham, before Adam was, was the cosmic **I AM**, was Christ, the root and spiritual substance of all individual **I AMs**. Before the foundation of the world, before ego was, was the Christ **I**, resplendent in glory with the Father (17:5, 24).

The **I AM** is the door (10:9) to the deathless world of the eternal present. The personal ego ever is repelled by the embodiment of its own vicious thoughts and consuming passions. The Christed **I** is able to withstand the hideous aspect of the self-created devil which, like Cerberus, stands guard as a forbidding porter at the threshold to the higher worlds. Like Dante’s Virgil, the divine **I** will conduct the lost soul back to its heavenly fold. Whereas the **I AM** is the good shepherd (10:11), the lower ego is a wolf in sheep’s clothing and desires to devour the soul.

The **I AM** is the resurrection and the life (11:25). The Word was with God, and one with God, from the beginning. In the Word is life. Every human spirit, therefore, being of and from God, must resurrect from the dense physical body in which it is buried, and though dead to

material eyes, it shall and must live to the eyes of spirit (11:25), since it *is* spirit. Individual consciousness is raised, like Lazarus, from the grave or cave of mundane consciousness. All things become new.

The Life Spirit, whose embodiment is **I AM**, is the Way (14:6) to the Father, the Divine Spirit. It is the truth that intuition delivers to the Christ-attuned soul. It is that which is true of each thing that is. And what is of life, is of and from this Life Spirit. The Holy Spirit, which correlates with the individual human spirit, is the Spirit of Truth (16:13), truth's awakener and teacher, Whom God sends in Christ's name to evoke a re-remembering of divinity, and thus instill peace of mind and comfort of soul.

As the **I AM** and the Father are one, so does the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit, proceed from the Father. So is the individuality fruitful when it abides in the will of the Father, the love of the Christ, and the truth of the Holy Spirit. The Christ Self, the **I AM**, is the vine (15:5) by which individual humanity is made spiritually fertile and productive. There can be no growth or yield outside the vine because outside it there is no life. A detached branch is a dead branch. An ego posing as its own source is void, a hollowness, a whimper in the wind. Its fate is to wail in a spiritual wasteland and gnash its teeth in a limbo of self-loathing. While Lucifer strengthens the center of gravity in one's own personality, necessary to an extent, Christ provides the basis for and strengthens the **I**-core of one's individuality. Christ through Jehovah (Yahweh, Jahve, JHVH) identifies Himself to Moses as *ehjeh esher*

ehjeh, **I am the I AM**.

Perhaps it would be unseemly of Christ to have said, I am the love of the world; though to His disciples he may well have, for He *is* the world's love. John the Beloved makes clear that Christ's mission is generated in and issues out of God the Father's divine love, established in His Son's eternally active deed of incommensurable love, and regenerated in myriad gracings of love through inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The mission of the Christ **I**

was to entirely empty **Itself**, actuated by boundless love to dismember or distribute **Itself** unto dying individual humanity as an elixir to effect a restoration, a replenishment of spiritual blood by which, through a roused **I**-consciousness, each soul, having wasted its divine resources, might return as a prodigal son to its heavenly Father.

Greater love has no man than this—to lay down his life for his friends. There is no one who was not and is not Christ's friend. For all, for love, did Christ lay down his life, that we might take ours and ascend the path He in mighty suffering and

mightier love cleared for us. **I** is not of this world. In it for a while; for a while here to know that no where here can it find real home. Our **I** chooses us out of this world and on the wingthrust of love we aspire to our heavenly home. We love to get there. We love because Christ showed us how and why.

The disciples of Christ are known by the love they have for one another (14:35). It is the Christ **I** that overcomes the world, not being of it, in whom the prince of this world of allures and illusions hath nothing—after, that is, John in the wilderness,



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

I Am The Way

the solitary John of the straight and narrow way, has baptized our souls in the purgative waters of regenerative thinking and charitable living.

So do we, as bearers of the holy I, as exemplars of a nascent Christ life, as blessed sons and daughters of our heavenly Father, weave, by acts and thoughts of love and service, that seamless coat, the garment of light that admits us to the wedding ceremony where the virgin soul and the Christ Ego are married in love by the Father's will.

As the Gospel of St. John moves from John the Baptist to the central and pivotal account of the raising of Lazarus (Chapter 11 in the 21-chapter Gospel), to the high teachings of John the Evangelist, so we individually evolve from John the Baptist to John the Beloved through an inward raising by the strong grip of the Lion's paw; each being "the one whom Christ loves," each being the beloved of Christ, our divine Self, our world savior that has sunk down into our mundane consciousness to be all but lost, all but unrecognized among the crowd of rude and rowdy thoughts and Christ-scourging passions that populate our earthly consciousness.

We are raised, in time, while yet drawing breath in our mortal body; we are raised and can then testify to the higher truths of our Christ-conferred Identity. With our hand on the words of John the Evangelist, whose Gospel is the Bible's Logos of Love, and our mind given wholly to it in devout contemplation, we renew our commitment to a life of holy usefulness and inclusive fellowship.

We are taught to pray to our Father, Who is in

heaven. Yet we are told that no one comes to the Father but through Christ (14:6). With Philip we may be inclined to say, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." But Jesus says, "He that hath seen me [the Christ] hath seen the Father." The Gospel that teaches us the deep truths of the Christ also teaches us of the Father, because "I AM [is] in the Father and the Father is in me [the Christ]"

(14:10). John Mark's Gospel has but three references to the Father, Luke has fifteen, and Matthew has thirty-eight. Compare these with John's Gospel, in which one hundred and seventeen references to the Father are made, including:

[T]he Word...[was the] only begotten of the Father (1:14); the Father loveth the Son (3:35); one must worship the Father in spirit and in truth (4:24); The Father has committed all judgment unto the Son (5:22); I am [is] come in my Father's name (5:43); The Father gives the true bread from heaven (6:32); It is the Father's will that Christ should lose nothing (6:39); No man can come to Christ but that the Father

draw him (6:44); No man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God (6:46); If one knows the Christ, one knows the Father also (8:19); Christ does nothing of himself, but speaks what the Father has taught him (8:28); I and the Father are one (10:30); The Father is in me and I in him (10:38); The Father has given all things into my hands (13:3); in my Father's house are many mansions (14:2); The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works (14:10); The Father will send the Comforter in my name (14:26); I am the true vine and my Father is the husbandman (15:1); All things that the Father hath are mine (16:15); I came



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

I Am the Truth

forth from the Father (16:28); Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee (17:21); The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? (18:11); I ascend to my Father, and your Father (20:17).

The foregoing recitation has been given that the transcendent nature of Christ, the solar **I AM**, might be brought fully before us, as it rests in the bosom of the Father; for we ourselves participate in this nature when we keep God's commandment, which is to love one another.

I AM, Christ is, the Way to the Father. The Gospel of St. John illuminates many facets of the **I AM** in order that we more readily may receive it, seize it, possess it, know it, live it, be it. In so doing we partake of the Father. Chapter 17 is an extended sublime prayer or intimate address by Christ Jesus to His Father, remarkable for the holy familiarity with which Christ assumes His Father's love, trust, and realized will. Moreover, this unity in love and truth is extended to all who hear and heed the word of God through Christ: "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect

in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me" (17:23).

The Gospel of St. John enables us to most deeply fathom the injunction that has ever been directed to the candidate for initiation into the spiritual worlds: Man know thyself. In Christian terms, as the Evangelist makes clear, this means to enter into one's innermost being and there submit the purified desire nature, the John Baptist nature, to an overshadowing by the Holy Spirit, whereby

the Christ Child is conceived. The renewing or transmuting of one's mind and attitudes through concentration, meditation, and service has a baptismal effect on the desire body, enabling it to undergo catharsis, whereupon it becomes the pure chaste virgin sophia. "Know thyself" means "fructify thyself with the content of the spiritual world." In this context the soul may be likened to the receptive female nature, and the objective spiritual

world likened to the male; that is, the Cosmic Ego of the Holy Spirit illuminates the purified and ennobled desire body, the wise virgin sophia. The personal ego is eclipsed and the universal Christ, the sun Logos, speaks through the soul.

The Gospel of St. John has concealed powers which can assist in developing the virgin sophia, the mother of God. The disciple whom Christ loved was entrusted by Him with those powers at the cross when the Savior said "Henceforth, this is thy mother," therewith designating him as the genuine interpreter of the

Messiah. Meditation on John's Gospel will develop this "mother" in the reverent seeker and the Holy Spirit will fructify his soul.

For the sons of Cain, belief alone is insufficient. They crave knowledge. And they shall have it if they subscribe to the practices and principles of Rosicrucian initiation. Let us make this Gospel a regenerative force active within our souls that we may individualize the Bethlehem event to the glory of God the Father. □

—C.W.



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

I Am the Life