

MYSTIC LIGHT

Meditation—Formed by Light for Light

FROM THE PRACTICE of such exercises for the will as we here describe, a purification of the will will follow, which we could not expect beforehand, and have never known before. Then we look at the life of the will in men around us, and see how casual, how impure, how darkly unconscious, how eaten up by egoism it is. How petty as aims for the will are money, position, one's own house and garden, a peaceful evening of life. And even these aims live only fluctuatingly in the thin wills of men of today.

Now we begin to see how it is when a clearer, purer will lives in a man. By the great aim, which we take into our lives, our will itself acquires greatness, which works ever more strongly into our daily activities, into our momentary wishes. In the greatness of his aim, man himself acquires greatness. By the great pattern which we see before us, which is Christ, our will gains that fire which is not dangerous, to which we can dedicate ourselves entirely. We have only to guard this fire against the impure flame of fanaticism—which may be quite concealed. But through the great opposition upon which we look, our will gets the strength of steel. It grows into the super-human, because it unites itself with the super-human.

It is a world full of suffering, if we feel in the individual weakness of a man all the littleness, the lamentableness, the anxiety of soul, the lostness, the gnawing unrest, the dissatisfaction of humani-

ty. Do not let yourselves be deceived: those who come forward with great pretensions of strength, and hurl around them arrogant words and actions are generally such men as are weak within. Often it surprises one to find suddenly—this man is afraid! If one can get over one's annoyance, and does not linger over the resistance which is perhaps necessary, one is seized with pity for the weaknesses of these men, which they carefully conceal from themselves and others. Against this can be set up, without any arrogance or insincerity, the "I am" of Christ, as a power for victory which breaks in with radiance from another world. Just where men are really disturbed, as in a public meeting, one need only hold this "I am" strongly within one, and let it radiate out into the unrest. That is "pacifism" in the sense of Christ. For the saying, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God," speaks in the original text of the *pacifici*, the peacemakers. They shall be called the "children of God," for such they are, because in unrest one sees that they are born from above.

If one can procure such revelations for men, they will see another Christ than the one preached to them. Our meditations will lead us to these heights. Tolstoi says somewhere: "I have only one wish: to fulfill the divine will; and only one fear: to neglect the divine will. When godly fear destroys all earthly fear, then man joins the army of the real warriors of the world."

That which we are here discussing is like passing the will through one consecration after another, to the real world battle. Thus we see yet another

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world appear, which is perhaps least of all seen in its need of redemption. This is the world of darkness.

Again it is necessary to lead our gaze to some of the facts around us before we can have the right impulse to meditation. Darkness, according to present-day views, is spread over the beginnings of humanity and of the earth; darkness over their goal, their meaning and their end; darkness over the destiny of the individual after death; darkness also over every individual appearance in its true being. In philosophy this has been expressed in the teaching that “the thing in itself” is always hidden from us. Never did humanity have so few and such uncertain thoughts about its origin and destiny as today. Do not more illnesses and suicides come from this than is admitted?

We must now turn to the training of our sight that it may see the darkness of the world. The men of the present day still live in a “dark age,” darker in many respects than the “dark Middle Ages.” And that they talk about enlightenment is a proof that they do not possess it. Even into theology, which ought to talk of the light, this world darkness spreads itself today. It ventures to speak only of the “unknown,” “mysterious,” “quite other” God. Thus it proclaims its need as if it were a virtue, and still asserts that religion has always consisted only in belief in this hidden power. He who closely examines what such a classical compendium as *Religion in History and at the Present Day* has to say about God and the higher world, will be astonished. That is hidden by many valuable individual items of historical knowledge. But in orthodox theology also, such as the theology of Barth, to which today many religious men turn, the world darkness continues to live, feebly illuminated by a few lamps taken from the Bible which are called “revelation.” Men live today, without knowing it, as those live who dwell under the veil of smoke of a great city. They do not know that above it is a glorious world in which the light lives in a thousand beauties. They see clearly that which is beneath the curtain of cloud, but the worlds above do not exist for them.

