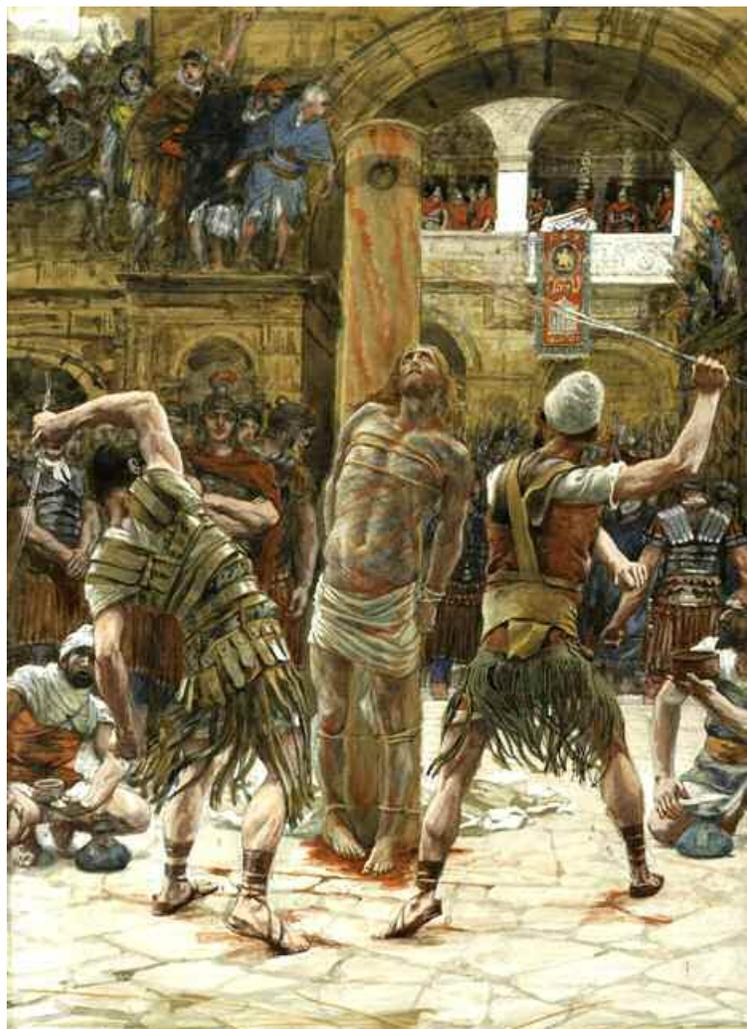


The Way of the Passion— The Scourging

IF THE INNER MEETING with the spiritual “Foot-washing” (*Rays* May/June 1999) represents the recognition of a basic law of the Spiritual World and a principle of spiritual schooling according to the method of Christian Rosicrucianism, a similar meeting with the spiritual “Scourging” represents the recognition of a further law of the Spiritual World and another principle of Christian Rosicrucian training. And just as the Footwashing was concerned with the relationship between *above and below*, so is the Scourging a question of the relationship between *right and left*. For the true regulation—in accordance with divine will—of the relationship between right and left in human beings and affairs is a task of the very widest spiritual and moral scope and comprises in itself a long path of learning and discipline. In essentials, it involves the same kind of adjustment in this relationship as is indicated in the precept: “Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.”

In order to understand what is required by this precept, and therewith the meaning of the Scourging, we must recognize...that the human form in its symmetrical structure expresses the fact that the forces of Lucifer and Ahriman encroach from each side and maintain a balance within the man. The “man of the left”—that is the left eye, the

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Watercolor, J. James Tissot (1836-1902)

The Scourging of Christ Jesus

The scourging designates a variety of initiatory experiences, which include pseudo-dilemmas of mental choice and psychological/ moral ordeals in which one resolves to stand firm (tied to the pillar of will) while personalities and events flail consciousness “from both sides.”

left ear, the left hand and the left leg—is the Luciferic man, while the “man of the right” is Ahrimanic. *Between* the two lies a central septum which forms the arena for the Ego and for the spiritual and divine element working through the Ego.

In this sense, then, the “right hand” signifies the Ahrimanic in Man, and the “left hand” corresponds to the Luciferic. Thus the principle that the left hand should not know what the right hand does

acquires the meaning that the knowledge should be present in the third principle, the human-divine, but not in the left-side or the right-side man. Neither must it be in the men of *both* sides, for that would mean an alliance between the Luciferic and the Ahrimanic in Man: that is, the combining of a consciously calculated aim with passionate impulsiveness. Such a combination would be of the worst description; it would represent the opposite of the precept quoted, for then the left hand *would* know what the right hand was doing. That would mean that all uprightness and honesty would be impossible, for the whole *life* of the soul would be tainted with calculation.

