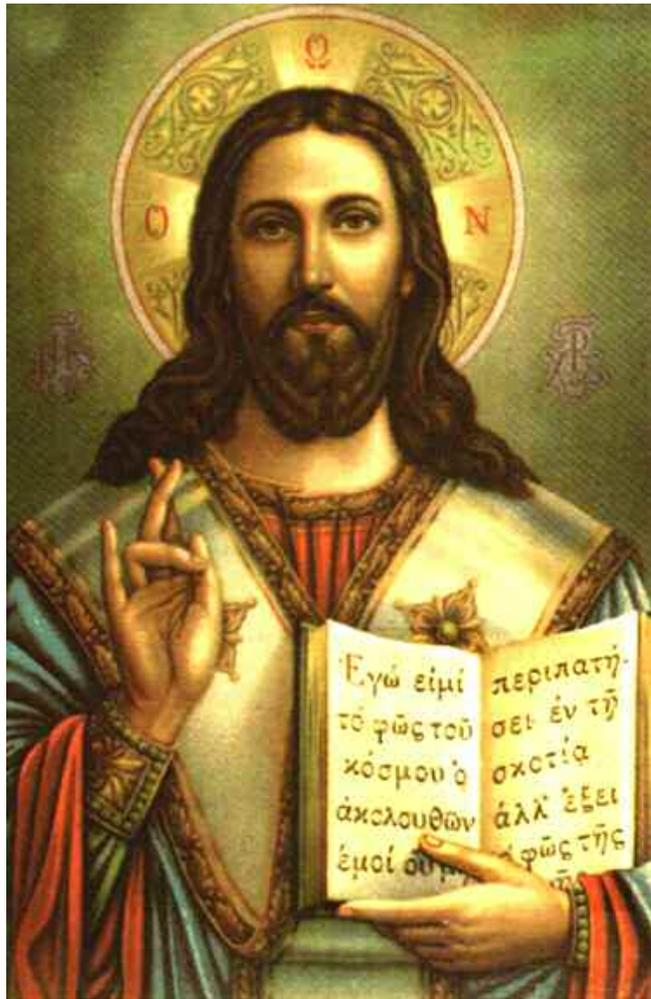


The Letter to the Angel of the Church of the Laodiceans

IF THE SIXTH CULTURE-EPOCH had to recognize the Christ as the Greater Guardian of the Threshold, the Seventh Post-Atlantean epoch must become conscious of another aspect of the Christ Being. To understand this side of the knowledge of Christ we must again look back on that past of which the Seventh culture-epoch will be the ‘resurrection.’ For as the Sixth culture-epoch will be the ‘resurrection’ of the ancient Persian, so will the Seventh be the ‘resurrection’ of the ancient Indian epoch. And again it will be in the sense that what flowed into man’s intellectual life as revelation and inspiration during the old Indian epoch will now have to be learned and acquired by the effort of that intellect. For the Seventh culture-epoch will be related to the First Post-Atlantean epoch as the life-spirit is to the ether body. In this sense also the content of the ancient Indian revelation will re-appear in such a way that “seven candlesticks” on the earth will no longer receive their light from the “seven stars”; that is, this time there will not be seven human beings inspired by the divine revelation, but that the content will appear as the conscience reveals itself in man. For all which in the old Indian age was a revelation from heaven will “rise again” in the Seventh culture-epoch as conscience within man. And the word *conscience* is not used here merely in the sense in which it is understood today (that is, as a moral judgement on a man’s own deeds), but in the sense of that certainty which



Coptic Image Archive

The Alpha and Omega

This Orthodox image reminds us that the first is the last, “the beginning and the ending.” The first Adam as creature was made in the image of the Creator. Christ, the “second Adam,” took on the form of the first Adam and regenerated it. A similar principle operates between the first and the seventh sub-epoch (Epoch, Period) where the former is resurrected in the latter. The Greek text in part reads: “I am the light of the world (kosmos).”

can arise in the soul from a comprehensive knowledge springing without shape or sound, not from any external sense impression, speculative thought, nor clairvoyant perception, but from the deepest stratum of man’s being. Conscience, in this sense, results from inwardizing experience throughout many incarnations of the soul’s past. It is the great moral and spiritual synthesis of all the experiences

This is the concluding article drawn from Valentin Tomberg’s Studies of the Apocalypse, ©1985 by Candeur Manuscripts. Reprinted by permission of the Anthroposophic Press.

and revelations which the soul has received.

