

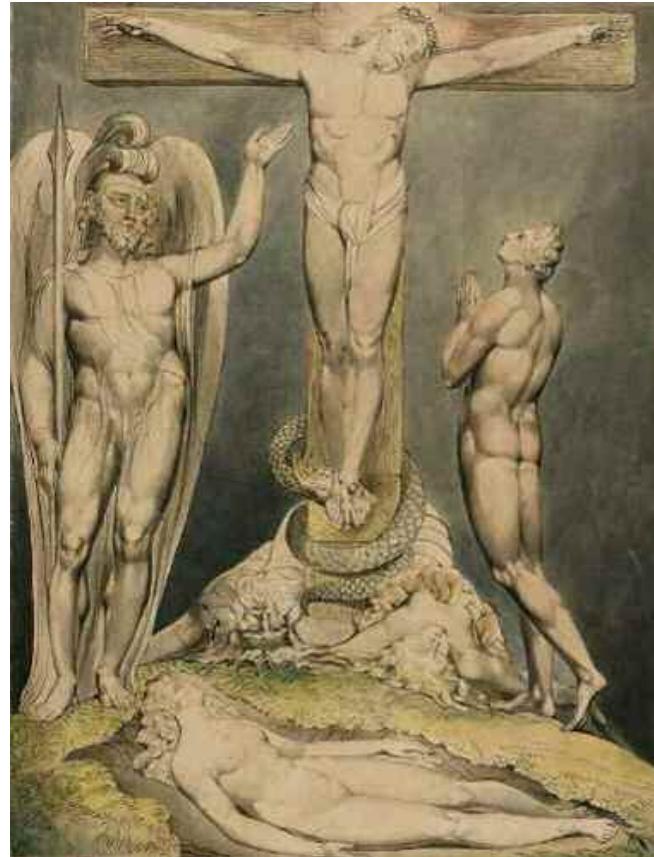
## The Mystery of Golgotha The Evolution of the Cosmos of Love

**W**E HAVE CONSIDERED the stages of the Passion as fundamental principles and stages of the path of Christian Initiation.\*

Now it would be of value to study the Mystery of Golgotha itself as a spiritual-historical and cosmic event. In doing so we shall come again upon the events of the Passion, though from another angle. We shall no longer consider them as stages of Initiation, but in their spiritual and cosmic scope as the sacrifice of Christ Jesus.

For the significance of the Mystery of Golgotha is not limited to the metamorphoses of human consciousness as they occur in Initiation and also in the karmic course of history; it is an event which concerns the whole Earth organism, the Planetary System, and the Spiritual Hierarchies of Good and Evil. It concerns the universe; no group of beings in the universe is unaffected by the Mystery of Golgotha. And it concerns every being in the world because it is the germ of a new Cosmos. For the Cosmos, as it exists at present, and as it has evolved through the Saturn, Sun, Moon, and Earth periods up to the Mystery of Golgotha, is a Cosmos of Wisdom which is to become a Cosmos of Love.

The statement that the present Cosmos of Wisdom is to become a Cosmos of Love contains a whole world of occult facts. But at the center of this throng of facts stands the Mystery of



Watercolor (50.1 cm by 38.1 cm). Illustration for John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, William Blake (1757-1827). Gift by Subscription, Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

### Michael Foretelling the Crucifixion to Adam

*The Archangel, winged and attired in the military garb of a Cherubim, mediates a vision of the Crucified Son Who shall redeem fallen humanity and its world. Vanquished will be the demonic trinity of Death, Sin (and Cerberus, all prostrate at the foot of the cross), and the Devil (Serpent). Death's appearance as the Father signifies that the Son's sacrifice ends the tyranny of the retributive Old Testament Father-God Jehovah.*

Golgotha. For all other facts pertain either to the preparations for this Mystery or to its after-effects. The Mystery of Golgotha itself is the decisive factor; and it is the object of this study to show both that it is so, and to what extent it is so.

The present Cosmos, as it is perceived by the senses, may be experienced as "frozen wisdom." The great moral impression made upon Man by the whole world-structure is essentially a formation of wisdom congealed, as it were, into ice. Immense

\*See the last six issues of the *Rays* for articles on the Passion. This is the first of three articles on the cosmic consequences of the Mystery of Golgotha. It is drawn from Valentin Tomberg's studies of the New Testament and is reprinted with permission of the Anthroposophic Press, Hudson NY 12534.

masses of wisdom have flowed into the world and have congealed to the Copernican *machina coelestis*.

