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Philosophic Encyclopedia

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Much is said in certain classes of the Western World about Initiation. This in the minds of most people seems usually to be associated with the esotericism taught in the religions of the far East; something that is peculiar to the devotees of Buddhism, Hinduism, and kindred systems of faith, and which in nowise appertains to the religion of the Western World, particularly to the Christian religion.

We have shown in the preceding series on "[Symbols and Ancient and Modern Initiation](#)" that this idea is entirely gratuitous, and that the ancient Tabernacle in the Wilderness pictures in its symbolism the path of progression from childlike ignorance to superhuman knowledge. As the Vedas brought light to the devotees who worshiped in faith and fervor on the banks of the Ganges in the sunny South, so the Eddas were a guiding star to the sons of the rugged Northland, who sought the Light of life in ancient Iceland where the sturdy Vikings steered their ships in frozen seas. "Arjuna," who fights the noble fight in the "Mahabharata," or "Great War," constantly being waged between the higher and the lower self, difference in nowise from the hero of the northern soul

myth, "Siegfried," which means, "He who through victory gains peace."

Both are representative of the candidate undergoing Initiation. And though their experiences in this great adventure vary in certain respects called for by the temperamental differences of the northern and southern peoples, and provided for in the respective schools to which they are referred for soul growth, the main features are identical, and the end, which is enlightenment, is the same. Aspiring souls have walked to the Light in the brilliantly illuminated Persian temples where the sun god in his blazing chariot was the symbol of Light, as well as under the mystic magnificence of the iridescence shed abroad by the aurora borealis of the frozen North. That the true Light of the deepest esoteric knowledge has always been present in all ages, even the darkest of the so-called dark, there is ample evidence to show.

Raphael used his wonderful skill with the brush to embody it in two of his great paintings, "The Sistine Madonna" and the "Marriage of the Virgin," which we would advise the interested reader to examine for himself. Copies of these paintings are procurable in almost any art store. In the original there is a peculiar tint of golden haze behind the Madonna and Child, which though exceedingly crude to one gifted with spiritual sight, is nevertheless as close an imitation of the basic color of the first-heaven world as it is possible to make with the pigments of earth. Close inspection of this background will reveal the fact that it is composed of a multitude of what we are used to call "angel" heads and wings.

This again is as literal a pictorial representation of facts concerning the inhabitants of that world as could be given, for during the process of purgation which takes place in the lower regions of the Desire World the lower parts of the body are actually disintegrated

so that only the head, containing the intelligence of the man, remains when he enters the first heaven, a fact which has puzzled many who have happened to see the souls there. The wings of course have no reality outside the picture, but were placed there to show ability to move swiftly, which is inherent in all beings in the invisible worlds. The Pope is represented as pointing to the Madonna and the Christ Child, and a close examination of the hand wherewith he points will show that it has six fingers. There is not historical evidence to show that the Pontiff actually had such a deformity, neither can that fact be an accident; the six fingers in the painting must therefore have been due to design on the part of the painter.

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What its purpose was we shall learn by examination of the "Marriage of the Virgin," where a similar anomaly may be noted. In that picture Mary and Joseph are represented together with the Christ Child under such conditions that it is evident that they are just on the eve of departure for Egypt, and a Rabbi is in the act of joining them in wedlock. The left foot of Joseph is the foremost object in the picture, and if we count we shall find it represented as having six toes. By the six fingers in the Pope's picture and the six toes of Joseph, Raphael wants to show us that both possessed a sixth sense such as is awakened by Initiation. By this subtle sense the foot of Joseph was guided in its flight to keep secure that sacred things which had been entrusted to his care. To the other was given a sixth sense that he might not be a blind leader of the blind but might have the "seeing eye" required to point out the Way, the Truth, and the Life. And it is a fact, though not commonly known, that with one or two exceptions when political power was strong enough to corrupt the College of Cardinals, all

who have sat upon the so-called throne of Peter have had the spiritual sight in a greater or lesser degree.

We have seen in the articles on "Symbols of Ancient and Modern Initiation," which preceded the present article, that the Atlantean Mystery Temple known as the Tabernacle in the Wilderness was a school of soul growth; and it should not surprise us to learn that the four Gospels containing the life of Christ are also formulae of Initiation, revealing another and a later Path to power. In the ancient Egyptian Mysteries, Horus was the first fruit whom the aspirant endeavored to imitate, and it is significant that in the Ritual of Initiation which was in vogue in that day and which we now call the "Book of the Dead," the aspirant to Initiation was always addressed Horus so-and-so. Following the same method today we might appropriately address those following the Christian Path of Initiation as Christ so-and-so, for as a matter of fact all who tread this Path are really Christs-in-the-making. Each in his or her turn will reach the different stations of the Via Dolorosa, or Path of Sorrow, which leads to Calvary, and experience in his or her own body the pangs and pains suffered by the Hero of the Gospels. Initiation is a cosmic process of enlightenment and evolution of power; therefore the experiences of all are similar in the main features.

The Christian Mystic form of Initiation differs radically from the Rosicrucian method, which aims to bring the candidate to compassion through knowledge, and therefore seeks to cultivate in him the latent faculties of spiritual sight and hearing at the very start of his career as an aspirant to the higher life. It teaches him to know the hidden mysteries of being and to perceive intellectually the unity of each with all, so that at last through this knowledge there is awakened within him the feeling that makes him truly realize his oneness with all that lives and moves, which

puts him in full and perfect tune with the Infinite, making him a true helper and worker in the divine kingdom of evolution.

The goal attained through the Christian Mystic Initiation is the same, but the method, as said, is entirely different. In the first place, the candidate is usually unconscious of trying to attain any definite object, at least during the first stages of his endeavors, and there is in this noble School of Initiation but one Teacher, the Christ, who is ever before the spiritual vision of the candidate as the Ideal and the Goal of all his striving. The Western world, alas! has become so enmeshed in intellectuality that its aspirants can only enter the Path when their reason has been satisfied; and unfortunately it is a desire for more knowledge which brings most of the pupils to the Rosicrucian School. It is an arduous task to cultivate in the compassion which must blend with their knowledge and be the guiding factor in the use of it before they are fitted to enter the Kingdom of Christ. But those who are drawn to the Christian Mystic Path feel no difficulty of that nature. They have within themselves an all-embracing love, which urges them onward and eventually generates in them a knowledge which the writer believes to be far superior to that attained by any other method. One who follows the intellectual Path of development is apt to sneer superciliously at another whose temperament impels him along the Mystic Path. Such an attitude of mind is not only detrimental to the spiritual development of whoever entertains it, but it is entirely gratuitous, as the works of Jacob Boehme, Thomas a Kempis, and many other who have followed the Mystic Path will show. The more knowledge we possess the greater condemnation also shall we merit if we do not use it right. But love, which is the basic principle in the Christian Mystic's life, can never bring us into condemnation or conflict with the purposes of God. It is infinitely better to be able to feel any noble emotion that

to have the keenest intellect and one which is able to define all emotions. Hairsplitting over the constitution and evolution of the atom surely will not promote soul growth as much as humble helpfulness toward our neighbor.

There are nine definite steps in the Christian Mystic Initiation, commencing with the Baptism, which is dedicatory. The Annunciation and Immaculate Conception precede as matters of course for reasons given later. Having prepared our minds by the foregoing consideration, we are now ready to consider each stage separately in this glorious process of spiritual unfoldment.

The Annunciation And Immaculate Conception

The Christian Mystic is emphatically not the product of one life, but the flower of many preparatory existences, during which he has cultivated that sublime compassion which makes him feel the whole world's woe, and conjures up before his spiritual vision the Christ Ideal as the true balm of Gilead, its practice the only palladium against all human grief and sorrow. Such a soul is watched over special care by the divine Hierarchies who have charge of our progression along the path of evolution, and when the time is ripe for him to enter that life in which he is to run the final race to reach the goal and become a Savior of his kind, angels are indeed watching, waiting, and singing hosannas in joyful anticipation of the great event.