Such comprehensive vision from within outward was, during the age in which Christianity began, denoted by the word AMEN*, which is now interpreted as meaning “It is certainly true.” And this interpretation is justifiable in so far as it points in the direction in which the untranslatable word—like the AUM of the Indians, or the TAO of the Chinese Taoists—is to be sought. For if a thing is known to be *certainly true* and yet stands on no other foundation than a word uttered by man himself and meaning nothing which can be found in any sphere of experience, then what is expressed is that something hidden in his own nature has been revealed and the *certainty* arises from this revelation.

How this all-embracing inner wisdom, the AMEN, comes about may be seen from an example given...in connection with the karmic history of the great Zarathustra....[I]n the old Indian age, Zarathustra followed a path that was a preparation for the mission which he was to carry out, from the ancient Persian epoch onwards, as the great teacher of the Post-Atlantean mysteries. During that time he passed through seven incarnations, receiving in each incarnation the revelation content of one of the Rishis. Thus he absorbed the whole revelation of the seven Rishis. After this, he appeared in an eighth incarnation in a body, blind and deaf. It was thus impossible for him to receive any impression from the outside world. In that eighth incarnation the great Zarathustra had to rely entirely on his own inner resources. And there arose within him the comprehensive “memory” of the revelation of the Rishis. It was not, however, a mere memory of the Rishis’ revelation, but rather a resurrection from his own ego of that revelation as a comprehensive unity. And this comprehensive unity then became an organ capable of receiving, in the next incarnation, a new revelation from without; namely, the revelation of the Christ in the form of the Sun Being, Ahura Mazdao. The path which Zarathustra took was in fact the archetype of the path followed by Post-Atlantean humanity as a

*“Amen” (alternative spelling amon), means, in the language of ancient Egypt, “hidden,”; similarly, “amenti” (the kingdom of the dead) means “that which hides.”

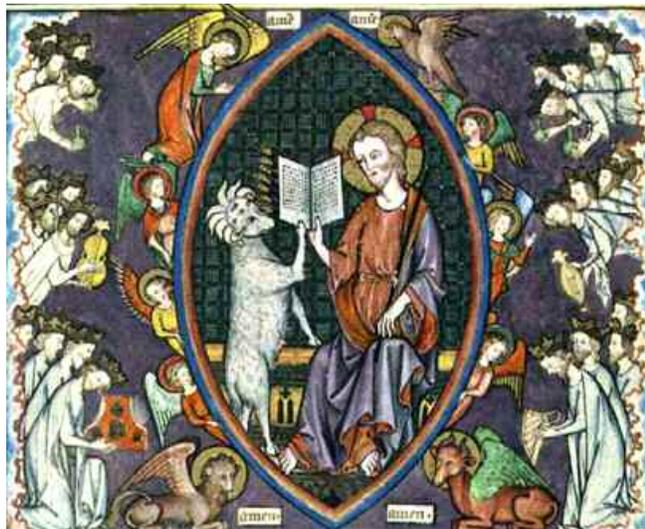
whole, when many souls typically had absorbed the ancient Indian revelation, and were treading the one path which led, through blindness and deafness, towards the spiritual world. But the result of following this path will be the resurrection from within of the original revelation, and of all the experience to which it gave rise. Indeed, this resurrection will not be the mere rising again of the combined and enhanced wisdom of the past, but its resurrection as an *organ*, so to speak, for the acceptance of the Christ Being as the living quintessence of that wisdom. For the Christ is the core of the content of that wisdom. He is the AMEN, that which is hidden in “the beginning of the creation of God” (Rev. 3:14). And it is as the AMEN that the Christ Being will be recognized during the Seventh culture-epoch—recognized as the One who bears the same relationship to the resurrecting, comprehensive wisdom as the sun does to its light. And as a man becomes aware of the sun by means of this light—unless indeed he sees nothing beyond the light and supposes himself to be the producer of it—so in that resuscitated wisdom he will possess an organ by which he can receive into himself the very essence of that wisdom. Hence, in the Letter to the Angel of the Church of the Laodiceans, the Apocalypse speaks of Christ “*coming in* to sup with” man, to share a meal with him.

“Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice and open the door I will *come in* to him and sup with him, and he with Me” (Rev. 3:20). That the “coming in” leads to the closest converse with the Christ Being is expressed in the figure of “supping with him.” For the “supping” follows on the “hearing of the voice”—that is, *intuitive* knowledge of Christ follows inspired knowledge. The supper shared signifies the converse of inspired knowledge. Man takes Christ into his innermost being in the same way as, in the physical sphere, he takes in food, and similarly the Christ takes man into Himself. For the point is that the meal is *shared*. In intuitive knowledge one does not only *know*, one is also *known*. The “bread” eaten in this communion is offered by each to each.

But before this can happen, a man must pass the test involved by the resurrection of the wisdom

within himself from the past. For the deeply imprinted memory rising from within may affect the soul in such a way that it feels itself to be “rich,” and can thus be so satisfied that it asks for nothing more. In this way a disastrous error may ensue; for, instead of using the rising memory as an organ (as a “door”) for the admission of the living Being in the “shadow of whose light” all wisdom consists, instead of turning his questioning gaze from the light to the sun which sheds it, a man may be completely satisfied with the wisdom he has absorbed and may say to himself: “I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing” (Rev. 3:17). Thus, experiencing wisdom, and regarding himself as “rich,” he knows not that he is “wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked” (Rev. 3:17) with respect to that purpose for which all wisdom exists. The great Zarathustra, although he became a radiant star of “wisdom from within himself,” did not stop short at this comprehensive understanding and the consciousness of bearing “all wisdom within him,” but found the strength of true humility to use that wisdom merely as an “eye” which, forgetting itself, looks outward, as the physical eye, towards a higher being. Similarly, the men of the Seventh culture-epoch will regard the wealth of wisdom rising within them (and initiates at the corresponding stage of occultism must do the same thing today) not as an end in itself, but only as a “door,” an organ as selfless as the eye or the ear, by which to receive from the hidden heights the living quintessence of the AMEN. As the physical eye, in itself a structure filled with tremendous wisdom, does not observe itself, but, forgetting its own entity in selflessness, submits itself to the external world, so the men of the Seventh culture-epoch must repeat the deed of the great Zarathustra, carried out many thousand years earlier. They must sacrifice their wisdom-wealth of intensified memory to form something higher, just as Zarathustra did when he molded it into a faculty through which to absorb the Sun-spirit, Ahura Mazdao.

The test of the Seventh post-Atlantean culture-epoch will consist in overcoming the temptation to rest content with riches derived from the past. For if this sense of contentment is not overcome, a



Illumination (folio 7r), the *Apocalypse* (early 14th cent. ms), The Cloisters, New York City

