

Miscellaneous Interpretations

Part 4

"Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise."—
Luke 23:29-43

THE NEW TESTAMENT was written in Greek, a language in which no punctuation marks are used. The punctuation marks in our Bible have been inserted by our later Bible translators, and punctuation often very radically changes the meaning of a sentence, as the following story will illustrate:

In a prayer meeting someone handed in a request which the pastor read thus: "A sailor going to sea, his mother-in-law desires the prayers of the congregation for his safe return to wife and child." The request was not punctuated at all, but would imply that the young man's mother-in-law was very solicitous to have him return safely to his wife and child and therefore desired the prayers of the congregation. Had the pastor read it without the comma, it would have implied that the sailor, going to see his mother-in-law desired the prayers of the congregation for his safe return to wife and child, and one would naturally think that the lady in question must be a Tartar when it was necessary for the young man to ask the prayers of the congregation before facing her.

In this case, if the words of the Christ are read thus: "Verily I say unto thee today, thou shalt be with me in paradise," they would imply that the thief would be with Christ at some future time not defined. But where the comma is placed before the word today, as in the Bible, it gives the the idea ordinarily held by people.



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The Crucifixion and the Good Thief

That this idea is absolutely wrong can be seen by the remark of the Christ just after His resurrection, when He said to the woman, "touch me not, for I have not yet ascended to my Father." If He promised the thief that he should be with Him in Paradise on the day of the crucifixion and three days later declared that He had not yet been there, the Christ would have been guilty of contradiction, which is, of course, an impossibility. Placing of the comma as suggested fully reconciles the meaning of the two passages; and besides, Peter [1 Peter 3: 19] tells us that in the interval He worked with the Spirits in Purgatory.

The Two Crucified Thieves

Contrary to the ordinarily accepted opinion, the four Gospels are not merely the biography of Jesus, the Christ. They are formulae of initiation of

four different Mystery Schools, and in order to veil their esoteric meaning, the life and ministry of the Christ is also intermingled. That could be done easily as all initiates, being cosmic characters, have similar experiences. It is truly said that unto the multitude the Christ spoke in parables, but the hidden meaning was given to His disciples in private. Paul also gave the milk to the weak and the meat to the strong ones. It was never intended at any time to give the hidden symbols to ordinary people, or to make the Bible "an open book of God," as people nowadays believe.

When reading in the Memory of Nature, we find that at the time of the crucifixion, there were not only two, but a number, who were crucified. The people at that time meted out capital punishment for the slightest offenses and there were always plenty to suffer those barbarous deaths. Thus, those who wanted to veil the hidden meaning of the Gospels were at no loss to find something wherewith to fill out the tale and obscure the points which are really vital in the crucifixion. The part of the story relating to the thieves, is, therefore, a true incident, without having anything to do with the esoteric meaning at all.

"All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers. "—John 10:8

When man first came upon this Earth the dense body was built in the Polarian Epoch, and was vitalized by the interpenetration of a vital body in the Hyperborean Epoch. At that time man was like the Angels, male-female, a complete creative unit, able to create from himself by projecting his whole creative force—which is love. Later it became necessary for man to evolve a brain, and in order to accomplish that object one half of his creative force was turned inward in order to build the necessary organs. From that time on, man must seek the cooperation of someone having the other half of the sex force available for propagation. Now he loves selfishly to obtain the cooperation of another in propagation; the other half of the creative force wherewith he built his brain and larynx he also uses selfishly to think, because he desires to obtain knowledge.

Previously man had projected his whole creative force without reserve, unselfishly. Since the division

of the sex force man has eventually become selfish and therefore by attraction a prey to others of like nature.

The Angels were the humanity of the Moon Period and have since attained to their present high development, but as in every great company there are stragglers, so also in the case of the Angels there were some who did not attain—a class of beings which were behind the Angels but above humanity. They were in a sad state, for they could not follow the present development of the Angels and neither could they sink as low into matter as man. They could not, as the Angels, dispense with a brain, yet they were incapable of building one for themselves. So when humanity evolved the brain and spinal cord they saw an opportunity in woman, who expresses the negative pole of the creative force, imagination, the faculty which enables her to build a body in the womb. In order to gain access to her consciousness this intelligence took advantage of a perplexity then disturbing the woman on account of her exercise of the imaginative faculty.

At that time the eyes of humanity had not yet been opened; they were spiritual beings, not quite conscious of the possession of a physical body. The woman was the first to observe dimly that she and others possessed such an instrument, and she had observed that at certain times some of her friends whom she had previously perceived as having this physical appendage, had lost it, so she was troubled. From the Angels she could obtain no information, but this intelligence which appeared within herself in the serpentine spinal cord, enlightened her, and "the serpent said unto the woman, 'Hath God said, ye shall not eat of every Tree in the Garden?'" To which she answered that they had been forbidden "to eat of the Tree of Knowledge" under penalty of death. But the serpent said: "Ye shall not surely die, for God knows that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

The woman secured the cooperation of the man according to the instructions of Lucifer, the light giver, and since then their eyes have been opened; they have known good and evil. But prior to that time man had been unconscious of the possession of his body; it had fallen away from him at times, as the leaf falls from the tree, without inconve-

niencing him or disturbing him, for his consciousness had been focused in the Spiritual World at all times. But the Lucifer Spirits desired a power over him, a foothold in his brain and spinal cord. They incited him to break away from the yoke of the Angels and take the creative function into his own hands. By the oft repeated and ignorant abuse of that faculty the consciousness of man was withdrawn from the Spiritual Worlds and focused in the Physical World. Then came death in all its present terrible aspects, for man now regards this Earth as the only real life. When that ends, he enters an existence of which he knows nothing and which he consequently fears.

Thus, on account of listening to Lucifer, the false light giver, man has become subject to sorrow, pain, and death. He has been robbed of his innocence and peace. The Christ came into the world to save humanity from sin, sorrow, and death. Therefore He called Himself the true light, and the others, who came before, He characterized as thieves and robbers, for they had robbed man of the spiritual sight though they had enlightened him in the physical sense.

"Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child shall not enter therein."—Luke 18: 17

In the world around us we see the kingdom of men, where everyone is endeavoring to maintain his own position and depends upon his own ideas and his own self-assertion to hold that position against all comers. When anything new is presented to him, his mental attitude is usually tinged with skepticism. He fears to be deceived.

The attitude of a little child with regard to what it sees or hears is exactly the reverse of the position of its elders. The little child has no overwhelming sense of its own superior knowledge, but is frankly ignorant and therefore eminently teachable, and it was to this trait that the Savior referred in the passage quoted.

When we enter the higher life, we must first forget everything that we knew in the world. We must commence to look at things in an entirely different way, and when a new teaching is brought before us we must endeavor to receive it regardless of other facts previously observed. This is in order that we



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The Gift of Wisdom

may be perfectly unbiased. Of course, we are not supposed to believe offhand that "black is white," but if someone seriously asserts that an object which we have hitherto regarded as black is really white, our mind should be sufficiently open to prevent us from passing judgment at once and saying, "Why, I know that that object is black." We should be willing to re-examine the object to see if there may not be a point of view whence that thing which we have thought black appears to be white. Only when we have made thorough examination and have found that the thing is really black from whatever point of view may we return to our previous opinion.

There is nothing so remarkable about a child as the flexible attitude of its mind which renders it so teachable, and the pupil who endeavors to live the higher life should always aim to keep his mind in that fluidic state, for as soon as our ideas have become set and incapable of being changed, our progress ceases. That was the great truth which the Christ was endeavoring to present to His hearers when He made the remark mentioned. □

—Max Heindel