Wisdom is everywhere in the world; the world is drenched through and through with wisdom. Every plant, every organism, all movements of the heavenly bodies bear witness to this; but the world is stark and chill and hollow to the souls of men. The words of Nietzsche, "The world—a door to thousand wildernesses dumb and cold," will find an echo in every human soul that inquires, not only concerning facts and laws in the universe, but also concerning the soul itself. For *soul* is not revealed in the universe; the laws of the universe bear witness to a wonderful wisdom—wisdom in whose presence human reason feels itself a dwarf, a tiny creature—but the rigid lines of these laws form only the *coffin* of the soul.

It is not a dull opaque coffin, it is transparent as crystal, but it is rigid and mute. At the same time, however, it bears witness to what is lacking in it. For as cold bears witness to warmth and rigidity to movement so does the cosmic coffin bear witness to the soul. In this sense the crystal coffin "contains" the soul and demonstrates—through the media of its coldness and rigidity—what the soul would necessarily be if it lived in the world; it shows the figure of the *dead* soul.

Thus there arises before the soul of him who perceives the universe as a "moral impression" the immensely significant fairy-tale of *Snow-white*: the crystal tomb with the dead maiden guarded by dwarfs. This image gives expression to the fact that the present Cosmos is a Cosmos of Wisdom in which Love is lacking.

This is the essential result of contemplation of the universe from the outside—as it appears to the consciousness between birth and death. But Man can also learn to know the universe from the other—that is, from the inside. He learns to know the inside of the universe either on the path of

Initiation or in the state of consciousness between death and a new birth. In either state, Man no longer experiences the universe only as rigidified Wisdom—as the *expression* of Wisdom—he feels himself submerged in a surging sea of flooding Wisdom.

This flooding, streaming Wisdom encircles the soul of man in overwhelming measure, so that for the soul it is not, as in the state of earthly consciousness, a question of making an entrance for Wisdom; rather is it important that in this sea of purposeful Wisdom she should assert herself as a

soul, with the content of a soul. For the welter of flooding content in which the soul is plunged threatens to make the soul appear devoid of content and unimportant. The soul's environment is so full of light that she can only feel herself as a shadow within the encircling radiance. And she would

actually be condemned to a shadow-existence if it were not that she brings with her from the Earth a force, a content, which makes it possible for her not to lose her being. This is the force she has learned on the Earth which becomes in the soul the faculty of Love.

The faculty of Love is received by the soul after death as a force which has the virtue of subsisting side by side with Cosmic Wisdom. It was earlier, especially at the period immediately preceding the Mystery of Golgotha, that the soul actually became more and more a shadow after death. The "realm of shades" of the ancient Greeks was a reality, not in the sense, of course, that the realm itself was dark, but that the souls of the dead were condemned to a shadow-existence. They could bring with them out of their earthly existence into the Spiritual World nothing which was as significant as the light of that world's Wisdom. For life on Earth could only give a reflection of the Wisdom of the Spiritual World; hence, what the soul could bring with it into the Spiritual World was also only

***In the fairy-tale of Snow-white the image of the crystal tomb with the dead maiden guarded by dwarfs gives expression to the fact that the present Cosmos is a Cosmos of Wisdom in which Love is lacking.***

a reflection or shadow of that World. And the soul bringing this shadow with her could only feel herself to be “the shadow of a shadow,” “the semblance of a semblance.”

But the destiny of the human soul has altered since the Mystery of Golgotha, for now the human soul entering the Spiritual World through the gate of death can bring with it from the Earth something which is not reflection and shadow, but is, on the contrary, of essential value—something which bears within itself the germ of a new world-order. For if the old world-order, the order of Wisdom, is expressed in the rule of Measure, Weight and Number, since the Mystery of Golgotha, a fourth element flows through the human soul into the cosmic order, a new element which delivers the other three from rigidity and at the same time restores to them their original purpose. For the original content of Weight, Measure and Number was not heaviness, limitation and quantity. The celestial archetypes of Number, Measure and Weight are different from the congealed expression of them in the lower world.

That which, today, has become Weight was originally the primal force of *sacrifice* in the descent to the Incarnation. But this true Weight was “betrayed” during the first Post-Atlantean Culture-epoch—the Ancient Indian epoch. In that period originated the bent towards “weightlessness”; that is, the endeavor to be disloyal to the Earth, to be emancipated from her. The karmic consequence of the fact that Ancient India “left her first love” was that “Weight” forfeited its meaning as the “first love” (Apocalypse 11: 4) and under Ahriman’s\* influence became the “spirit of heaviness.”