The point is, that both the right and the left hand should take part in the accomplishment of deeds, but that they should not supply the *motive* for these deeds. The latter, that is the knowledge of what is being done, belongs to the *third* man whose consciousness is developed on the plane of contact between the left-side and the right-side man. Against this central man, however, onslaughts are launched from left and right to set up a vacillating movement, swinging to the right or to the left.

Within the human organism a perpetual struggle goes on consisting mainly of a reciprocal conflict between the Luciferic and the Ahrimanic elements which, however—after the spirit of Foot-washing has established the connection between above and below—is expressed in an attack from *both* sides on the central man. This onslaught from both sides on the upright “Son of Man,” who unites Heaven and Earth within the human being, is the essence of the inner experience of *Scourging*. The point of it is that the true man should learn to stand, and to “stand” in such a way that he swerves neither to left nor right from the position of the spiritual conscience.

This “standing” is, at the same time, the second spiritual-moral principle of the Western-Christian spiritual training. This training is based on the moral attitude—between “rights” and “duty”—in

which *moral imagination*, as the expression of the creative spiritual conscience, has the decisive word. For the Christ-impulse is neither a right nor a duty, but a free creation flowing from the cosmic fount of love. And this act of creating, is precisely what Rudolf Steiner in his *Philosophy of Spiritual Activity* has called “moral imagination”.

The moral attitude here indicated determines also the concrete method of spiritual discipline which demands that moral attitude as its condition. On this path the Meditation exercise must be so constructed that it becomes neither an ardent

absorption in prayer nor sober reflection, but a calm experience of consciousness, light, and life—clear in perception and strong in thought. Thus it is important that the living light-ray in the central man should not only shine out, but should stand firm in quiet steadfastness against the onslaughts from left and right. It is upon thoughtful,

quiet steadfastness during the time spent in the light of a true and lofty thought that the value of a Meditation exercise specially depends.

Now in other spiritual movements there are exercises which are radically different from those characterized above. There are, for instance, exercises whose task is to develop shrewdness, the gift of observation, and skill in dealing with the things of physical existence. These exercises are intended to give the pupil an advantage over others in the physical world.

Again, in another direction, exercises of mystical absorption, of ecstasy, are practiced. The purpose of these exercises is to make clairvoyant, supersensible experiences possible by elimination or suppression of the Ego-consciousness.

The first group of exercises is to train the consciousness to a higher estimate of the physical world, and also to be more bound up with it than would normally be the case; the second group of exercises, on the contrary, aims at suppressing the activity of reason and intellect in order to attain, in

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ecstatic absorption, to dreamlike experiences of the supersensible.

But on the Christian Rosicrucian path there is neither a strengthening of the physical consciousness and the physical reasoning power nor an extension of the dream-consciousness to the daytime, but a union of the waking consciousness with the Spiritual World, and a maintenance of this union without deviating towards the dream-like or the physical-sensory.

The maintaining of union with the Spiritual World by means of the light-ray of the spiritual conscience may become more and more a necessity of life, even in the destiny of a man who practices the maintenance of this union by means of the use of Meditation. Then it also happens that the inner difficulties which are overcome in the man's nature by the practice of Meditation come out, so to speak, and re-appear in the "destiny organism" of the man in question.

Onslaughts from right and left, which hitherto had been purely inner processes within him, now appear externally in his destiny. His destiny then assumes a character in which the man is constantly faced with a dilemma; but this dilemma is not one of *choice*, it is one in which the man must give proof of strength to be capable of *not* choosing. Then, like Scylla and Charybdis, possibilities of decision confront the man among other *real* dilemmas in which he is obliged to choose. What appears now before the man is a false dilemma against which he must hold his ground, because it is not the true dilemma of Good and Evil.*

Then destiny may exhibit a further metamorphosis. For it may happen that false dilemmas urging to this decision become real attacks and pressure from two sides. Calumny and need, hostility and worry may form the environment of the man, and blow after blow may fall upon him. Then his task is not to give way to resentment or anger nor to fear and discouragement, but to stand firm in loyalty to the Spirit. No abstract conviction will avail then, but only the consciousness that, being guilty,

It must, however, be again expressly pointed out that, together with the false dilemmas, true dilemmas may make their appearance, and that the man has not only to undergo the test in which he must **not choose, but stand firm; he has also to undergo the test of deciding when he **ought** to choose.*



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

Luciferic temptations and influences (shown above appealing to worldly vanity and ambition) assail human consciousness from one side, while from the other Ahriman prompts to "cold-blooded" logic and the emptiness of rational materialism.

