

MAX HEINDEL'S MESSAGE

The Sacrament of Communion



Predella, oil on wood (45 x 206 cm), Joos Van Cleve (1485-1540), Louvre

Last Supper

The artist has chosen to depict the dramatic moment immediately following Christ Jesus' disclosure that one among the assembled disciples will betray Him. Only John retains a measure of His Master's serenity. Judas, clutching his purse, sits third from left.

THE LORD JESUS, the same night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it and said, Take, eat. This is my body, which is broken for you. This do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood. This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord... For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself....For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep"—I Cor. 11: 23-30.

In the foregoing passages is a deeply hidden esoteric meaning which is particularly obscured in the English translation, but in the German, Latin, and Greek the student still has a hint as to what really was intended by that last parting injunction of the Saviour to His Disciples. Let us first consider the words "in remembrance of me." We shall then be in better condition to understand what is meant by the "cup" and the "bread."

Suppose a man from a distant country comes

into our midst and travels about from place to place. Everywhere he will see many small communities gathering around the Table of the Lord to celebrate this most sacred of all Christian rites. Should he ask why, he would be told that they do this in remembrance of One who lived a life nobler than any other who lived upon Earth. Should this stranger then compare the attitude of these religious communities on Sunday at the celebration of this rite with their civic lives during the week, what must he see?

Everyone among us goes out into the world to fight the battle of existence. Under the Law of Necessity we forget the love which should be the ruling factor in Christian lives. Everyone strives for position, wealth, and power. We forget on Monday what we reverently remembered on Sunday, and the world is poor in consequence.

We also make a distinction between the bread and wine which we drink at the "Lord's Supper" and the food of which we partake during the intervals between Communion. But there is no warrant in the Scriptures for any such distinction. On the contrary, we are told that whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, all should be done to the glory of God. Our every act should be a prayer. The perfunctory "grace" at meals in reality is a blasphemy,

and the silent thought of gratitude to the Giver of daily bread is far to be preferred.

When we remember at each meal that it has been drawn from the substance of the Earth, which is the body of the indwelling Christ Spirit, we can understand how that body is being broken for us daily, and we can appreciate the loving kindness which prompted Him to give Himself for us. There is not a moment, day or night, that He is not suffering because bound to this Earth. When we thus eat and realize the true situation, we are indeed declaring to ourselves the death of the Lord, whose Spirit is groaning and travailing, waiting for the day of liberation.

But there is another, greater, more wonderful mystery hidden in these words of the Christ. What connection is there between the death of the Saviour and the millions of seeds sprouting forth from the Earth in spring? If we meditate upon that life which is annually poured out in spring, we see it as something gigantic and awe-inspiring, a flood of life which transforms the globe from one of frozen death to rejuvenated life. The life which thus diffuses itself in the building of millions of plants is the life of the Earth Spirit.

From that come both the wheat and the grape. They are the body and blood of the imprisoned Earth Spirit, given to sustain mankind during the present phase of its evolution. There is a spiritual responsibility connected with the bread and wine given at the Lord's Supper: It must be eaten worthily, otherwise under pain of ill health and even death. When we bring the light of esotericism to bear and look at conditions in the world today, we see that this is not a far-fetched idea.

We first must go back to the time when man lived under the guardianship of the Angels, unconsciously building the body he now uses. This was in ancient Lemuria. A brain was needed for the

evolution of thought, and a larynx for verbal expression. Therefore, half the creative force was turned upward and used by man to form these organs. Thus man became single-sexed and was forced to seek a complement when it was necessary to create a new body.

While the act of love was consummated under the wise guardianship of the Angels, man's existence was free from sorrow, pain, and death. But when, under the tutelage of the Lucifer Spirits,

he ate of the Tree of Knowledge and perpetuated the race without regard for interplanetary lines of force, he transgressed the Law. The bodies thus formed crystallized unduly and became subject to death in a much more perceptible manner than had hitherto been the case. Celestial warders of the creative force drove him from the garden of love into the wilderness of the world, and he was made responsible for his actions under cosmic Law which governs the universe. Thus for ages he struggled, seeking to work out his own salvation, and the Earth in consequence crystallized more and more.

Divine Hierarchies, the Christ Spirit included, worked upon the Earth from without as the Group Spirit guides the animals. But, as Paul says, none could be justified under the law, for under the law all have sinned and all must die. There is in the old covenant no hope beyond the present, save a foreshowing of one who is to come and restore righteousness. Thus John tells us that the law was given by Moses and grace came by the Lord Christ Jesus. But what is grace?