The Opening of the Book

Christ as the Lamb opening the Book of Life, or the future's memory, viewed from the realm of Life Spirit, where archetypes in the World of Thought are foreseen and transformed through the expiatory act of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

standstill in evolution will result which will lead to the soul being “neither hot nor cold” (Rev. 3:15). This state of mind, in which is felt neither the cold of loneliness and darkness nor the warmth of hope and endeavor for the future, but where the soul actually rests completely satisfied with itself, is, for the divine love of that Providence which watches over the progress of humanity, a condition offering no alternative but to restore the soul through catastrophic blows of fate to the interchange of cold and warmth. For only through such heavy blows is it possible to re-awaken the spiritual humility which feels none of its contents and circumstances to be “ends in themselves” or “riches,” but regards each one, however excellent and advantageous it may be, as a gift entrusted to it, only to be used for the work which is to be accomplished in the world under the unfailing guidance of the Christ Being. Far from lingering in tranquil enjoyment of his spiritual treasures, the great Zarathustra became a prophet of the approaching Christ, feeling all the yearning of expectation and all the pain of a world which was still without Him. Yet, however edifying was the manner in which he stood this test, it is nevertheless important to study those figures in the spiritual history of humanity who had to experience the error of this

great temptation. Thus, in the first century of our chronology, there lived and worked a much-maligned man who, nevertheless, enjoyed among his contemporaries immense authority and fame. This fame spread throughout almost the whole known world of those days—from India to Spain. He was an initiate who, through his extensive travels (to Babylon, Egypt, India, and Spain), called up within himself, stratum by stratum, an enhanced resurrection of the wisdom of the past. A comprehensive wisdom sprang up in him, stage by stage, during his wanderings. First there arose in him the whole of the combined wisdom of the Greek mysteries, and then an equally complete synthesis of the Chaldean and Egyptian wisdom. Later, after a glimmer of the ancient Persian wisdom, strangely feeble in comparison with the others, came the old Indian wisdom, outshining all. After this, he travelled also to the West, to Spain, there to experience a rekindling of the content of the guidance from the West, the path of the Atlantean wisdom. This cooperation of external destiny with the inner life of knowledge resulted in a consciousness wherein a magnificent synthesis of the pre-Christian mystery wisdom dwelt in intensified form. Thus, in the first century of our chronology, Apollonius of Tyana was, so to speak, a living synthesis of all mysteries of the past, endowed with faculties which all the world admired. But the strange thing is that this sage who, on the one hand, cared nothing for power or wealth, and, on the other, had practiced countless deeds of compassion; who knew all the Mystery schools and had learned all the traditions; yes, and had visited most of the temples—the strange thing is that this sage should pass blindly by the greatest event, not only of his age, but of all world history. Apollonius of Tyana paid no heed to the Mystery of Golgotha. He concerned himself in no way at all with Christianity or the Jewish mysteries. Now, if we ask ourselves the reason of this strange circumstance, we must conclude that it was the very wealth of his wisdom which hid, as it were, the Mystery of Golgotha from him. For Apollonius was put to the test of regarding his accumulated wisdom, not as the goal, but as a means of attaining to the higher level at which the fulfillment of all mystery wisdom is to

be found. And the outcome of this initiation test was tragic. Thanks to his wisdom and his remarkable destiny, obvious to all the world, Apollonius could have imparted to humanity, with whom he, himself, had so much sympathy, the deepest knowledge, the highest gnosis of the Mystery of Golgotha. Instead of this, he left behind him in the world of his day, the impression that it could do very well without the Mystery of Golgotha.

Now, had the mission of Apollonius of Tyana not taken this tragic turn, the almost indescribable tragedy of Julian the Apostate need never have come to pass. For the gulf which opened then between an external Christianity and a mystery principle devoid of hope—a gulf created by the party-spirit forced upon them by Julian—would never have existed at all if Apollonius had found and pointed out the link between the Mystery wisdom and the Event wherein it was fulfilled. For then Christianity would not have become external, and the Mystery principle would have offered itself as an “eye” through which mankind could gaze with knowledge upon the Mystery of Golgotha.

But Julian was beloved of that Spirit, the Sun Spirit, whom he also loved and who was present at that time on earth. This made it impossible throughout the tragic course of his destiny for him to rely in contentment of soul upon the wealth of his wisdom. In his destiny the words of the Apocalypse became reality: “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten” (Rev. 3:19). For it may be seen in the destiny of Julian how suffering made it impossible for him to be “neither hot nor cold,” and yet at the same time, how he lived in the most intense cold of loneliness as well as in the fire of his hopeless longing to reawaken the spirit of the mysteries. Thus, by the example of two different individuals, Apollonius and Julian, we can see wherein lies the danger of the rising memory of the wisdom of the past, and by what means protection may be afforded, through the help of the Lords of Karma.

But whoever stands this test, that is, whoever overcomes the temptation to rest in the light of wisdom, attains to rest of another kind in the very Being from which that wisdom radiated. For the Being upon which wisdom depends is love. And he

who overcomes the temptation involved in wisdom enters into the hidden sphere, the AMEN of wisdom. He is rooted into the Being of Christ Himself. Now to be rooted into the Being of Christ is the *true rest*, for it means not resting satisfied with the result of the past, but a condition of security, a tapping of inexhaustible founts of patience and courage in the task of fulfilling the Christ mission throughout ages of time. This state of sharing the Christ's sources of strength, wherein the soul rests in such a way as to be ever stronger for greater and greater efforts of sacrifice, is described in the Apocalypse as "sitting in the throne with Christ." So the Letter ends with the promise: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21.)

This inner intuitive relationship to the Christ Being will be the positive outcome of the Seventh culture-epoch, but the negative outcome of that epoch will be the antithesis of the "supping together." The Christ will "spew out of his mouth" those elements of the Seventh culture-epoch which have rigidified in a state of self-sufficiency. This "spewing out," however, is a process which signifies not only being set at a distance from the Christ, but also, and above all, being conscious of that condition. It will be so experienced by men that they will feel a "plunge" into cold and darkness. This plunge will entail a shock which may be salutary in the sense of an awakening of "cold" and "warmth" in the soul; that is to say, in the sense of liberation from the resting in the self-sufficiency. This shock was experienced also in the past, on the path of karma during the life on earth. It was experienced too in the life after death. But in the future, especially in the Seventh culture-epoch which will end with the war of "all against all," it will be for the great majority of mankind the only cure for the condition of false rest. And the war which will bring about the destruction and end of the whole Post-Atlantean culture will be karmically necessary for the purpose of shocking humanity into the realization that they are not "rich, and increased with goods, and in need of nothing," but that they are "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked." □

GREETING

I salute you.

I am your friend and my love for you goes deep. There is nothing I can give you which you have not got; but there is much, very much, that, while I cannot give it, you can take.

No heaven can come to us unless our hearts find rest in today.

Take heaven!

No peace lies in the future which is not hidden in this present little instant.

Take peace!

The gloom of the world is but a shadow.

Behind it, yet within our reach, is joy.

There is radiance and glory in the darkness, could we but see, and to see we have only to look. I beseech you to look.

Life is so generous a giver, but we judging its gifts by their covering, cast them away as ugly or heavy or hard.

Remove the covering and you will find beneath it a living splendor, woven of love, by wisdom, with power.

Welcome it, grasp it, and you touch the angel's hand that brings it to you.

Everything we call a trial, a sorrow, or a duty, believe me, that angel's hand is there; the gift is there, and the wonder of an over-shadowing presence.

Our joys too: be not content with them as joys. They too conceal diviner gifts.

Life is so full of meaning and purpose, so full of beauty, beneath its covering, that you will find earth but cloaks your heaven.

Courage then to claim it: That is all!

But courage you have, and the knowledge that we are pilgrims together, wending through an unknown country, home.

And so, at this time, I greet you.

Not quite as the world sends greetings, but with profound esteem and with the prayer that for you, now and forever, the day breaks, and the shadows flee away.

—Fra Giovanni
Anno Domini 1513