Similarly, the original purpose of Measure was not the limitation or restriction for which it stands today, but the power of fulfilling the spiritual mission on Earth, the force of patience in the created being. If Weight originally signified the force of descent in the vertical direction of Incarnation, so also Measure signified the horizontal direction of the path of life on which is to be reached that relationship between Heaven and Earth which is the



*The cult of the physical body and the valuation of the material world was promoted in ancient Egypt with the practices of embalming, mummification, and opulent burials, which had the effect of keeping the human spirit earthbound.*

mission on Earth of Incarnation.

But just as Weight in its original significance was betrayed by the Ancient Indian civilization and fell a victim to Ahrimanizing, so during the Ancient Persian Culture-epoch was Measure betrayed when that civilization refused to follow to the end the pure path pointed out by the great Zarathustra, but chose to enter into relations of compromise with the Turanian element. The consequence of that compromise was that, in the karma of mankind, Measure became restriction, a principle of confinement; it became, indeed, the “prison” into which “the tempter shall cast you . . . for ten days.” (Revelation 2:10)

The principle of “Number,” too, became purely quantitative as the result of the betrayal perpetrated against its original meaning. This occurred during the Egypto-Chaldaic Culture-epoch when the original significance of Number as the force of the essential structure of immortal beings was changed into its opposite—into an assemblage of perishable bodily units. The celestial archetype—that is, the truth of Number—is, however, the fact that there

\*All that prompts humanity to believe that material creation is the only reality ultimately derives from the influence of Ahriman. This spirit has a contracting, rigidifying effect on the vital body and promotes cold, abstract, earth-bound logic.

are many individualities within the world. And the very reason why there are many of them is that each has a qualitative significance for the world which no other can have. If any one individuality in the world were nonexistent, the world as a whole would be imperfect, just as a symphony would be with one note lacking.

The uniqueness of each individuality and his immense value, just because of his unique character—this is the original significance of Number as intended in the Heavens. But the application of Number was diverted from the eternally individual to the bodily, and thence arose the materialism of which one expression was mummification in Ancient Egypt. The Apocalypse describes materialism in its original form as “the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate” (Revelation 2:15)—a doctrine which is as clearly the karma of the “betrayal” of Number as the “prison” and the “loss of the first love” are karmic consequences of the betrayal of Measure and Weight.

But now every human soul which, during its earthly existence, has received, at least into its life of ideation, the Christ-impulse brings into the Spiritual World something which it there changes into resurrectional forces of original Number, Measure and Weight. Through the Christ-impulse the soul experiences the resurrection of Number, Measure and Weight: first in the Spiritual World, but later, with the next incarnation, the power of the experience flows into the earthly existence and there becomes the effective germ of a new world order.

A new world order in which the Wisdom-tomb of the soul formed from the frozen Number, Measure and Weight will be melted, and the soul in Number, Measure and Weight will become living. Then the human soul will experience, even during its earthly existence—as it can be experienced today in the Spiritual World after death, or on the path of Initiation—that true Weight, for example, is contained in Foot-washing; that true Measure is contained in the words, *not seven times, but seven-*



Engraving, c. 1624, from *Life of the Brethren*, contained in *The Life of the Brethren*, Schele à Boswert

### **Augustine Washes the Feet of the Pilgrim Christ**

*The initiatory emblem for the humble mind dedicated to serving the world and all its creatures is footwashing. A soul so imbued with Christlike humility offsets the materializing effect of the fall and conquers egoic heaviness.*

ty times seven must forgiveness be granted; and that true Number is expressed, for instance, in the Parable of the one Lost Sheep at whose recovery there was more joy among the Angels than for the other ninety and nine.

For the Gospel, read in the light of Spiritual Science, contains ensouled concepts of Number, Measure and Weight. The concepts become experiences in the Spiritual World, and the experiences become forces with which a new world can be built in accordance with the New Testament significance of Weight, Measure and Number.

When Number, Measure and Weight in the world are ensouled, then is the new Cosmos there—the Cosmos of Love which is to follow on the dying Cosmos of Wisdom. The future Cosmos will, however, come into existence in stages: and the Jupiter-existence, which will follow immediately on the Earth-existence, will be the stage of the conquered spirit of heaviness—the resurrection of true Weight. The subsequent Venus-phase will be the cosmic stage of the ensouling of all Measure in the universe. And the Vulcan existence will be the stage of the resurrection of Number in its true significance of a community of immortal individualities. (Continued) □