Man must fulfill a karma borne by the Guiltless in incomparably greater measure. From this consciousness flows the strength of humility, which is the only power to be depended upon in this situation—for the power of pride is then broken.

What is experienced in this way as "Scouring", both inwardly as Meditation and also in individual destiny, can and must be experienced by that section of humanity which has decided for the Christ-impulse in the history of mankind. And that section of humanity *must* experience the historical "Scouring" in this way because the world with its peoples and races has no "room" to spare for Christianity. Other ideals and other paths will be accepted by the world, and the nations will do battle for those ideals and paths; but in the end they will all be of one mind—that Christianity is, to say the least, superfluous.

Just as within the human organism the true man has only the surface of the septum at his disposal in defending himself against the onslaughts from

left and right, so all the “room” within organized humanity will be appropriated by other forces, and spiritually active Christianity will be vouchsafed merely a “septum” *between* the right and left. The passage in St. Matthew’s Gospel (24:9): “Ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake,” must be fulfilled for the very reason that Man has to bring about the same situation as that set up within the individual during his spiritual training. Just as all the organs of the right-side and the left-side man are in the possession of Lucifer and Ahriman, and all assaults on the organless spirit-man [divine spirit] proceed from them, so all the peoples constituting organized humanity will be hostile towards anything that does not fit into that organization and towards a Christianity which does not originate with themselves. For true Christianity is the conscience of mankind and has as little to do with the different races and organizations as the conscience of the individual has to do with his different organs.

But what will result from the fact of Christianity being accorded only the vertical surface between right and left? It will mean that in reality Christianity will be given no room at all; it will be crowded out of everything of the nature of an organization (and the world will belong to what is organizational), and will, therefore, be able to develop only in the consciousness of individuals and in conscious relationship between individuals. As its history proceeds, Christianity will become precisely “a Kingdom which is not of this world.” And then for the first time will it fully display its power, for then it will be true and definitively free of compromise. For the weakness of historic Christianity is that it is sullied by the spirit of compromise.

This tendency to compromise is mainly seen in the fact that Man pins his hopes to something other than the Spirit itself. He thinks to find allies in ideas, forces and expedients drawn from *other sources*. So long as these illusions persist, Christianity can never be fully developed as an active force in the souls of men. For the complete devotion of the soul is the indispensable condition upon which its full development depends. And this complete devotion can only be attained when the soul is subject to the test of Scourging. In this situation only do

the illusions of the spirit of compromise disappear—the compromise which desires to rely on something other than that flowing in through the gates of conscience as a living revelation of the Spirit.

Now this test is at the same time an experience: in it the reality of the Christ-impulse is experienced in a clearer and more striking manner than in any other situation. And the consequence of the experience is—this applies to the inner life of the individual as well as to the spiritual history of mankind—that the Christ-impulse, to which “room” has been denied, obtains room for itself. It obtains it within the human organism, not in any separate organ but in the *blood* flowing through all organs. And working from the blood, the Christ-impulse gradually alters the whole organism, the left side as well as the right. Then appears the condition referred to in the passage: “Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth,” for knowledge will then belong not to the left-side man nor the right-side man, but to the man of conscience.

Similar will be the consequences in history for the historic Christianity which has undergone “Scourging.” For the Christianity experienced as “not of this world,” will become a spiritually etheric current, flowing, like the circulation of the blood, through the whole organism of humanity. Through “all nations” will this current flow—the stream of activity of the spiritual conscience, inwardly transforming and emancipating the world from the bonds of the group-spirit and the trammels of organization. And insofar as in all nations men and groups of men will react to it, to that extent will a new human culture-community gradually arise, that culture-community which in the Revelation of St. John is called “Philadelphia,” and which in the terminology of Spiritual Science is the sixth post-Atlantean Culture-epoch. In this epoch the culture will be that of the Christ-impulse flowing through all mankind, no longer only as a doctrine, but above all as a social force. And this culture will have settlements in “all nations” and will be a bond of brotherly unity among men, binding nations and lands together all round the Earth. For it will be the fruit of the adjustment of the relationship between right and left in the spirit of the experience resulting from the Trial by Scourging. (Continued) □