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Like always seeks like, and naturally the parents are carefully selected for (and by such a noble soul from among the "sons and daughters of the King." They may be in the poorest circumstances from a worldly point of view; it may be necessary to cradle the babe in a manger, but no richer gift ever came to parents that

such a noble soul. Among the qualifications necessary to be the parents of such an Ego is that the mother be a "virgin" and the father a "builder."

It is stated in the Bible that Joseph was a carpenter, but the Greek word is "tekton" which means "builder." In Mystic Masonry God is called the Great Architect. Arche is the Greek word signifying primordial substance, and a tekton is a builder. Thus God is the Great Master Builder, who out of primordial substance fashioned the world as an evolutionary field for various grades of beings. He uses in His universe many tektons, or builders, of various grades. Everyone who follows the Path of spiritual attainment, endeavoring to work constructively with the laws of nature as a servant of humanity, is a tekton or builder in the sense that he has the qualifications necessary to aid in giving birth to a great soul. Thus when it is said that Jesus was a carpenter and the son of a carpenter, we understand that they were both tektons or builders along cosmic lines.

The Immaculate Conception, like all other sublime mysteries, has been dragged down into the gutter of materiality, and being so sublimely spiritual it has perhaps suffered more by this rude treatment than any other of the spiritual teachings. Perhaps it has suffered even more from the clumsy explanation of ignorant supporters than from the jeers and sneers of the cynic. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, as popularly understood, is that about two thousand years ago God in a miraculous manner fertilized a certain Mary who was a virgin, as the result she gave birth to Jesus, an individual who in consequence was the Son of God in a sense different from all other men. There is also in the popular mind the idea that this incident is unique in the history of the world.

It is particularly the latter fallacy which has served to distort the beautiful spiritual truth concerning the Immaculate Conception. It is not unique in any sense. Every great soul who has been born into the world to live a life of sublime saintliness, such as required for the Christian Mystic Initiation, has also found entrance through of immaculate virginity who were not besmirched by passion in the performance of the generative act. Men do not gather grapes of thorns. It is an axiomatic truth that like begets like, and before anyone can become a Savior, he must himself be pure and sinless. He, being pure cannot take birth from one who is vile; he must be born of virgin parents.

But the virginity to which we refer does not comprehend a merely physical condition. There is not inherent virtue in physical virginity, for all possess it at the beginning of life no matter how vile their disposition may be. The virginity of the mother of a Savior is a quality of the soul, which remains unsullied regardless of the physical act of fertilization. When people perform the first creative act without desire for offspring, merely for gratification of their animal lusts and propensities, they lose the only (physical) virginity they ever possessed; but when prospective parents unite in a spirit of prayer, offering their bodies upon the altar of sacrifice in order to provide an incoming soul with the physical body needed at the present time to further spiritual development, their purity of purpose preserves their virginity and draws a noble soul to their hearth and home. Whether a child is conceived in sin or immaculately depends upon its own inherent soul quality, for that will unerringly draw it to parents of a nature like unto its own. To become the son of a virgin predicates a past career of spirituality for the one who is so born.

The "mystic birth" of a "builder" is a cosmic event of great importance, and it is therefore not surprising that it is pictured in

the skies from year to year, showing a graphic symbolism in the great world or macrocosm what will eventually take place in man, the little world or microcosm. We are all destined to experience the things that Jesus experienced, including the Immaculate Conception, which is a prerequisite to the life of saints and saviors of varying degrees. By understanding this great cosmic symbol we shall more easily understand its application to the individual human being.

The sun is "the light of the world" in a material sense. When in winter time it reaches the extreme southern declination at the solstice on December 23rd, the people in the northern hemisphere, where all the present religions have had their birth, are plunged into the deepest darkness and bereft of the all-sustaining vital power emanating from the sun, which is them partly dead so far as its influence upon men is concerned. It is therefore necessary that a new light shine in the darkness, that a sun of good be born to save humanity from the cold and famine which must inevitably result if the sun were to remain in the southern position which he occupies at the winter solstice.

On the night between the 24th and 25th of December, the sun having commenced to slowly rise toward the earth's equator, the zodiacal sign of Virgo, the immaculate celestial Virgin, is on the eastern horizon in all northern latitudes (in the hours immediately preceding midnight). In the science of astrology it is the sign and degree on the eastern horizon at the time of birth which determine the form or body of the creature then born. Therefore the Sun of Good is said to have been born of Virgo, the sublime celestial Virgin, who remains as pure after giving birth to her Sun Child as she was before. By analogy the Son of God who comes to save his fellow men must also be born of an immaculate spiritual virgin.

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From what has been said it is evident that a great period of preparation precedes the entrance of a Christian Mystic into the present sphere of human life, though he in his physical consciousness is usually entirely unaware of the fact of the great adventure in store for him. In all probability his childhood days and early youth will pass in obscurity, while he lives an inner life of unusual depth, unconsciously preparing himself for the Baptism, which is the first of the nine steps of this method of attainment.

Mystic Rite Of Baptism

It is noteworthy that nearly all religious systems have prescribed ablutions previous to the performance of religious duties, and the worship performed in the ancient Atlantean Mystery Temple, the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, was no exception, as we have seen from the previous articles on "Symbols of Ancient and Modern Initiation." After having obtained justification by sacrifice on the Brazen Altar, the candidate was compelled to wash in the Laver of Consecration, the Molten Sea, before he was allowed to enter upon the duties of his ministry in the sanctuary proper. And it is in conformity with this rule that we find the Hero of the Gospels going to the river Jordan, where He underwent the mystic rite of Baptism. When He rose, we learn that the Spirit descended upon Him. Therefore it is obvious that those who follow the Christian Mystic Path of Initiation must also be similarly baptized before they can receive the Spirit, which is to be their true guide through all the trials before them.

But what constitutes Baptism is a question which has called forth arguments of almost unbelievable intensity. Some contend that it is a sprinkling with water, and other insist upon the immersion of

the whole body. Some say that it is sufficient to take an infant into church, sprinkle it with water despite its protests, and presto! it becomes a Christian, an heir of heaven; whereas should it unfortunately die before this sacred rite is performed, it must inevitably go to hell. Others take the more logical position that the desire of an individual for admission into the church is the prime factor necessary to make the rite effective, and therefore wait until adult age before the performance of the ceremony, which requires an immersion of the whole body in water. But whether the rite is performed in infancy or in later life, it seems strange that momentary immersion or sprinkling with water should have the power to save the soul; and when we examine the subsequent life of those who have thus been baptized, even in adult age and with their full consent and desire, we find little or no improvement in the great majority. Therefore it seems evident that this cannot be the proper rite, because the Spirit has not descended upon them. Consequently we must look for another explanation of what constitutes a true mystic rite of Baptism.

A story is told of an Ottoman king who declared war on a neighboring nation, fought a number of battles against it with varying success, but was finally conquered and taken captive to the palace of the victor, where he was compelled to work in the most menial capacity as a slave. After many years fortune favored him, and he escaped to a far country, where by hard work he acquired a small estate, married, and had a number of children, who grew up around him. Finally he found himself upon his deathbed at a very rip old age, and in the exertion of drawing his last breath he raised himself upon his pillow and looked about him, but there were no sons and daughters there. He was not in the place which he had regarded as home for so many years, but in his own palace which he thought he had left in his youth, and he

was as young as when he left it. There he found himself sitting in a chair with a basin of water close to his chin and a servant engaged in washing his hair and beard. He had just immersed his face in the water when the dream of going to war had started, and a lifetime had been lived in dreamland during the few seconds it took until he raised his face. There are thousands of other instances to show that outside the physical world time is nonexistent and the happenings of millennia are easily inspected in a few moments.

It is also well known that when people are under water and in the act of drowning, their whole preceding life is re-enacted before their eyes with crystal clarity, even the minutest details which have been forgotten during the passing years standing out sharply. Thus there must be and is a storehouse of events which may be contacted under certain conditions when the senses are stilled and we are near sleep or death.