As law, apart from love, gave birth to sin, so the child of law, tempered with love, is grace. Take an example from concrete social conditions: We have laws which decree a certain penalty for a specified offense, and when the law thus is carried out independently, we call it justice. Long experience,



however, teaches us that justice, pure and simple, is like the Colchian dragon's teeth which breed strife and struggle in increasing measure. The criminal remains criminal and becomes more hardened under the ministrations of law. When the milder regime allows one who has transgressed to go under suspended sentence, he is under grace and not under law. Thus, also, the Christian, who aims to follow in the Master's steps, is emancipated from the law of sin by grace, provided he forsake the path of sin.

It was the sin of our progenitors in Lemuria that they scattered their seed regardless of law and without love. But it is the privilege of the Christian to redeem himself by purity of life in remembrance of the Lord. John says, "His seed remaineth in him," and this is the hidden meaning of the bread and wine. In the English version we read simply: "This is the cup of the New Testament," but in German the word is *kelch* and in Latin, *calix*—both meaning the outer covering of the seed pod of the flower. In Greek is a still more subtle meaning, in the word *poterion*, a meaning evident when we consider the etymology of the word *pot*. This at once gives us the same idea as the chalice, or calix—a receptacle. The Latin *potare* (to drink) also shows that it is a receptacle capable of holding a fluid. Our English words potent and impotent, meaning possessing or lacking virile strength, further show the meaning of this Greek word, which foreshadows the evolution from man to superman.

It will be readily conceded that our animal passions restrain us on the path of attainment; the lower nature is warring constantly against the Higher Self. In those who have experienced a spiritual awakening, a war is fought silently within and all the more bitterly for being suppressed. Goethe voiced that sentiment in the words of Faust, the aspiring Spirit, speaking to his more materialistic friend Wagner:

*Thou by one sole impulse art possessed,
Unconscious of the other still remain.
Two souls, alas, are housed within my breast,
And struggle there for undivided reign.
One, to the earth with passionate desire,
And closely clinging organs still adheres.*

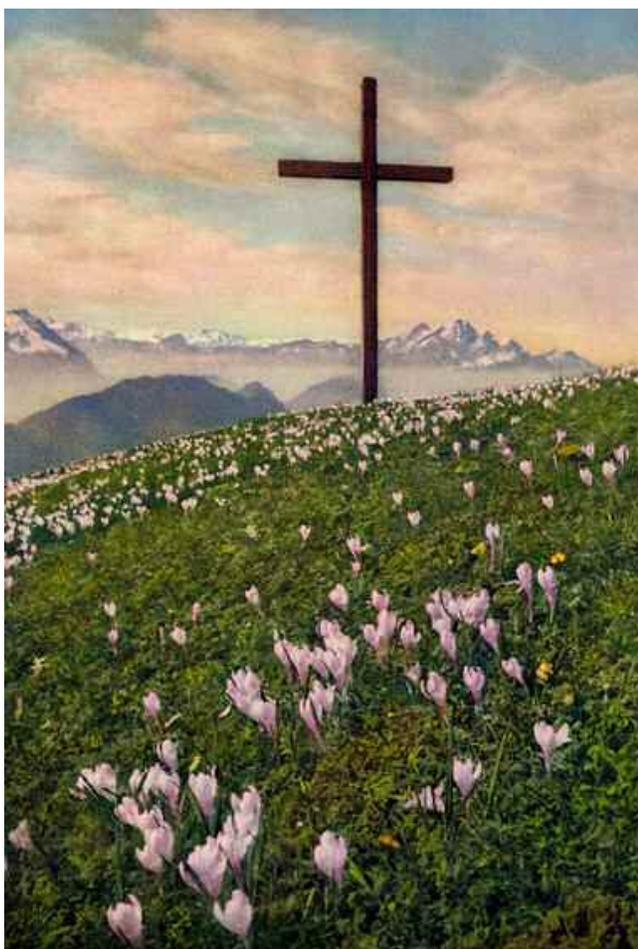


Photo: J. Gaberell

The divine creative Word that dies upon the world cross at the spring equinox is the same Word of life which manifests in the vernal rebirth. So too do the aspirant's vital energies, consecrated to selfless service, effect a regeneration. A dying to the lower nature makes possible a spiritual flowering, a conscious birth into higher spheres of power and usefulness.

*Above the mists the ether does aspire
With sacred ardor, unto purer spheres.*

Knowledge of this absolute necessity of chastity (save when procreation is the object) on the part of those who have had a spiritual awakening dictated the words of Christ. The Apostle Paul stated an esoteric truth when he said that those who partook of the communion without living the life were in danger of sickness and death. For just as under a spiritual tutelage, purity of life may elevate the disciple wonderfully, so also, unchastity has a much stronger effect upon his more sensitized bodies than upon those who are yet under the law and have not become partakers of grace by the cup of the new covenant. □