In Plato’s time men still felt the life of humanity in the way he described in his famous picture of



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Oil on Canvas, Frederic Shields

Saint Paul in Athens

Paul declared that the “unknown god” (“agnosto theos” is incised on the urn behind the woman), “ignorantly” worshiped by the Athenians, is the resurrected Christ Jesus.

the cave. Men live shut up in the dark, cast out from the real world. But upon the wall of their cave they see the shadows of those who pass by outside. Today the cave is lit by electric light. They see clearly what is upon their walls. But the shadows of those who pass by outside they see no longer. That there could be another dwelling than this well-appointed cave, they do not know.

Certainly, there are riches in their cave: “Drink, O eyes, what your lashes will hold of the golden superfluity of the world!” Gottfried Keller was the voice of men today, when he wrote these words, and Friedrich Nietzsche was the soul of men today, when he loved them.

But the increasing number of suicides reveals that men are not satisfied with this drink, good

though it may taste. Goethe was a pioneer upon the way of humanity when he spoke these words through Faust: “Night seems more deeply deep to penetrate, but brightest light shines in the inward part.” This same Faust, who was intoxicated with the glory of the world of the senses, seeks the inward light and values it, even when the outward eyes are surrounded with darkness. For he is not blind *now*, he was blind *before*. A wisdom which lights up the age is expressed in these words.

“And as Jesus passed by he saw a man which was blind from his birth” (John 9:1). Everyone who comes into the world in these centuries is born blind. Christ was the light of the world. Christ wished his disciples to be the light of the world. His task, our task is to heal the blind. How does that come to pass?

Many remarkable things can be found by close examination of the simple picture presented by this story. He who calls himself “the light of the world” —and that in connection with this action—yet does not immediately open the eye by saying, “Let there be light!” but he goes the way the sun went, when it formed the human eye. The more closely we look at it, the more significant does this way appear. “He spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with clay.” Then he sent him to the pool of Siloam with the command, “Go, wash.” With our present-day feelings of taste, we are shocked by such a story. With our concepts of natural science we are shocked by it. And we do not notice what sublime spiritual teaching speaks in this story for all those who feel the necessity of lightening the world’s darkness.

Christ gives a piece of His life. The spirit lives more vividly and penetratingly in the watery element than in the material, as we saw in the story of the marriage at Cana. But Christ does not take water, as it comes from heaven, but water as it has passed through his earthly personality. Again, He does not use it as it is, but He unites it with the powers of the earth. But the healing does not follow immediately, an action is required from the blind man himself: that he should go to the pool of Siloam and wash himself there.

One can only say that this is an earthly picture of

the working of deep wisdom. If we wish to heal a man of his earthly blindness, we have no other than heavenly wisdom. But this heavenly wisdom cannot be brought immediately to men. It only works in the right way when it has passed through our earthly personality. And this alone is not enough. The wisdom of the higher world must unite itself with the forces of the earth upon which we live, if it is really to help man. Only thus it becomes the true power of healing. Not as it may represent itself to the angels in heaven, but as it unites itself to earthly being, is it real help. And yet, we must not believe that the single act of another is sufficient, even if he were the greatest. Man must be brought to perform an action himself, and to go where complete healing is ready for him. The evangelist finds the name of the pool significant—*Sent*. That is the word which he himself always uses of Christ: “Him whom the Father hath sent.” And so, in his significant speech, the evangelist tells us the ultimate truth: only if you purify yourself in Christ Himself shall you become able really to see.

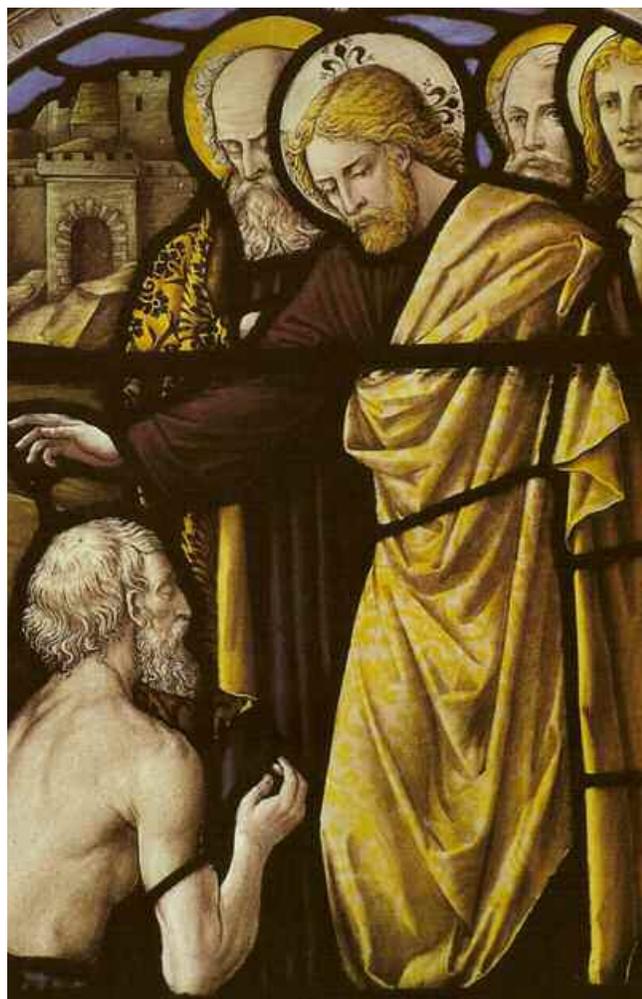
Of course all such interpretations are absolutely painful to the man of today, with the intellect on which he prides himself. Yet it must be admitted that religious documents of past ages speak with double meaning in this way, apart from the hint which the evangelist himself gives. But now let us leave as an open question whether there was in the evangelist any knowledge or suspicion of these truths, and notice the mistakes made by men when they try to bring the light of truth into the darkness of the world. There are those who throw texts from the Bible at other people’s heads, and think that that helps. There are others who throw scientific discoveries at the heads of ordinary people and call it “educating the people.” Even...[spiritual] truths can be used in these attempts at healing. The results are notorious. A spiritual truth has power to heal only when it has passed through a personality. It must have become a piece of a human life if it is really to work. Abstract truths can be comprehended easily by thought, even when they come lifeless and stale to men. The truths of life do not reveal themselves unless they come out of a life. The more a lecture upon questions of life is penetrated

in every sentence by the character of a fully human person, the more the life-sap of a man is perceptible in it, the more eagerly will it be taken in. This is true not only of lectures, it is true of every conversation. As a helper of men, one has often the primary impression—when one is giving advice—only when you let it appear that you have personal experience, do men take you in earnest. That is the first thing.

And this is not the whole. Men often go away uncomforted from a friend or pastor, and think: “What he has said may be all right and fit his own case, but it does not suit my circumstances, it cannot be fulfilled through what is possible to me.” Only complete earthly activity gives complete earthly power. Personal wisdom must be added to life on earth. That which is to help must not only be truly and personally experienced but it must be brought to earth, it must be permeated by the earth on which we live. Very, very much remains theory and principle and never brings help and healing, in great or small things, because, although it is right and is perhaps worked out at great cost, it has failed to give earthly powers their due, and to allow them to work along with it. That is the second thing.

And the third thing must also be noticed. Enduring help and healing is only in Christ. To Him we must point, as well as we can, to Him we must lead, to the “Sent.” He is the new world who heals the old. Otherwise there is only the single benefit, there is no lasting help. And he who is to be healed must himself perform this action, must purify himself in Christ.

We must know and ponder all this if we wish to be received into the ranks of the fighters for humanity in the sense of Christ. It helps us to meditate strongly. Christ’s action as a parable, when we have once understood it, says everything, more shortly, more impressively, more instructively than many words. In the picture of the man born blind we see man before us, as he lives on the earth today. We see Christ before us as the light of the world. We see a truth which can prove itself in life in the help given by Christ, and in the way the help is given. Great worlds and truths and purposes will shine in through such a picture. When such pic-



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Stained glass, Lancaster, England

Jesus Heals a Blind Man

The healing of the blind man from Bethsaida proceeded from the archetypal body to the vital to the physical. At the intermediate stage, after Jesus’ saliva was applied to his eyes, the man saw humans as trees (representing the etheric) walking.

tures become transparent for us, the earth itself becomes transparent and we ourselves are healed from the world-darkness. Christ lives in this story and out of it heals blindness today.

A time will come when men will not see before them stone and earth, hill and wood as today, but when all will be a transparent veil, soft and spiritual, and behind it they will see the working of the angels. Today we are able to prepare only a little for this time. But still we can do a mighty thing. We can carry Christ in us like the sunlight of a new world. We can let him shine through our words, our bearing, our actions. So a higher world can flash forth before men, even if it happens only here and there. So the eyes gradually fit themselves to

perceive another world. “The eye is formed by light for light,” says Goethe, of the bodily eye. This process is the type of that which must happen today. There is “darkness upon the face of the deep,” but “the spirit of God moves upon the face of the waters.”

In man himself this new “Let there be light!” must be fulfilled. He himself must become translucent for it. It is deeply moving to perceive this task: to become translucent in one’s earthly being and one’s earthly life for the light of Christ, so that the light of heaven shines into the darkness of the world. Every revelation of man in the world of the senses, even his movement, gains a new meaning. Man can be the bearer of divine light, and thus can shine through the world of sense everywhere from within. *Christus verus Luciferus*—Christ the true lightbearer—one must not only love this saying, one must translate it into action.

It can only succeed if we concentrate wholly upon the light in us, if we bring this light to all we are and do, so that the light shines through it all; if all that is earthly exists for us only that it may be irradiated. That is the fight of light against darkness, as it can be carried on today.

Rembrandt represented in his whole artistic life the battle of light with darkness. Goethe regarded with reverence this battle of light with darkness as a worshipping of God. Our calling is to *be* this battle of light with darkness, in all that we can bring into the dark world of the senses by our life and actions.

Thus we place ourselves rightly between East and West. The *East* has light, but not for the darkness. The *West* has darkness, but not with the light. Christ is the light in the darkness, and so are all in whom He really is. “The light shines” again, “in the darkness.”

We have spoken above of the glorious fact that we may live out our ego before men, “I am, be not afraid!” Now we recognize the glorious fact that a new world can arise out of this ego, as out of a sun: “Let there be light!”

Thus our meditation again trains us for the great world battle. The world of the senses becomes ever more wonderful when the light shines through it. Man is born blind “that the works of God should be made manifest in him” (John 9:3). □

STRIVING FOR CHRIST CONSCIOUSNESS—HERE AND NOW

There is a spark of Divine essence hidden within every human being. It is the hope of the spiritual aspirant to find that spark and fan it into a flame of living beauty. The degree of success of his endeavors will depend on where he places the “treasures” of his heart. If he places his inner values on external forms, he will be building the foundation of his life on shifting sands. If, on the other hand, he places his inner values on spiritual truths, he will be constructing an edifice on solid rock.

Along the Path, the aspirant will meet the most trying challenge of achieving the fine balance between involvement in outer activities and inner efforts toward the attainment of his spiritual goals. His former reliance on the senses may lead him to believe that external forms are the prime realities of life and that spiritual precepts have only a dim and hazy reality by comparison. His hope may be placed on outward organization rather than on the principles for which that organization was founded and continues to exist.

The externally-oriented aspirant may dedicate himself to a spiritual teacher in preference to the ideals the teacher strives to live by or he may put his faith in books and the veneration of the writers. He may be tempted to give his loyalty to a set of Teachings on spiritual themes, instead of offering his devotion to the spiritual realities behind those Teachings. Unless he is careful in his loyalties, he could reduce the Teachings to a code of intellectual concepts.

Assuredly, it takes a great deal of strength to rely on the Christ Light within rather than on these outer realities. However, should any external factor be truly working for the spiritual development of mankind, it would exist only to encourage the aspirant to seek the God within himself. Christ alone is the answer to our longings and the Goal of our aspirations.

—B.R.