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To make this last sentence clear it should be understood and borne in mind that man is a composite being, having finer vehicles which interpenetrate the physical body, usually regarded as the whole man. During death and sleep this dense body is unconscious on account of a complete separation between it and the finer vehicles; but this separation is only partial during dream-filled sleep and prior to drowning. This condition enables the spirit to impress events upon the brain with more or less accuracy according to circumstances, particularly those incidents which are connected with itself. In the light of these things we shall understand what really constitutes the rite of Baptism.

According to the Nebular Theory that which is now the earth was at one time a luminous fire-mist, which gradually cooled by contact with the cold of space. This meeting of heat with cold generated moisture, which evaporated and rose from the heated center, until the cold condensed it and it fell again as moisture upon the heated world. The surface of the earth being thus subjected to alternate liquidation and evaporation for ages, it finally crystallized into a shell which perfectly covered the fiery center. This soft moisture-laden shell naturally generated a mist, which surrounded the planet as an atmosphere, and this was the cradle of everything that has its being upon the earth: man, animal, and plant.

The Bible describes this condition in the second chapter of Genesis, where we are told that at the time of the first man a mist went up from the earth, "for it had not yet rained." This condition evidently continued until the Flood, when the moisture finally descended and left the atmosphere clear so that the rainbow was seen for the first time, the darkness was dispelled, and the age of alternation, day and night, summer and winter, commenced.

By a study of the cosmology and the pictorial account of evolution given in the Northern Eddas, treasured among the sages of Scandinavia before the Christian Era, we may learn more of this period in the earth's history and the bearing which it has upon our subject. As we teach our children, by means of stories and pictures, truths that they could not intellectually grasp, so the divine leaders of mankind were wont to teach the infant souls in their charge by pictures and allegories, and through these prepare them for a higher and nobler teaching of a later day. The great epic poem which is called "The Day of the Niebelung," gives us the story of which we are in search, the cosmic origin of the rite of

Baptism and why it is necessarily the preliminary step in the spiritual unfoldment of the Christian Mystic.

The cosmogony of the Eddas is similar to that of the Bible in some respects, and in others gives points which bear out the theory of Laplace. We quote from the poetical version of Oehlenschlaeger:

"In the Being's earliest Dawn
All was one dark abyss,
Nor heaven nor earth was known.
Chill noxious fogs and ice,
North from murk Niflheim's hole,
Piled up in mountains lay;
From Muspel's radiant pole,
Southwards fire held the sway.
"Then after ages passed,
Mid in the chaos met
A warm breath, Niflheim's blast,
Cold with prolific heat.
Hence pregnant drops were formed,
Which by the parent air
From Muspel's region warmed,
Produced great Aurgelmer."

Thus by the action of heat and cold Aurgelmer, or as he is also called, the Giant Ymer, was first formed. This was the pregnant seed ground whence came the spiritual Hierarchies, the spirits of the earth, air, and water, and finally man. At the same time the All-Father created the Cow Audumla, from whose four teats issued four streams of milk, which nourished all beings. These are the four ethers, one of which now sustains mineral, two feed the plant, three the animal, and all four the human kingdom. In the Bible they are the four rivers which went forth out of Eden.

Eventually, as postulated by science, a crust must have been formed by the continued boiling of the water, and from this drying crust a mist must have ascended as taught in the second chapter of Genesis. By degrees the mist must have cooled and condensed, shutting out the light of the sun, so that it would have been impossible for early mankind to perceive the body even had they possessed the physical vision. But under such conditions they had no more need of eyes than a mole which burrows in the ground. They were not blind, however, for we are told that "they saw God"; and as "spiritual things (and beings) are spiritually perceived," they must have been gifted with spiritual sight. In the spiritual worlds there is a different standard of reality than here, which is the basis of myths.

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Under these conditions there could be no clashing of interests, and humanity regarded itself as the children of one great Father while they lived under the water of ancient Atlantis. Egoism did not come into the world until the mist had condensed and they had left the watery atmosphere of Atlantis. When their eyes had been opened so that they could perceive the physical world and the things therein, when each saw himself or herself as separate and apart from all others, the consciousness of "me and mine, thee and thine," took shape in the nascent minds, and a grasping greed replaced the fellow feeling which obtained under the waters of early Atlantis. From that time to the present stage of egoism has been considered the legitimate attitude, and even in our boasted civilization altruism remains a Utopian dream not to be indulged in by practical people.

Had mankind been allowed to travel the path of egoism without let or hindrance, it is difficult to see where it all would have ended.

But under the immutable Law of Consequence every cause must produce an adequate effect; the principle of suffering was born from sin for the benevolent purpose of guiding us back to the path of virtue. It takes much suffering and many lives to accomplish this purpose, but finally when we have become men of sorrows and acquainted with grief, when we have cultivated that keen and ready sympathy which feels all the woe of the world, when the Christ has been born within, there comes to the Christian Mystic that ardent aspiration to seek and to save those who are lost and show them the way to everlasting light and peace.

But to show the way, we must know the way; without a true understanding of the cause of sorrow we cannot teach others to obtain permanent peace. Nor can this understanding of sorrow, sin, and death be obtained from books, lectures, or even the personal teachings of another; at least an impression sufficiently intense to fill the aspirant's whole being cannot be conveyed in that way. Baptism alone will accomplish the purpose in an adequate manner; therefore the first step in the life of a Christian Mystic is Baptism.

But when we say Baptism, we do not necessarily mean a physical Baptism where the candidate is either sprinkled or immersed and where he makes certain promises to the one who baptizes him. The Mystic Baptism may take place in a desert as easily on an island, for it is a spiritual process to attain a spiritual purpose. It may take place at any time during the night or day, in summer or winter, for it occurs at the moment when the candidate feels with sufficient intensity the longing to know the cause of sorrow and alleviate it. Then the Spirit is conducted under the waters of Atlantis, where it sees the primal condition of brotherly love and kindness; where it perceives God as the great Father of His children, who are there surrounded by His wonderful love. And by

the conscious return to this Ocean of Love, the candidate becomes so thoroughly imbued with the feeling of kinship that the spirit of egoism is banished from him forever. It is because of this saturation with the Universal Spirit that is able later to say: "If a man takes your coat, give him your cloak also; if he asks you to walk one mile with him, go with him two miles." Feeling himself one and all, the candidate does not even consider the murder of himself as mistreatment, but can say: "Father, forgive them." They are identical with himself, who suffers by their action; he is the aggressor as well as the victim. Such is the true Spiritual Baptism of the Christian Mystic, and any other baptism that does not produce this universal fellow feeling is not worthy of the name.

The Temptation

We often hear about devout Christians complain of their periods of depression. At times they are almost in the seventh heaven of spiritual exaltation, they all but see the face of Christ and feel as if He were guiding their every step; then without any warning and without any cause that they can discover the clouds gather, the Savior hides His face, and the world grows black for a period. They cannot work, they cannot pray; the world has no attraction, and the gate of heaven seems shut against them, with the result that life appears worthless so long as this spiritual expression lasts. The reason is, of course, that these people live in their emotions, and under the immutable Law of Alternation the pendulum is bound to swing as far to one side of the neutral point as it has swung to the other. The brighter the light, the deeper the shadow, and the greater the exaltation, the deeper the depression of spirit which follows it. Only those who by cold reason

restrain their emotions escape the periods of depression, but they never taste the heavenly bliss of exaltation either. And it is this

emotional outpouring of himself which furnished the Christian Mystic with the dynamic energy to project himself into the invisible worlds, where he becomes one with the spiritual ideal which has beckoned him on and awakened in his soul the power to rise to it, as the sun built the eye wherewith we perceive it. The nestling takes many a tumble before it learns to use its wings with assurance, and the aspirant upon the path of Christian Mysticism may soar to the very throne of God times out of number and then fall to the lowest pit of hell's despair. But some time he will overcome the world, defy the Law of Alternation, and rise by the power of the Spirit to the Father of Spirits, free from the toils of emotion, filled with the peace that passeth understanding.

