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RAYs from the Rose Cross



CHRIST THE PROMISE
ASTROLOGY'S RAY OF HOPE
LAY PARTICIPATION IN CHURCHES
CHRISTMAS SYMBOLS

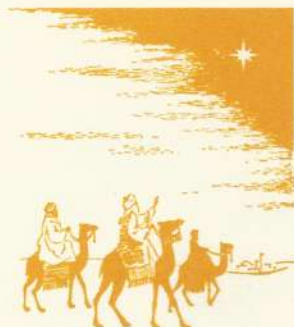


*The
Rosicrucian Fellowship*



The Mystical Interpretation of Christmas

**By
Max Heindel**



CHAPTER HEADINGS

Spiritual Light—The New Element and the New Substance

The Mission of Christ and the Festival of the Fairies

The Cosmic Significance of Christmas

The Annual Sacrifice of Christ

The Mystic Midnight Sun

The Newborn Christ

51 Pages

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**"LET US GO
UNTO BETHLEHEM"**

I am the Way. A thousand paths
Lie open to your choice —
The path of power, the roads of fame,
Of knowledge and of wealth;
The ways that lead to earthly loves
And all the joys that men call sweet —
These paths spread out before your feet.
Explore them if you must, and then return
And in your heart discover a small key
That will unlock a narrow door, to show
A climbing way that goes straight upward.
Take it, follow Me, over the pathway of
humility.

I am the Truth. A hundred creeds
Proclaim "We have the truth, given
by God,
And written down in these our books
By holy men of old." And yet —
The seeker after truth should know
The written text may lead astray
And books but partial truth convey.
Truth is not held in words of printer's ink;
The Word of Truth in your own being
dwells,
And every human Spirit is a Word of God,
Written in letters of the living flame
When Divine Fiat sounded forth each name.

I am the Life. And Life is Love
And Light. And how should you know
Light
Had you not known the darkness?
Out of the darkness of the womb
Comes forth new life;
Out of Earth's night of suffering
Is born the Holy Child of Christmas Morn.
—G.R.



FESTIVAL OF LIGHT

The Light of Lights is streaming
From star-decked, violet skies,
Downward its rays are bending,
Earthward, where darkness lies.

Darkness of pain and sorrow,
Of ignorance and strife,
Of fear and death, awaiting
The awak'ning Light of Life.

Into the darkest caverns,
From planes of light above,
To beasts and men still-bestial
Enters the Light of Love.

The beast becomes more gentle,
The spark of godly light
In soul of man flames heavenward,
And radiant glows the night.

—Gladys Rivington



THE MYSTIC MIDNIGHT SUN AT CHRISTMAS

The illuminated mystic sees the great Cosmic Drama of the Christ Spirit's descent into matter enacted before his spiritual vision year after year. Nor is this vision vague and indefinite, depending upon certain feelings, but it is a clear and accurate presentation to the smallest details.

It is not necessary for Spirit in the invisible world to take a certain definite form as we do in the physical world; any form that has a certain sharp outline implies limitation. A Spirit may allow its form to blend with the forms of other Spirits; it may perceive even the physical bodies of others and still retain its own individuality, because it vibrates to a certain tone or keynote which is different from that of all others. Thus in September the illuminated seer perceives the Cosmic Christ Spirit as a mighty Lightwave of supernal splendor, descending upon the Earth it permeates.

By the twenty-first of December this celestial light has reached the center of our terrestrial sphere. Then the days are shortest, the nights are the longest and darkest, "but the light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." The vibratory motive impulses given to the Earth during the early months of the year have nearly spent themselves; by Christmas the Earth is crystallized, cold, wrapped in its blanket of snow, and were it not for this new life of the Christ Spirit poured into the Earth to give it fresh energy for another year, all life upon our planet must perish.

There has been much speculation upon the nature of the star that shone in Bethlehem at midnight, and the orthodox opinion which holds that the immaculate conception and birth of Jesus are unique in the history of the human race, supposes that the Christ Star was seen in the firmament on that occasion only. The wise men, however, who, by the alchemy of soul growth, are striving to build within themselves that stone of the corner which was rejected by the builders but is prized by all philosophers, know that the Christ Light is not to be found outside; they know that the Hermetic axiom expressing the Law of Analogy "as above, so below," applies also in this case, and that the Christ formed within them must look for the Christ Star within the Earth, for, quoting Angelus Silesius, "It would be as impossible for a Christ outside the Earth to save the world, as it is for a Christ on Golgotha to save us."

—Max Heindel



CHRIST, THE PROMISE

JAMES NOEL

In recent years, much has been said about the commercialization of Christmas. Critics point out that the stores put up their Christmas decorations earlier each year, and that no sooner do we finish with Halloween than we start to hear Christmas music.

Many who agree say that we have lost touch with the true spirit of Christmas. This may be true for those who see only the material side of things. Those who have spiritual perception, however, are not so easily distracted by the commercialization and see that behind all the noise there lies, as always, the true spirit of Christmas.

What is that true Christmas spirit? Many of us remember when, as children, we helped to decorate the Christmas tree and then spent sleepless nights waiting for Santa Claus to come from the North Pole. Many of us also are blessed with memories of the first Christmas we spent with new families and friends, as well as Christmases when we were reunited with our families after having been separated. That feeling of love and fellowship is the Spirit of Christmas, and it transcends all commercialization. We see, then, that the true spirit of Christmas is not dead; it is very much alive.

The spiritual reasons for celebrating Christmas, of course, are the birth of Jesus and the annual rebirth of the Christ Spirit.

The birth of Jesus two thousand years ago came in fulfillment of an ancient prophecy. The annual birth of the Christ Spirit is the continual fulfillment of that same promise — a promise to save humanity.

At Christmas time, when our thoughts are directed to the birth of Jesus, we must bear in mind that this birth was not a one-time event. Nor was the birth of Jesus a thing that "just happened" without preparation. Preparations for the birth of Jesus started thousands of years before that blessed event took place. Cosmically, that event repeats itself every year and will continue to do so until our salvation is complete.

Although few of humanity were sufficiently awake spiritually at the time of Jesus' birth to understand the significance of what was taking place, many were familiar with the Old Testament prophecies of Christ's coming.

We read in *Isaiah*:

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (7:14)

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." (9:6)

"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame leap as a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing. . . ." (35:5-6)

"Yet on himself he bore our suffering, our torments he endured . . . he was pierced for our transgressions, tortured for our iniquities: the chastisement he bore is health for us and by his scourging we are healed. (53:4-5)

"Without protection, without justice, he was taken away; and who gave thought to his fate, how he was cut off from the world of living men, stricken to the death for my people's transgression? He was assigned a grave with the wicked, a burial place among the refuse of mankind, though he had done no violence and spoke no word of treachery." (53:8-9)

"After all his pains he shall be bathed in Light, after his disgrace he shall be fully vindicated; so shall he vindicate many, himself bearing the penalty of their guilt." (53:12)

"He exposed himself to face death and was reckoned among the transgressors, he bore the sins of many and interceded for their transgressions." (53:12)

These words of prophesy were written seven hundred years before the birth of Jesus. During the intervening centuries, they became familiar to many thousands of people. Each generation hoped to witness the fulfillment of the prophesy. Yet, unknown to the majority, during those years preparations were being made for the holy birth. The two Virgin Spirits Who would one day re-embody as Mary and Joseph were treading the Path of Holiness. After years of preparation, the glorious event finally took place. The preparation is recreated during Advent.

ADVENT

The four weeks just prior to Christmas are known as Advent. The keynote of the Advent season is preparation. Both exoterically and esoterically, three steps must be taken in preparation for the Path. These three steps are: the Annunciation, the Immaculate Conception, and the Holy Birth.

Concerning the Annunciation we read, in *Luke*: "And the Angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of His Father, David, and he will reign over the House of Jacob forever; and of His Kingdom there will be no end.'"

The step of Annunciation concerns the Degree of Purity symbolized by the Virgin Mary. We, as aspiring spirits on the Path, must cultivate purity: purity in thought, purity in word, and purity in deed. If we are to be efficient channels

for the Christ Force, we must cleanse ourselves, "for an unclean vessel cannot contain" the pure and wholesome healing force.

The second step is the Immaculate Conception. In meditating on the Immaculate Conception, we should keep in mind the Virgin Mary and also Joseph who, as a carpenter, symbolized forces used constructively and in harmony with the Laws of Nature. To be able to use the forces in such a way, we must have our desire bodies under control. Only then can we achieve the Degree of the Immaculate Conception. Thus the Virgin Mary (purity) and Joseph (the Master Builder) are symbols of the dual forces within each of us. These forces must be united in purity and purpose.

The third step deals with the Holy Birth. In *Luke* we read: "...and the time came for her to be delivered, and she gave birth to her first born son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them at the inn."

The birth of Jesus best can be comprehended if we understand its significance both for the world and for the individual.

If we view the Holy Birth from a world conception, we see the birth of the World Savior come to save fallen man. In viewing the Holy Birth esoterically, there are many ways to apply the Teachings to the individual. We can interpret the manger as the heart side of man and the inn as the head side. In this interpretation, we find that Christ must first be born in the heart of man, in total humility, because there is no room for him at the inn, the head.

We also can view the Holy Birth in the cosmic drama unfolding in the skies around us. At Christmas time, the Sun is born again in the Northern Hemisphere. "A wave of solar Christ Light and Life is focused upon the Earth. Gradually this Light penetrates deeper into the Earth,

until the turning point is reached on the longest and the darkest night of the year, which we call Christmas. This is the mystic birth of a cosmic Life Impulse which impregnates and fertilizes the Earth. It is the basis of all terrestrial life. Without it no seed would germinate, no flower would appear upon the face of the Earth, neither man nor beast could exist, and life would soon become extinct. Therefore, there is a very, very valid reason for the joy that is felt at Christmas time. As the divine Author of our being, our Father in heaven, has given the greatest gift to man, the Son, so men also are impelled to give gifts to one another. There reigns upon Earth joy, good will, and peace, no matter whether man understands the mystic and annually recurrent reasons therefor. . . .

"To understand this mystery it is necessary to view the matter from the Christ viewpoint, and it is necessary to realize fully and thoroughly that this annual life wave which is projected into our planet is not simply a force devoid of consciousness. It carries with itself the full consciousness of the Cosmic Christ. It is absolutely a true fact that without Him was not anything made that was made. . . ."
Questions and Answers II, page 276

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

After taking the first three steps of the Christmas mysteries, we find ourselves at the end of the Advent season and at the beginning of the twelve days of Christmas. The twelve days of Christmas run from December 25 through January 6. Each of these days represents a task that the aspirant must complete. The key to the task may be found in the zodiacal sign corresponding to the day in question. The first day of Christmas is Aries, the second is Taurus, etc., with the final day being Pisces. The following are Biblical correlations to the twelve days of Christmas:

1. *Aries*: "Behold, I make all things new."
2. *Taurus*: "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God."
3. *Gemini*: "Be still, and know that I am God."
4. *Cancer*: "If we walk in the Light as he is in the Light, we have fellowship one with another."
5. *Leo*: "Love is the fulfilling of the law."
6. *Virgo*: "But he that is greatest among you, let him be the servant of all."
7. *Libra*: "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."
8. *Scorpio*: "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."
9. *Sagittarius*: "Ye are the light of the world."
10. *Capricorn*: "Let the Christ be formed in you."
11. *Aquarius*: "Ye are my friends."
12. *Pisces*: "So God created man in his own image."

Starting on Christmas Day and continuing for the next twelve days, we should meditate on the inner meaning of each sign of the zodiac. Each sign represents a lesson that each of us must learn. Each sign symbolizes a trial we must face, a task we must accomplish, a fault we must overcome, a virtue we must develop.

EPIPHANY

The Christmas season continues through January. January 6, the last of the twelve days of Christmas, also is the first day of Epiphany. "It is interesting to note, from a historical point of view, that Epiphany was celebrated as part of the Christmas season and not observed as a separate holiday until the year 813 AD." *Holy Days and Holidays*, Edward M. Deems, ed page 48.

From the esoteric point of view, Epiphany is a time to extract the spiritual essence of the lessons learned from the twelve days of Christmas. It is a time for

amalgamating the spiritual gifts we have received during Christmas.

January 6 is known as "Three Kings Day." The story of the three wise men contains much esoteric information. If we study the gifts each of these wise men laid before the Christ, we may gain a greater insight into the Christmas mysteries. Gold represents the Spirit, frankincense the body, and myrrh the soul. The greatest gift we can give the Christ Child is to offer our Spirit, body, and soul in His service.

Just as Advent holds the key to the first three steps to be taken towards Christian initiation and just as the twelve days hold the key to the twelve trials each seeker must pass, so also does Epiphany, with the gifts of the wise men, hold the key to the seeker's future development.

We have spoken of Christ, the Promise. In the Old Testament, the Prophets foretold good things to come. Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany are steps along the Path, which were given in fulfillment of a promise made long ago. The fulfillment of that promise is Christ — the Wayshower, the Light.

In *Revelation*, the future, in which the Promise is completely fulfilled, is revealed. If we compare the information in *Revelation* with that in *Genesis*, we see some interesting contrasts:

Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the Earth;" *Revelation*: the promise of a New Heaven and a New Earth.

Genesis: the waters were gathered together and called the Sea; *Revelation*: the Sea shall be no more.

Genesis: the darkness was called night; *Revelation*: there shall be no night.

Genesis: God made the two Great Lights, the Sun and the Moon; *Revelation*: we will have no need of the Sun or the Moon.

Genesis: "in the day you eat thereof you shall surely die;" *Revelation*: "death shall be no more."

Genesis: "I will greatly multiply

your pain." *Revelation*: "Neither shall there be pain any more."

Genesis: "Cursed is the ground for your sake." *Revelation*: "There shall be no more curse."

Genesis: Satan appears as deceiver of mankind; *Revelation*: Satan disappears forever.

Genesis: we were driven from the Tree of Life; *Revelation*: the Tree of Life re-appears.

Genesis: we were driven from God's presence; *Revelation*: the promise that we shall see His face.

In summary, we see that the Christmas season is composed of three parts: Advent, the twelve days of Christmas, and Epiphany. Advent is a time of preparation; the twelve days constitute a period for developing soul growth through experience; Epiphany is the time to extract, amalgamate, and apply our spiritual gifts to the greater Work. Throughout this season the Christ Spirit is working towards the fulfillment of the promise to save mankind.



THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

Any observing person will perceive at this time of the year the effervescence of good will so evident in our fellow beings. Some there are who understand this feeling of fellowship and cheerfulness. Others simply respond without questioning and bathe in its warmth. Those who possess a deeper understanding of the Christmas Season yield to its influence wholeheartedly and reverently. They feel impelled to fill their hearts to overflowing capacity so that spiritual expansion is a natural consequence.

Let us strive to keep open the spiritual valves of the heart so that the Living Christ will express through us the joy and beauty of His eternal love.

—T.F.

Jesus of nazareth

PERL WILLIAMS



The Angel Gabriel foretold the birth of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospel according to St. Luke:

And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God, into a city of Galilee, named Nazareth.

To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David: and the virgin's name was Mary.

And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that are highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. — Luke 1:26-28, 31.

The imperishable records in the Memory of Nature show that Jesus of Nazareth is an Ego belonging to our human life-wave; he was incarnated again and again, under various circumstances and different names, including the patriarch Moses and the wise Solomon. He was born in Galilee, the "melting pot" of that day, so that the body generated in that environment was different from the ordinary Jewish race body. His birth occurred at about the time stated in our historic records, when the Vernal Equinox was in about seven degrees of the sign Aries.

Jesus was of a singularly pure type of mind, vastly superior to the great majority of our present humanity. Through many lives he had trod the Path of Holiness and thus fitted himself for the greatest honor ever bestowed upon a human being.

At that time, the desire natures of the more advanced among humanity had become amenable to control so that the act of generation could be performed without passion, out of pure love, and the child could be immaculately conceived. Such were the parents of the child Jesus.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, was of an exceedingly pure type — a most beautiful character of the highest human purity and a high Initiate. Thus she was selected to become the mother of Jesus. Joseph, the father of Jesus, was also an Initiate of high degree, and in this life had devoted himself wholly to the spiritual path. When the time came that a great Teacher was to incarnate among us, he was selected to give the fertilizing seed for that Teacher's body. He was capable of performing the act of fecundation as a sacrament, without personal desire or passion. For that time in his life he forsook the path of celibacy, having in previous incarnations fulfilled the need of being a householder. Joseph is said to have been a carpenter, but the Greek word is "tekton" — builder. He was not merely a worker in wood, but a "builder" in a higher sense. All spiritual aspirants are engaged in building a temple (body) without sound of hammer, and Joseph and Jesus were no exceptions.

Thus the pure and lovely Spirit Whom we revere as Jesus of Nazareth was born in a pure and passionless body, the best that could be produced on Earth. It was a wonderful body such as never has existed before or since. The task of Jesus in that embodiment was to care for the body and evolve it to the highest degree of efficiency, in preparation for the great purpose it was to serve.

Here it should be understood that Christ, a Ray of the Cosmic Christ, could not construct such a vehicle. It is a law of the Cosmos that no being, however high, can function in any world without a vehicle of that world. The desire body was the lowest vehicle of the group

of Spirits called Archangels. Christ, as the highest of these Spirits, was consequently unable to build a vital body and a dense physical body for Himself. Christ could not be *born* in a dense body, because he never had passed through an evolution such as the Earth Period. Besides, it would have been a useless expenditure of valuable energy for such a great Spirit to pass through the womb and bring a body up through the years of childhood until it arrived at the age of maturity where it could be used. Therefore, this task was delegated to Jesus, who used the body until the time of the Baptism, and who knew during his entire lifetime that he was preparing a vehicle to which the desire body and higher vehicles of the Christ could link themselves for a brief period, while He accomplished His mission.

Concerning the early days of Jesus, it is stated that he was put into the schools of the Essenes, on the shores of the Dead Sea. The Essenes were of the most devout character, living a holy life. Among them the growing Jesus found his early training and, being so marvelously adapted to the life led there, he outdistanced them all in a very short time. Later he went to Persia, where the Essenes had a great center of learning. In their extensive library, Jesus absorbed an immense amount of occult knowledge, regaining what he had learned in previous lives. At the end of thirty years he had cleansed and purified his body to such an extent that it could be taken, at the Baptism, by the great Being Whom we call Christ.

The sublime spirituality of the Sons of Seth was centered in Jesus at the time of his Baptism by John, representative of Jehovah, in the water of Jordan. When he arose from the water he had left his father, Jehovah, and was ready to serve the Christ. Therefore the Christ Ray, at the Baptism, descended as a dove upon Jesus' body, which was inhabited and used by Christ during His ministry on Earth. Jesus himself, the Spirit, left that body

and was given a mission to serve the churches while his body was being used for direct teaching by the Christ and while his blood was being prepared as an "open sesame" to the Kingdom of God. Jesus taught the nucleus of the new faith, and began the guidance of the esoteric branches which sprang up all over Europe.

During the three years' interval between the Baptism, when he gave up his vehicles, and the Crucifixion, which brought the return of the seed atoms of these vehicles Jesus gathered a vehicle of ether, as an Invisible Helper gathers physical matter whenever it is necessary to materialize all or part of the body. However, material not matched with the seed atom cannot be permanently appropriated. It disintegrates as soon as the will-power assembled in it is withdrawn, and this vehicle was, therefore, only temporary. When the seed atom of the vital body was returned, a new vital body was formed, and in that vehicle Jesus has been functioning ever since. He never has taken another dense body, though he is perfectly able to do so. This presumably is because his work is entirely unconnected with material things.

Jesus, the Son of Man, stands as the genius and protector of all church craft, whereby religion is fostered and man is brought back to God along the heart path of devotion. The time comes when the Christian Mystic, too, is crucified (liberated from the body) 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.

When Jesus relinquished his dense and vital bodies to the Christ, he thereby lost the experience of the thirty years which he had lived. The experiences are impressed upon the seed atom. When Jesus received

these seed atoms upon the death of the body on Golgotha, he thereby received a *record* of the experiences, but the vital body had received the *impact* from the experiences. Jesus had wrought his experiences into the soul body which was surrendered to Christ. Jesus is still *minus* the soul body (the two higher ethers) that had been growing during the life upon Earth, including the three years when Christ occupied it. This will not be returned until the Day of Liberation and the millennium have come and gone. Then the Christ will be finished entirely with the vital body received from Jesus. At that time, the soul growth that was made upon it by the Christ will fall to Jesus, drawn by the Law of Attraction. Therefore, Jesus will become manifold richer than he would have been if he had not thus sacrificed his bodies.

It is well to love Jesus and to imitate him; could a nobler and more worthy ideal have been found, Jesus would not have been chosen as the vehicle of the Christ, in Whom dwelt the Godhead. We do well to follow "in his steps."

At the Crucifixion, the vital body of Jesus was laid aside to await Christ's Second Advent. The Elder Brothers have placed it in a sarcophagus of glass to protect it from the gaze of the curious or profane. They keep this receptacle in a cavern deep in the Earth, where no uninitiated can penetrate. To make assurance doubly sure, however, vigilant watchers keep constant guard over their precious charge. The reason why the vital body of Jesus is preserved for the Second Coming instead of provision being made for a new vehicle is given in Goethe's *Faust*: "For ghosts and Spirits it is the law that where we enter we must withdraw."

The vital body of Jesus, in which the Christ Spirit was focused prior to its actual ingress into the Earth, has the ordinary human form; it is preserved and shown to the candidate for Initiation at a certain point in his progression. Some day in the far future it will

again house the benevolent Christ Spirit upon His return from the center of the Earth, when our bodies shall have become etheric.



PEACE ON EARTH

*How still and peaceful was that night
two thousand years ago,
When swirling through the mists of time
The marching orbs dipped low
To kneel with adoration with
The mortals here below,*

*Then lift their songs of praise to Him
In voices crystal clear,
Resounding o'er the vaulted sky
This music of the spheres.*

*"Peace on the Earth, good will toward
...men,
God's precious Son is here."*

*And while the four winds blew the words
O'er the shadowy night,
Lo, the radiant Midnight Sun
Shone forth in blazing light,
To glorify the new-born King
And guide the neophyte.*

*Though Christ is born in Bethlehem
Upon this Christmas Eve,
He must be born within the soul
If we are to perceive
The path unseen by outward sight
Which love alone achieves!*

—G.E.T.





christmas

thoughts

Dagmar Frahme

Before the Christ can reign — in the Cosmos, on Earth, or as the Christ Within — He must be born. Once again we celebrate the annual birth of the Cosmic Christ into the Earth. Once again He is infusing the planet with His life for our sakes so that, by utilizing His auric emanations, we may enkindle and nourish the Christ within ourselves.

The birth of the Cosmic Christ into Earth must take place annually because man was not, 2,000 years ago, and is not now, spiritually aware or strong enough to sustain himself on a single effusion of the Christ Light and Love. The effects of this birth are global, felt in some measure by all human beings, whether or not they understand why.

The birth of the Christ Within, on the other hand, occurs but once, and once suffices. This birth takes place quietly and is almost unnoticed except by the person concerned. In embryo, the Christ Within always has been there, waiting to be born. The Christ Principle, the Life Spirit principle in man, waits for the moment when the Ego awakens to the reality of the higher life — for the opportunity to begin its work in the service of universal Life and Love.

During the holy season of Christ's birth into the Earth, an almost world-

wide tradition of giving gifts is manifested. