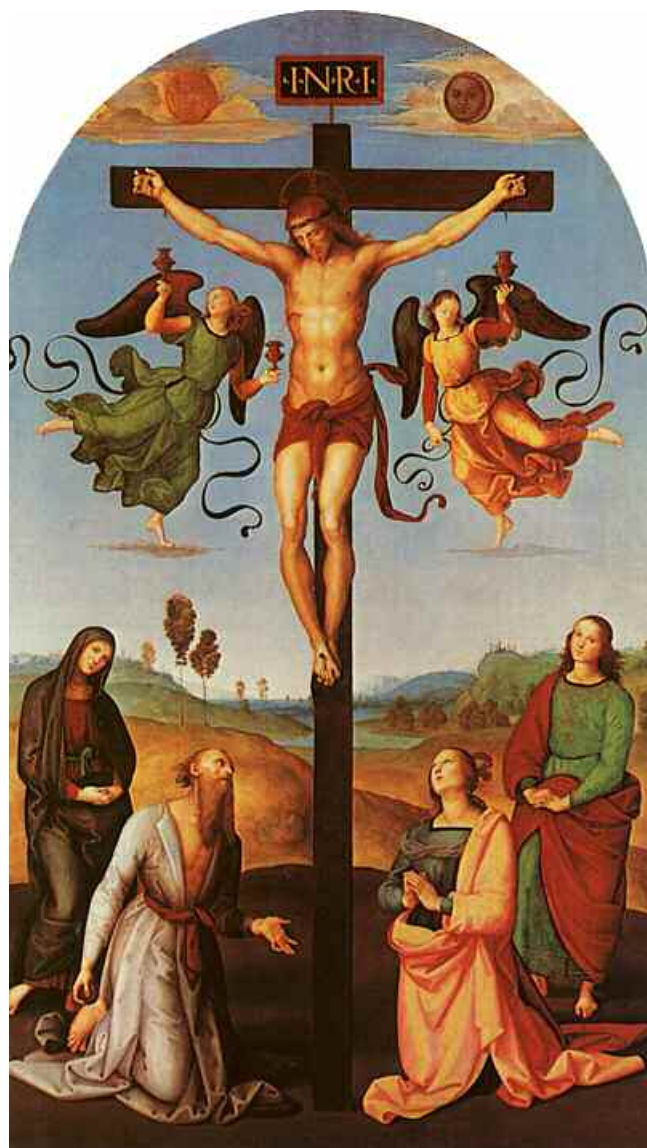


The Higher Stages of the Passion— Crucifixion

TO UNDERSTAND THE STAGE of Crucifixion as a fundamental principle of Christian Rosicrucian Initiation, we must start, in the first place, from things which have apparently nothing to do with it. For instance, the phenomena of the law of metamorphoses must be studied insofar as they may be observed in human existence. For such phenomena may be observed in the sphere of Man's inner life as well as in that of the structure of bodily organs. In both spheres the rule holds good that metamorphosis occurs through the alternation of restriction and freedom.

Speech, for example, is a metamorphosis of the faculty of movement by an enhancement of this faculty. The enhancement, however, could not have taken place unless a limit had been set to the outer movement. Suppressed external movements became the concentrated movements of speech. Similarly, the faculty of thought is a further stage of the metamorphosis of the faculty of movement. Thinking is an enhancement of the faculty of speaking when the latter is checked by suppression. In silence, a man learns to think, as in the bridling of the urge to movement he learns to speak.

But this metamorphosis can be carried further. Thinking can be enhanced into a new, a higher faculty. This may result from the thought-movement being consciously brought to a stand-still, when it is not a question of passivity or of deficiency of thought but of the whole thinking-force being concentrated on one point. Through this concentration, thinking is enhanced and transformed into the



Mond Altarpiece, c. 1502, oil on panel, Raphael (1483-1520), National Gallery, London

Christ on the Cross with the Virgin, St. Jerome, St Mary Magdalene and St. John

faculty of spiritual seeing. This metamorphosis is brought about through the practice of Meditation. There, one moves from thinking to thought, and from thought to seeing. But this progress will depend on efforts of curbing, of self-limitation. For thinking must pass through the "needle's eye" of completely calm concentration in order to ascend into the "heavenly kingdom" of seeing as a force of

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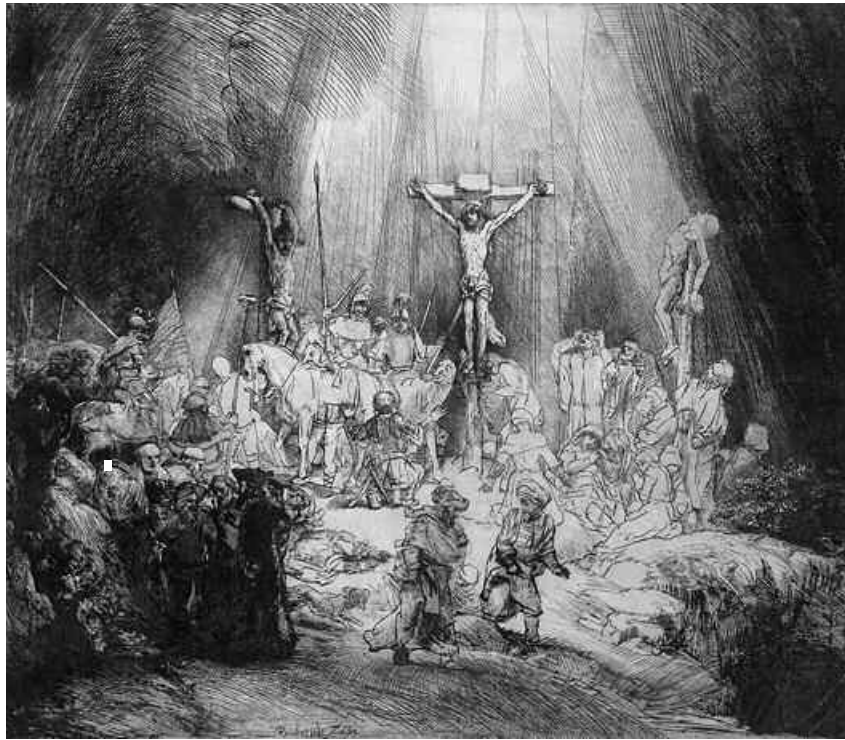
perception. It must pass through a condition of complete restraint, of perfect immobility, before it can cross the threshold separating the kingdom of visual experience from the kingdom of reflection.

This law of curbing the lower force in order that it may be transformed into a higher is the principle of Crucifixion (or Initiation) in the Christian Rosicrucian school. It is the principle of ascent in Meditation; but it is also the principle of the whole path of karmic evolution leading to a karmic ally determined Initiation. Hence, on the karmic path of Initiation the soul must pass through an inner, and also often an outer, situation in which all its basic forces of feeling and willing* are *bound*, a situation in which the soul manifests a very strong desire and a very keen aspiration, but in which, nevertheless, there is not the remotest possibility of satisfying the desire, or of realizing the aspiration.

Thus the man's longing and wishing are held motionless in the iron grip of necessity until they are concentrated to a point and pass through the "needle's eye" of the "mystic death." A "rich man" can never pass through that "needle's eye," but only one who is as poor as every man is who, on his death-bed, is at the point of passing through the gate of death.

The principle of curbing the lower with intent to metamorphose it into a higher is called in the Gospels, the "narrow way," as distinct from the "broad way" in which many walk. These expressions are not used "poetically" in the Gospels; they are "occult technical terms" coined from a profound knowledge of occult facts. The "narrow way" is a "technical term" of this kind: it describes the path on which the "narrowing," the concentration of the soul-forces, takes place so that they may be changed, in accordance with the law of meta-

**There is no more to be said at this stage about thinking, because thinking must already have passed through corresponding stages. At this stage it is really willing which is specially important.*



Drypoint and Burin, 38.5 x 45 em., first state of five, 1653, Rembrandt, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

The Three Crosses

The penitent and impenitent thieves flank the Guiltless One, the World Savior.

morphoses, into higher forces.

This "narrowing" of the soul-forces culminates in that situation which is called "Crucifixion." "Crucifixion" appears when "Cross-bearing" has reached the point where the two Crosses—the bright Spirit-cross and the dark Earth-cross—become one. When the two Crosses inter-penetrate so that, for the personal consciousness of the man, there exists no space at all between the two, then this personal consciousness becomes a single point in which its whole force is collected, and from which it is poured forth into the Cross. It dies by becoming, itself, a Cross. It carries the Cross no farther but becomes one with the human spirit and body. Then its "spiritual duty," the "higher man," becomes flesh and blood, and the human blood system becomes the organ of spiritual truth.

Thus the higher becomes, as it were, the lower and the inner, the outer. But this conversion which represents no longer merely a harmony of body, soul and spirit as at the stage of Cross-bearing, but a complete unity of body, soul and spirit This conversion is, precisely, the actual process of Initiation. True, the process may be experienced in different

degrees of intensity, and on these degrees the different grades of Initiation depend. For the process may be experienced in the Ego (and the Ego-organization), it may be experienced in the astral, the ether-body, even to a certain extent in the physical body. Christ Jesus alone experienced it completely in the physical body. Those who have had partial experience of it in the physical body are the Masters of the *Great Initiates*. Those who have experienced "Crucifixion" in the ether-body are called the *Great Initiates*; while those who have had the experience of "Crucifixion" in the astral body and the ego come under the category of *Initiates* and Experts in *Occultism*.

At the stage of Crucifixion occurs the meeting with the Greater Guardian of the Threshold, just as the stage of the Thorn-crowning is preceded by the encounter with the lesser Guardian of the Threshold. This meeting is the experience of the spiritual crucifixion of the world, known already to Plato, who spoke of the "crucified world soul." Only here there is not merely ideational knowledge of the fact, but experience of the World Conscience in the figure of Christ Jesus.

Then indeed Man experiences the fulfillment of the promise: "Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." He feels himself to be, spiritually and morally, in the position of the malefactor crucified on the left, and now in "Paradise"; that is, in the higher, spiritual world, experiencing "today" as the time in which the World Conscience is present with him. He experiences for the first time the true present, the "today in Paradise," not merely the earthly moment linking together past and future, but a reality with which he is confronted.

Man awakes to the apprehension of the cosmic reality of the present when he passes on Earth through the experience of intense concentration on the moment of "mystic death"—of "Crucifixion." But he passes through this experience in the same

way as the malefactor on the left did—as one who is guilty looking on the Guiltless. And this "looking on the Guiltless" is the essence of the meeting with the Greater Guardian of the Threshold as the crucified Conscience of the World. This meeting is, at the same time, the experience of the Reality of the Present, of the "today in Paradise."

The "today," as it is experienced in Paradise, is the awaking of conscience in the present to a sense of the responsibility of Man for the whole past and the whole future. The con-science, as the knowing together of the tasks of the past and the future in the present, is the "great secret of Initiation" which

can never be betrayed. It can never be betrayed because it is inexpressible; that is to say, it is absolutely incommunicable, whether in the language of human words, or in that of supersensible thought-transference, or by means of signs and symbols. It can only rise as an experience in the soul. It cannot be imparted by any teacher in any

way at all. For this reason, the task of the teacher in the Christian Rosicrucian school is confined to helping his pupil to find the direction which leads to that experience. But the actual experience and the progression towards it must be left to the pupil himself. He must live through this experience alone, just as he must pass through the gate of death alone.

This, again, is one of the fundamental principles of the whole Christian Rosicrucian spiritual training: namely, that the relationship between teacher and pupil is based upon the complete freedom of the latter. The Indian "guru," who obtrudes his influence into the inner life of the "chela," and the master who regulates by precepts all the details of his pupil's life, are both far from the Christian Rosicrucian relationship of teacher and student. For in this relationship the teacher is neither a mentor nor a guardian, but an experienced friend who does not withhold advice when he is asked for it.

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The reason why this relationship differs so much from the other methods indicated here is that these methods belong to the "broad ways," as they are called; that is, to the ways wherein it is not the metamorphosis of the consciously checked, lower forces into higher which is striven after; the goal in mind is, rather, the development and utilization of existent forces as they are, so that either the forces temporarily associated with the human being are emancipated, or existent faculties are strengthened and intensified. Either atavistic forces of the past are re-animated, or existent forces of will and reason are strengthened and sharpened to a degree which makes it possible to use them in a way that is equivalent to "magic" practices. For the "broad way," that is, the way of expansion of the development of what is already present, leads either to some form of mediumism or egoistic magic.

There are many, however, who walk "the broad way that leadeth to perdition"; that is, into the karmic community of the future Ahrimanic humanity. But this Ahrimanic section of humanity is likewise faced in the future with a certain kind of Crucifixion—the crucifixion of the malefactor on the right. By this Crucifixion, Ahrimanic humanity will lose the faculty of movement in the Seventh Period. They will be fixed to the earth like the plants are. And the men who have to bear the karma of mediumism in this way—as passivity victims—yearn for emancipation, while those who have been placed in this unhappy situation by their black magic karma will hurl reproaches and hatred against heaven. Yet even in that situation there will still be a possibility of delivering many of those men—liberating them in the literal-physical sense from their bondage to earth. The yearning of those who have become victims of passivity will help to form a starting-point.

Thus, in the last hour of Earth's history, white magic—that is to say, the force of love—will find a wide field of activity to loosen the bonds which bind human beings to earth. This effect of white magic will then be possible because "white humanity" will also have experienced a kind of Crucifixion, as has been already explained. In effect, it will then proclaim, with magic might, the message to the other section of humanity : "Dost



J. James Tissot, Brooklyn Museum of Art

The Pardon of the Good Thief

Placement at the right hand designates the traditional position of preferment, but, as the previous study on Scourging makes clear, the human left side is particularly subject to Luciferic and the right side to Ahrimanic influences (See Zechariah 3:1 where Satan is standing at Joshua's right hand to resist him). Both the individualized and the cosmic Lucifer will be the first to be redeemed, followed by some of the Ahrimanic powers, which manifest as materialism and lifeless thinking.

not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" And it will be fear—fear of the judgment of God—which will be the last guarantee of the possibility of deliverance at the twelfth hour—even for that section of mankind whose fate has been determined by the action of black magic.

Thus the karmic picture of the future of mankind in conjunction with the spiritual law of Crucifixion shows, on the one hand, fearful abysses of misfortune, and, on the other, the immensity of the possibilities of help and deliverance which the providence of God has vouchsafed to Man. (Continued) □

—Valentin Tomberg