But that is the end attained only after Golgotha and the Mystic Baptism, the latter of which we discussed in the preceding section. Moreover, it is only the beginning of the active career of the Christian Mystic, in which he becomes thoroughly saturated with the tremendous fact of the unity of all life, and imbued with a fellow feeling for all creatures to such an extent that henceforth he can not only enunciate but practice the tenets of the Sermon on the Mount.

Did the spiritual experiences of the Christian Mystic take him no further, it would still be the most wonderful adventure in the world, and the magnitude of the event is beyond words, the consequences only dimly imaginable. Most students of the higher philosophies believe in the brotherhood of man from the mental conviction that we have all emanated from the same source, as rays emanate from the sun. But there is an abyss of inconceivable depth and width between this cold intellectual conception and the baptismal saturation of the Christian Mystic, who feels it is his heart and in every fiber of his being with such an intensity that it is actually painful to him; it fills him with such a yearning, aching

love as that expressed in the words of the Christ: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings;" a brooding, yearning, and aching protective love which asks nothing for self save only the privilege to nurture, to shield, and to cherish.

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Were even a faint resemblance to such a universal fellow feeling abroad among humanity in this dark day, what a paradise earth would be. Instead of every man's hand being against his brother to slay with the sword, with rivalry and competition, or to destroy his morals and degrade him by prison stripes or industrial bondage under the whiplash of necessity, we should have neither warriors nor prisoners but a happy contented world, living in peace and harmony, learning the lessons which our Father in Heaven aims to teach us in this material condition. And all the misery in the world may be accounted for by the fact that if we believe in the Bible at all, we believe with our head and not with our heart.

When we came up through the waters of Baptism, the Atlantean Flood, into the Rainbow Age of alternating seasons, we became prey to the changing emotions which whirl us hither and yon upon the sea of life. The cold faith restrained by reason entertained by the majority of professing Christians may give them a need of patience and mental valance which bears them up under the trials of life, but when the majority get the living faith of the Christian Mystic which laughs at reason because it is heart-felt, then the Age of Alternation will be past, the rainbow will fall with the clouds and the air which now composes the atmosphere, and there will be a new heaven of pure ether, where we shall receive the Baptism of Spirit and "there shall be peace" (Jerusalem).

We are still in the Rainbow Age and subject to its low, so we may realize that as the Baptism of the Christian Mystic occurs at a time of spiritual exaltation, it must necessarily be followed by a reaction. The tremendous magnitude of the revelation overpowers him, he cannot realize it or contain it in his fleshly vehicle, so he flees the haunts of men and betakes himself to the solitude allegorically represented as a desert. So rapt is he in his sublime discovery that for the time being in his ecstasy he sees the Loom of Life upon which the bodies of all that live are woven, from the least to the greatest—the mouse and the man, the hunter and his prey, the warrior and his victim. But to him they are not separate and apart, for he also beholds the one divine thread of golden life-light "which runs through all and doth all unite." Nay, more, he hears in each the flaming keynote sounding its aspirations and voicing its hopes and fears, and he perceives this composite color-sound as the world anthem of God made flesh. This is at first entirely beyond his comprehension; the tremendous magnitude of the discovery hides it from him, and he cannot conceive what it is that he sees and feels, for there are no words to describe it, and no concept can cover it. But by degrees it dawns upon him that he is at the very fountain of life, beholding, nay, more, feeling its every pulse beat, and with this comprehension he reaches the climax of his ecstasy.

So rapt has the Christian Mystic been in his beautiful adventure that bodily wants have been completely forgotten till the ecstasy has passed, and it is therefore only natural that the feeling of hunger should be his first conscious want upon his return to the normal state of consciousness; and also naturally comes the voice of temptation: "Command that these stones be made bread."

Few passages of the sacred Scriptures are darker than the opening verses of the Gospel of St. John: "In the beginning was the word .

. . .and without it was not anything made that was made." A slight study of the science of sound soon makes us familiar with the fact that sound is vibration and that different sounds will mold sand or other light materials into figures of varying form. The Christian Mystic may be entirely ignorant of this fact from the scientific point of view, but he has learned at the Fountain of Life to sing the song of being, which cradles into existence whatever such a master musician desires. There is one basic key for the indigestible mineral stone, but a modification will turn it to gold wherewith to purchase the means of sustenance, and another keynote peculiar to the vegetable kingdom will turn it into food, a fact known to all advanced esotericists who practice incantations legitimately for spiritual purposes but never for material profit.

But the Christian Mystic who has just emerged from his Baptism in the Fountain of Life immediately shrinks in horror at the suggestion of using his newly discovered power for a selfish purpose. It was the very soul quality of unselfishness that led him to the waters of consecration in the Fountain of life, and sooner would he sacrifice all, even life itself, than use this new-found power to spare himself a pang of pain. Did he not see also the Woe of the World? And does he not feel it in his great hearth with such an intensity that the hunger at once disappears and is forgotten? He may, will, and does use this wonderful power freely to feed the thousands that gather to hear him, but never for selfish purposes else he would upset the equilibrium of the world.

The Christian Mystic does not reason this out, however. As often stated, he has not reason, but he has a much safer guide in the interior voice which always speaks to him in moments when a decision must be made. "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from God";-another mystery. There is no need to partake of earthly bread for one who has access to the

Fountain of Life. The more our thoughts are centered in God, the less we shall care for the so-called pleasures of the table, and by feeding our gross bodies sparingly on selected simple foods we shall obtain an illumination of spirit impossible to one who indulges in an excessive diet of coarse foods which nourish the lower nature. Some of the saints have used fasting and castigation as a means of soul growth, but that is a mistaken method for reasons given in an article on "Fasting for Soul Growth" published in the December 1915 number of "Rays from the Rose Cross." The Elder Brothers of humanity who understand the Law and live accordingly use food only at intervals measured by years. The word of God is to them a "living bread." So it becomes also to the Christian Mystic, and the Temptation instead of working his downfall has led him to greater heights.

The Transfiguration

We remember that by the mystic processes of the true Spiritual Baptism the aspirant becomes so thoroughly saturated with the Universal Spirit that as a matter of actual fact, feeling, and experience he becomes one with all that lives, moves, and has its being, one with the pulsating divine Life which surges in rhythmic cadence through the least and the greatest alike; and having caught the keynote of the celestial song he is then endued with a power of tremendous magnitude, which he may use either for good or ill. It should be understood and remembered that though gunpowder and dynamite facilitate farming when used for blowing up tree stumps which would otherwise require a great deal of manual labor to extract, they may also be used for destructive purposes as in the great European war. Spiritual powers also may be used for good or ill depending upon the motive and character of the one who wields them. Therefore, whoever has successfully undergone the rite of Baptism and thereby acquired spiritual

power is forthwith tempted that it may be definitely decided whether he will range himself upon the side of good or evil. At this point he becomes either a future "Parsifal," a "Christ," a "Herod," or a "Klingsor" who fights the Knights of the Holy Grail with all the powers and resources of the Black Brotherhood.

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There is a tendency in modern materialistic science to repudiate as fable, worthy of attention only among superstitious servant girls and foolish old women, the ideas commonly believed in as late as the Middle Ages, that such spiritual communities as the Knights of the Grail at one time existed, or that there are such beings as the "Black Brothers." Esoteric societies in the last half century have educated thousands to the fact that the Good Brothers are still in evidence and may be found by those who seek them in the proper way. Now unfortunately the tendency among this class of people is to accept anyone on his unsupported claims as a Master or an Adept. But even among this class there are few who take the existence of the Black Brothers seriously, or realize what an enormous amount of damage they are doing in the world, and how they are aided and abetted by the general tendency of humanity to cater to the lusts of the flesh. As the good forces, which are symbolized as the servants of the Holy Grail, live and grow by unselfish service which enhances the luster of the glowing Grail Cup, so the Powers of Evil, known as the Black Grail and represented in the Bible as the court of Herod, feed on pride and sensuality, voluptuousness and passion, embodied in the figure of Salome, who glories in the murder of John the Baptist and the innocents. It was shown in the legend of the Grail as embodied in Wagner's "Parsifal" that when the Knights were denied the inspiration from the Grail Cup, on which they fed and which spurred them onto deeds of greater love and service, their courage

flagged and they became inert. Similarly with the Brothers of the Black Grail. Unless they are provided with words of wickedness they will die from starvation. Therefore they are ever active in the world stirring up strife and inciting others to evil.

Were not this pernicious activity counteracted in a great measure by the Elder Brothers at their midnight services at which they make themselves magnets for all the evil thoughts in the Western World and then by the alchemy of sublime love transmute them to good, a cataclysm of still greater magnitude than the recent World War would have occurred long ago. As it is, the Genius of Evil has been held within bounds in some measure at least. Were humanity not so ready to range itself on the side of evil, success would have been greater. But it is hoped that the spiritual awakening started by the war will result in turning the scale and give the construction agencies in evolution the upper hand.

It is a wonderful power which is centered in the Christian Mystic at the time of his Baptism by the descent and concentration within him of the Universal Spirit; and when he has refused during the period of temptation to desecrate it for personal profit or power, he must of necessity give it vent in another direction, for he is impelled by an irresistible inner urge which will not allow him to settle down to an inert, inactive life of prayer and meditation. The power of God is upon him to preach the glad tidings to humanity, to help and heal. We know that a stove which is filled with burning fuel cannot help heating the surrounding atmosphere; neither can the Christian Mystic help radiating the divine compassion which fills his heart to overflowing, nor is he in doubt whom to love or whom to serve or where to find his opportunity. As the stove filled with burning fuel radiates heat to all who are within its sphere of radiation, so the Christian Mystic feels the love of God burning within his heart and is continually radiating it to all with whom he

comes in contact. As the heated stove draws to itself by its genial warmth those who are suffering with physical cold, so the warm love rays of the Christian Mystic are a magnet to all those whose hearts are chilled by the cruelty of the world, by man's inhumanity to man.

If the stove were empty but endowed with the faculty of speech, it might preach forever the gospel of warmth to those who are physically cold, but even the finest oratory would fail to satisfy its audience. When it has been filled with fuel and radiates warmth, there will be no need of preaching. Men will come to it and be satisfied. Similarly a sermon on brotherhood by one who has not laved in the "Fountain of Life" will sound hollow. The true Mystic need not preach. His every act, even his silent presence, is more powerful than all the most deeply thought-out discourses of learned doctors of philosophy.

There is a story of St. Francis of Assisi which particularly illustrates this fact, and which we trust may serve to drive it home, for its exceedingly important. It is said that one day St. Francis went to a young brother in the monastery with which he was then connected and said to him: "Brother, let us go down to the village and preach to them." The young brother was naturally overjoyed at the honor and opportunity of accompanying so holy a man as St. Francis, and together the two started toward the village, talking all the while about spiritual things and the life that leads to God. Engrossed in this conversation they passed through the village, walking along its various streets, now and then stopping to speak a kindly word to one or another of the villagers. After having made a circuit of the village St. Francis was heading toward the road which led to the monastery when of a sudden the young brother reminded him of his intention to preach in the village and asked him if he had forgotten it. To this St. Francis answered: "My son,

are you not aware that all the while we have been in this village we have been preaching to the people all around us? In the first place, our simple dress proclaims the fact that we are devoted to the service of God, and as soon as anyone sees us his thoughts naturally turn heavenward. Be sure that everyone of the villagers has been watching us, taking note of our demeanor to see in how far it conforms with our profession. They have listened to our words to find whether they were about spiritual or profane subjects. They have watched our gestures and have noted that the words of sympathy we dispensed came straight from our hearts and went deep into theirs. We have been preaching a far more powerful sermon than if we had gone into the market place, called them around us, and started to harangue them with an exhortation to holiness."

St. Francis was a Christian Mystic in the deepest sense of the word, and being taught from within by the spirit of God he knew well the mysteries of life, as did Jacob Boehme and other holy men who have been similarly taught. They are in a certain sense wiser than the wisest of the intellectual school, but it is not necessary for them to expound great mysteries in order to fulfill their mission and serve as guide posts to others who are also seeking God. The very simplicity of their words and acts carries with it the power of conviction. Naturally, of course, all do not rise to the same heights. All have not the same powers anymore than all the stoves are of the same size and have the same heating capacity. Those who follow the Christian Mystic path, from the least to the greatest, have experienced the powers conveyed by Baptism according to their capacity. They have been tempted to use those powers in an evil direction for personal gain, and having overcome the desire for the world and worldly things they have turned to the path of ministry and service as Christ did; their lives are marked

not so much by what they have said as by what they have done. The true Christian Mystic is easily distinguished. He never uses the six week days to prepare for a grand oratorical effort to thrill his hearers on Sunday, but spends every day alike in humble endeavor to do the Master's will regardless of outward applause. Thus unconsciously he works up toward that grand climax which in the history of the noblest of all who have trod this path is spoken of as the "Transfiguration."

The Transfiguration is an alchemical process by which the physical body formed by the chemistry of physiological processes is turned into a living stone such as is mentioned in the Bible. The medieval alchemists who were seeking the Philosopher's Stone were not concerned with transmutation of such dross as material god, but aimed at the greater goal as indicated above.

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Moisture gathered in the clouds falls to earth as rain when it has condensed sufficiently, and it is again evaporated into clouds by the heat of the sun. This is the primal cosmic formula. Spirit also condenses itself into matter and becomes mineral. But though it be crystallized into the hardness of flint, life still remains, and by the alchemy of nature working through another life stream the dense mineral constituents of the soil are transmuted to a more flexible structure in the plant, which may be used as food for animal and man. These substances become sentient flesh by the alchemy of assimilation. The flesh of man is even now undergoing a refining process which is eradicating the coarser, grosser substances. In time by evolution this process of spiritualization will render our flesh transparent and radiant with the Light that shines within, radiant as the face of Moses, the body of Buddha, and the Christ at the Transfiguration.

At present the effulgence of the indwelling Spirit is effectually darkened by our dense body, but we may draw hope even from the science of chemistry. There is nothing on earth so rare and precious as radium, the luminous extract of the dense black mineral called pitchblende; and there is nothing so rare as that precious extract of the human body, the radiant Christ. At present we are laboring to form the Christ within, but when the inner Christ has grown to full stature, He will shine through the transparent body as the Light of the World.

It is an anatomical fact of common knowledge that the spinal cord is divided into three sections, from which the motor, sensory, and sympathetic nerves are controlled. Astrologically these are ruled by the moon, Mars, and Mercury, which are divine Hierarchies that have played a great role in human evolution through the nervous systems indicated. Among the ancient alchemists these were designated by the three alchemical elements, salt, sulphur, and mercury. Between them and upon them played the spinal Spirit Fire of Neptune. It rose in a serpentine column through the spinal cord to the ventricles of the brain. In the great majority of mankind the Spirit Fire is still exceedingly weak. But whenever a spiritual awakening occurs in anyone such as that which takes place in a genuine conversion, or better still at the Baptism of the Christian Mystic, the downpouring of the Spirit, which is an actual fact, augments the spinal Spirit Fire to an almost unbelievable extent, and forthwith a process of regeneration begins whereby the gross substances of the threefold body of many are gradually thrown out, rendering the vehicles more permeable and quickly responsive to spiritual impulses. The further the process is carried, the more efficient servants they become in the vineyard of the Master.

The spiritual awakening which starts this process of regeneration in the Christian Mystic who purifies himself by prayer and service, comes also of course to those who are seeking God by way of knowledge and service, but it acts in a different way, which is noted by the spiritual investigator. In the Christian Mystic the regenerative spinal Spirit Fire is concentrated principally upon the lunar segment of the spinal cord, which governs the sympathetic nerves under the rulership of Jehovah. Therefore his spiritual growth is accomplished by faith as simple, childlike, and unquestioning as it was in the days of early Atlantis when men were mindless. He therefore draws down the great white Light of Deity reflected through Jehovah, the Holy Spirit, and attains to the whole wisdom of the world without the necessity of laboring for it intellectually. This gradually transmutes his body into the White Philosopher's Stone, the Diamond Soul.

In those, on the other hand, whose minds are strong and insistent on knowing the reason why and the wherefore of every dictum and dogma, the Spinal Fire of regeneration plays upon the segments of the red Mars and the colorless Mercury, endeavoring to infuse desire with reason, to purify the former of the primal passion that it may become chaste as the rose, and thus transmute the body into the Ruby Soul, the Red Philosopher's Stone, tried by fire, purified, a creative budding Individuality.

All who are upon the Path, whether the path of esotericism or of mysticism, are weaving the "golden wedding garment" by this work from within and from without. In some the gold is exceedingly pale, and in others it is deeply red. But eventually when the process of Transfiguration has been completed, or rather when it is nearing completion, the extremes will blend, and the transfigured bodies will become balanced in color, for the esotericist must learn the lesson of deep devotion, and the

Christian Mystic must learn how to acquire knowledge by his own efforts without drawing upon the universal source of all wisdom.

This view gives us a deeper insight into the Transfiguration reported in the Gospels. We should remember distinctly that it was the vehicles of Jesus which were transfigured temporarily by the indwelling Christ Spirit. But even while allowing for the enormous potency of the Christ Spirit in effecting the Transfiguration it is evident that Jesus must be a sublime character without a peer. The Transfiguration as seen in the Memory of Nature reveals his body as a dazzling white, thus showing his dependence upon the Father, the Universal Spirit. There is a great diversity in present attainments, but in the kingdom of Christ the differences will gradually disappear, and a uniform color indicating both knowledge and devotion will be acquired by all. This color will correspond to the pink color seen by esotericists as the Spiritual Sun, the vehicle of the Father. When this has been accomplished, the Transfiguration of humanity will be complete. We shall then be one with our Father, and His kingdom will have come.

The Last Supper And The Footwashing

We are told in the Gospels which relate the story of the Christian Mystic Initiation, how on the night when Christ had partaken of the Last Supper with His disciples, His ministry being finished at that time, He rose from the table and girded Himself with a towel, then poured water into a basin and commenced to wash His disciples' feet, an act of the most humble service, but prompted by an important esoteric consideration.

Comparatively few realize that when we rise in the scale of evolution, we do so by trampling upon the bodies of our weaker brothers; consciously or unconsciously we crush them and use

them as stepping-stones to attain our own ends. This assertion holds good concerning all the kingdoms in nature. When a life wave has been brought down to the nadir of involution and encrusted in mineral form, that is immediately seized upon by another slightly higher life wave, which takes the disintegrating mineral crystal, adapts it to its own ends as crystalloid, and assimilates it as part of a plant form. If there were no minerals which could thus be seized upon, disintegrated, and transformed, plant life would be an impossibility. Then again, the plant forms are taken by numerous classes of animals, masticated to a pulp, devoured, and made to serve as food for this higher kingdom. If there were no plants, animals would be an impossibility; and the same principle holds good in spiritual evolution for if there were no pupils standing on the lower rung of the ladder of knowledge and requiring instruction, there would be no need for a teacher. But there is one all-important difference. The teacher grows by giving to his pupils and serving them. From their shoulders he steps to a higher rung on the ladder of knowledge. He lifts himself by lifting them, but nevertheless he owes them a debt of gratitude, which is symbolically acknowledged and liquidated by the foot washing—an act of humble service to those who have served him.

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When we realize that nature, which is the expression of God, is continually exerting itself to create and bring forth, we may also understand that whoever kills anything, be it ever so little and seemingly insignificant, is to that extent thwarting God's purpose. This applies particularly to the aspirant to the higher life, and therefore the Christ exhorted His disciples to be wise as serpents but harmless as doves notwithstanding. But no matter how earnest our desire to follow the precept of harmlessness, our constitutional tendencies and necessities force us to kill at every

moment of our lives, and it is not only in the great things that we are constantly committing murder. It was comparatively easy for the seeking soul symbolized by Parsifal to break the bow wherewith he had shot the swan of the Grail knights when it had been explained to him what a wrong he had committed. From that time Parsifal was committed to the life of harmlessness so far as the great things were concerned. All earnest aspirants follow him readily in that act once it has dawned upon them how subversive of soul growth is the practice of partaking of food which requires the death of an animal.

But even the noblest and most gentle among mankind is poisoning those about him with every breath and being poisoned by them in turn, for all exhale the death-dealing carbon dioxide, and we are therefore a menace to one another. Nor is this a far-fetched idea; it is a very real danger which will become much more manifest in course of time when mankind becomes more sensitive. In a disabled submarine or under similar conditions where a number of people are together the carbon dioxide exhaled by them quickly makes the atmosphere unable to sustain life. There is a story from the Indian Mutiny of how a number of English prisoners were huddled in a room in which there was only one small opening for air. In a very short time the oxygen was exhausted, and the poor prisoners began to fight one another like beasts in order to obtain a place near that air inlet, and they fought until nearly all had died from the struggle and asphyxiation.

The same principle is illustrated in the ancient Atlantean Mystery Temple, the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, where we find a nauseating stench and a suffocating smoke ascending from the Altar of Burnt Offerings, where the poison-laden bodies of the unwilling victims sacrificed for sin were consumed, and where the light shone but dimly through the enveloping smoke. This we may

contrast with the light which emanated clear and bright from the Seven-branched Candlestick fed by the olive oil extracted from the chaste plant, and where the incense symbolized by the willing service of devoted priests rose to heaven as a sweet savor. This we are told in many places, was pleasing to Deity, while the blood of the unwilling victims, the bulls and the goats, was a source of grief and displeasure to God, who delights most in the sacrifice of prayer, which helps the devotee and harms no one.

It has been stated concerning some of the saints that they emitted a sweet odor, and as we have often had occasion to say, this is no mere fanciful story—it is an esoteric fact. The great majority of mankind inhale during every moment of life the vitalizing oxygen contained in the surrounding atmosphere. At every expiration we exhale a charge of carbon dioxide which is a deadly poison and which would certainly vitiate the air in time if the pure and chaste plant did not inhale this poison, use a part of it to build bodies that last sometimes for many centuries or even millennia as instanced in the redwoods of California, and give us back the rest in the form of pure oxygen which we need for our life. These carboniferous plant bodies by certain further processes of nature have in the past become mineralized and turned to stone instead of disintegrating. We find them today as coal, the perishable Philosopher's Stone made by natural means in nature's laboratory. But the Philosopher's Stone may also be made artificially by man from his own body. It should be understood once and for all that the Philosopher's Stone is not made in an exterior chemical laboratory, but that the body is the workshop of the Spirit which contains all the elements necessary to produce this Elixir Vitae, and that the Philosopher's Stone is not exterior to the body, but the Alchemist himself becomes the Philosopher's Stone. The salt, sulphur, and mercury emblematically contained in the three

segments of the spinal cord, which control the sympathetic, motor, and sensory nerves and are played upon by the Neptunian spinal Spirit Fire, constitute the essential elements in the alchemical process.

It needs no argument to show that indulgence in sensuality, brutality, and bestiality makes the body coarse. Contrariwise, devotion to Deity, an attitude of perpetual prayer, a feeling of love and compassion for all that lives and moves, loving thoughts sent out to all beings and those inevitably received in return, all invariably have the effect of refining and spiritualizing the nature. We speak of a person of that sort as breathing or radiating love, an expression which much more nearly describes the actual fact than most people imagine, for as a matter of actual observation the percentage of poison contained in the breath of an individual is in exact proportion to the evil in his nature and inner life and the thoughts he thinks. The Hindu Yogi makes a practice of sealing up the candidate for a certain grade of Initiation in a cave which is not much larger than his body. There he must live for a number of weeks breathing the same air over and over again to demonstrate practically that he has ceased exhaling the death-dealing carbon dioxide and is beginning to build his body therefrom.

The Philosopher's Stone then is not a body of the same nature as the plant, though it is pure and chaste, but it is a Celestial Body such as that whereof St. Paul speaks in the 5th chapter of Second Corinthians, a body which becomes immortal as a diamond or a ruby stone. It is not hard and inflexible as the mineral; it is a soft diamond or ruby, and by every act of the nature described the Christian Mystic is building this body, though he is probably unconscious thereof for a long time. When he has attained to this degree of holiness it is not necessary for him to perform the foot washing so far as concerns the physical pupil who helps him to

rise, but he will always have the feeling of gratitude, symbolized by that act, toward those whom he is fortunate enough to attract to himself as disciples and to whom he may give the living bread which nourishes them to immortality.

Students will realize that this is part of the process which eventually culminates in the Transfiguration, but it should also be realized that in the Christian Mystic Initiation there are no set and definite degrees. The candidate looks to the Christ as the author and finisher of his faith, seeking to imitate Him and follow in His steps through every moment of existence. Thus the various stages which we are considering are reached by processes of soul growth which simultaneously bring him to higher aspects of all these steps that we are now analyzing. In this respect the Christian Mystic Initiation differs radically from the processes in vogue among the Rosicrucians, in which an understanding upon the part of the candidate of that which is to take place is considered indispensable. But there comes a time at which the Christian Mystic must and does realize the path before him, and that is what constitutes Gethsemane, which we will consider in the next section.

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Gethsemane

The Garden Of Grief

And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives. "And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. But after that I am risen I will go before you into Galilee.

"But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will

not I. "And Jesus saith unto him, Verily, I say unto thee that this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.

"But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.

"And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and He saith to His disciples, Sit ye here while I shall pray. And He taketh with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; and saith unto them, My soul is exceedingly sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here and watch. And He went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass from him. And He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: Nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt.

And he cometh and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst not thou watch one hour? Watch ye and pray lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak."

—Mark, 14:26-38.

In the foregoing Gospel narrative we have one of the saddest and most difficult of the experiences of the Christian Mystic outlined in spiritual form. During all his previous experience he has wandered blindly along, that is to say, blind to the fact that he is on the Path which if consistently followed leads to a definite goal, but being also keenly alert to the slightest sigh of every suffering soul. He has concentrated all his efforts upon alleviating their pain physically, morally, or mentally; he has served them in any and every capacity; he has taught them the gospel of love, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"; and he has been a living example to all in its practice. Therefore he has drawn to himself a little band of friends whom he loves with the tenderest of affection. Them has

he also taught and served unstintingly, even to the foot washing. But during this period of service he has become so saturated with the sorrows of the world that he is indeed a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief as no one else can be.

This is a very definite experience of the Christian Mystic, and it is the most important factor in furthering his spiritual progress. So long as we are bored when people come to us and tell us their troubles, so long as we run away from them and seek to escape hearing their tales of woe, we are far from the Path. Even when we listen to them and have schooled ourselves not to show that we are bored, when we say with our lips only a few sympathetic words that fall flat on the sufferer's ear, we gain nothing in spiritual growth. It is absolutely essential to the Christian Mystic that he become so attuned to the world's woe that he feels every pang as his own hurt and stores it up within his heart.

When Parsifal stood in the temple of the Holy Grail and saw the suffering of Amfortas the stricken Grail King, he was mute with sympathy and compassion for a long time after the procession had passed out of the hall, and consequently could not answer the questions of Gurnemanz, and it was that deep fellow feeling which prompted him to seek for the spear that should heal Amfortas. It was the pain of Amfortas felt in the heart of Parsifal by sympathy which held him firmly balanced upon the path of virtue when temptation was strongest. It was that deep pain of compassion which urged him through many years to seek the suffering Grail King, and finally when he had found Amfortas, this deep, heartfelt fellow feeling enabled him to pour forth the healing balm.

As it is shown in the soul myth of Parsifal, so it is in the actual life and experience of the Christian Mystic: he must drink deeply of the cup of sorrow, he must drain it to the very dregs so that by

the cumulative pain which threatens to burst his heart he may pour himself out unreservedly and unstintedly for the healing and helping of the world. Then Gethsemane, the garden of grief, is a familiar place to him, watered with tears for the sorrows and sufferings of humanity.

Through all his years of self-sacrifice his little band of friends had been the consolation of Jesus. He had already learned to renounce the ties of blood. "Who is my mother and my brother? They that do the will of my Father." Though no true Christian neglects his social obligations or withholds love from his family, the spiritual ties are nevertheless the strongest, and through them comes the crowning grief; through the desertion of his spiritual friends he learns to drink to the dregs the cup of sorrow. He does not blame them for their desertion but excuses them with the words, "The Spirit is indeed willing, but the flesh is weak," for he knows by his own experience how true this is. But he finds that in the supreme sorrow they cannot comfort him, and therefore he turns to the only source of comfort, The Father in Heaven. He has arrived at the point where human endurance seems to have reached its limit, and he prays to be spared a greater ordeal, but with a blind trust in the Father he bows his will and offers all unreservedly.

That is the moment of realization. Having drunk the cup of sorrow to the dregs, being deserted by all, he experiences that temporary awful fear of being utterly alone which is one of the most terrible if not the most terrible experience that can come into the life of a human being. All the world seems dark about. He knows that in spite of all the good he has done or tried to do the powers of darkness are seeking to slay him. He knows that the mob that a few days before had cried "Hosannah" will on the morrow be ready to shout "Crucify! Crucify!" His relatives and now his last few friends have fled, and they were also even ready to deny.

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But when we are on the pinnacle of grief we are nearest to the throne of grace. The agony and grief, the sorrow and the suffering borne within the Christian Mystic's breast are more priceless and precious than the wealth of the Indies, for when he has lost all human companionship and when he has given himself over unreservedly to the Father a transmutation takes place: the grief is turned to compassion, the only power in the world that can fortify a man about to mount the hill of Golgotha and give his life for humanity, not a sacrifice of death but a living sacrifice, lifting himself by lifting others.

The Stigmata And The Crucifixion

As we said in the beginning of this series of articles, the Christian Mystic Initiation differs radically from the esoteric Initiation undertaken by those who approach the Path from the intellectual side. But all paths converge at Gethsemane, where the candidate for Initiation is saturated with sorrow which flowers into compassion, a yearning mother love which has only one all-absorbing desire; to pour itself out for the alleviation of the sorrow of the world to save and to succor all that are weak and heavy-laden, to comfort them and give them rest. At that point the eyes of the Christian Mystic are opened to a full realization of the world's woe and his mission as a Savior; and the esotericist also finds here the heart of love which alone can give zest and zeal in the quest. By the union of the mind and the heart both are ready for the next step, which involved the development of the stigmata, a necessary preparation for the mystic death and resurrection.

The Gospel narrative tells the story of the stigmata in the following words, the opening scene being in the Garden of Gethsemane:

"Judas then having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees came thither with lanterns, torches, and weapons. Jesus therefore knowing all things that should come upon Him went forth and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered Him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said unto them, I am He.....Then the band and the captain and the officers of the Jews took Jesus and bound Him and led Him away to Annas first.....The high priest then asked of His disciples and of His doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world.....Why asketh though me? Ask them which heard me what I have said unto them; behold they know what I have said. Now Annas had sent Him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.....Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment.....

"Pilate then went out unto them and said, What accusation bring you against this man? They answered and said unto him, If He were not a malefactor we would not have delivered Him unto thee.....Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto Him, Art thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself or did others tell it to thee of me?.....My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate said unto Him, What is truth?.....Then he went out again unto the Jews and saith unto them, I find in Him no fault at all. But we have a custom that I should release unto you one at the Passover; will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the

Jews? Then cried they all again saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber. Pilate therefore took Jesus and scourged Him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe and said, Hail, King of the Jews; and they smote him with their hands.

"Pilate therefore went forth again and saith unto them, behold I bring Him forth unto you that ye may know that I find no fault in Him. Then came Jesus forth wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! When the chief priests therefore, and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, Crucify Him, Crucify Him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye Him and crucify Him; for I find no fault in Him. The Jews answered him, We have a law and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.....Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend; whoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.....They cried out, Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. Then delivered he Him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus and led Him away. And He, bearing His cross, went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is, in the Hebrew, Golgotha. There they crucified Him and two others with Him, one on either side and Jesus in the midst. And Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

We have here the account of how the stigmata or punctures were produced in the Hero of the Gospels, though the location is not quite correctly described, and the process is represented in a narrative form differing widely from the manner in which these things really happen. But we stand here before one of the

Mysteries which must remain sealed for the profane, though the underlying mystical facts are as plain as daylight to those who know. The physical body is not by any means the real man. Tangible, solid, and pulsating with life as we find it, it is really the most dead part of the human being, crystallized into a matrix of finer vehicles which are invisible to our ordinary physical sight. If we place a basin of water in a freezing temperature, the water soon congeals into ice, and when we examine this ice, we find that it is made up of innumerable little crystals having various geometrical forms and lines of demarcation. There are etheric lines of forces which were present in the water before it congealed. As the water was hardened and molded along these lines, so our physical bodies have congealed and solidified along the etheric lines of force of our invisible vital body, which is thus in the ordinary course of life inextricably bound to the physical body, waking or sleeping, until death brings dissolution of the tie. But as Initiation involves the liberation of the real man from the body of sin and death that he may soar into the subtler spheres at will and return to the body at his pleasure, it is obvious that before that can be accomplished, before the object of Initiation can be attained, the interlocking grip of the physical body and the etheric vehicle which is so strong and rigid in ordinary humanity, must be dissolved. As they are most closely bound together in the palms of the hands, the arches of the feet, and the head, the esoteric schools concentrate their efforts upon severing the connection at these points, and produce the stigmata invisibly.

The Christian Mystic lacks knowledge of how to perform the act without producing an exterior manifestation. The stigmata develop in him spontaneously by constant contemplation of Christ and unceasing efforts to imitate Him in all things. These exterior stigmata comprise not only the wounds in the hands and feet and

that in the side but also those impressed by the crown of thorns and by the scourging. The most remarkable example of stigmatization is that said to have occurred in 1224 to Francis of Assisi on the mountain of Alverno. Being absorbed in contemplation of the Passion he saw a seraph approaching, blazing with fire and having between its wings the figure of the Crucified. St. Francis became aware that in hands, feet, and side he had received externally the marks of crucifixion. These marks continued during the two years until his death, and are claimed to have been seen by many eyewitnesses, including Pope Alexander the Fourth.

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The Dominicans disputed the fact, but at length made the same claim for Catherine of Sienna, whose stigmata were explained as having at her own request been made invisible to others. The Franciscans appealed to Sixtus the Fourth who forbade representation of St. Catherine to made with the stigmata. Still the fact of the stigmata is recorded in the Breviary Office, and Benedict the 13th granted the Dominicans a Feast in commemoration of it. Others, especially women who have the positive vital body, are claimed to have received some or all of the stigmata. The last to be canonized by the Catholic Church for this reason was Veronica Giuliani (1831). More recent cases are those of Anna Catherine Emmerich, who became a nun at Agnetenberg; L'Estatica Maria Von Moerl of Caldero; Louise Lateau, whose stigmata were said to bleed every Friday; and Mrs. Girling of the Newport Shaker community.

But whether the stigmata are visible or invisible the effect is the same. The spiritual currents generated in the vital body of such a person are so powerful that the body is scourged by them as it

were, particularly in the region of the head, where they produce a feeling akin to that of the crown of thorns. Thus there finally dawns upon the person a full realization that the physical body is a cross which he is bearing, a prison and not the real man. This brings him to the next step in his Initiation, viz., the crucifixion, which is experienced by the development of the other centers in his hands and feet where the vital body is thus being severed from the dense vehicle.

We are told in the Gospel story that Pilate placed a sign reading, 'Jesus Nazarenus Rex Judaeorum' on Jesus' cross, and this is translated in the authorized version to mean, "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews." But the initials INRI placed upon the cross represent the names of the four elements in Hebrew: Iam, water; Nour, fire; ruach, spirit or vital air; and Iabeshah, earth. This is the esoteric key to the mystery of crucifixion, for it symbolizes in the first place the salt, sulphur, mercury, and azoth which were used by the ancient alchemists to make the Philosopher's Stone, the universal solvent, the Elixir Vitae. The two "I's" (Iam and Iabeshah) represent the saline lunar water: a, in a fluidic state holding salt in solution, and b, the coagulated extract of this water, the "salt of the earth"; in other words, the finer fluidic vehicles of man and his dense body. N (Nour) in Hebrew stands for fire and the combustible elements, chief among which are sulphur and phosphorus so necessary to oxidation, without which warm blood would be an impossibility. The Ego under this condition could not function in the body nor could thought find a material expression. R (ruach) is the Hebrew equivalent for the spirit, Azoth, functioning in the mercurial mind. Thus the four letters I.N.R.I., placed over the cross of Christ according to the Gospel story represent composite man, the Thinker, at the point in his

spiritual development where he is getting ready for liberation from the cross of his dense vehicle.

Proceeding further along the same line of elucidation we may note that I.N.R.I., is the symbol of the crucified candidate for the following additional reasons:

Iam is the Hebrew word signifying water, the fluidic lunar, moon element which forms the principal part of the human body (about 87 per cent). This word is also the symbol of the finer fluidic vehicles of desire and emotion.

Nour, the Hebrew word signifying fire, is a symbolic representation of the heat-producing red blood laden with martial Mars iron, fire, and energy, which the esotericist sees coursing as a gas through the veins and arteries of the human body infusing it with energy and ambition without which there could be neither material nor spiritual progress. It also represents the sulphur and phosphorus necessary for the material manifestation of thought as already mentioned.

Ruach, the Hebrew word for spirit or vital air, is an excellent symbol of the Ego clothed in the mercurial Mercury mind, which makes man and enables him to control and direct his bodily vehicles and activities in a rational manner.

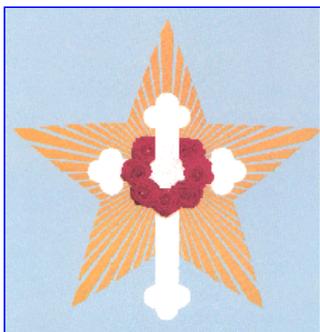
Iabeshah is the Hebrew word for earth, representing the solid fleshy part which makes up the cruciform earthy body crystallized within the finer vehicles at birth and severed from them in the ordinary course of things at death, or in the extraordinary event that we learn to die the mystic death and ascend to the glories of the higher spheres for a time.

This stage of the Christian Mystic's spiritual development therefore involves a reversal of the creative force from its ordinary downward course where it is wasted in generation to satisfy the passions, to an upward course through the tripartite spinal cord, whose three segments are ruled by the moon, Mars, and Mercury respectively, and where the rays of Neptune then lights the regenerative spinal Spirit Fire. This mounting upward sets the pituitary body and the pineal gland into vibration, opening up the spiritual sight; and striking the frontal sinus it starts the crown of thorns throbbing with pain as the bond with the physical body is burned by the sacred Spirit Fire, which wakes this center from its age-long sleep to a throbbing, pulsating life sweeping onward to the other centers in the five-pointed stigmatic star. They are also vitalized, and the whole vehicle becomes aglow with a golden glory. Then with a final wrench the great vortex of the desire body located in the liver is liberated, and the martial energy contained in that vehicle propels upward the Sidereal Vehicle (so-called because the stigmata in the head, hands, and feet are located in the same positions relative to one another as the points in a five-pointed star), which ascends through the skull (Golgotha), while the crucified Christian utters his triumphant cry, "Consummatum est" (it has been accomplished), and soars into the subtler spheres to seek Jesus whose life he has imitated with such success and from whom he is thenceforth inseparable. Jesus is his Teacher and his guide to the kingdom of Christ, where all shall be united in one body to learn and to practice the religion of The Father, to whom the kingdom will eventually revert that He may be All in All.

- Reference: [Ancient and Modern Initiation](#), by Max Heindel [1865-1919]
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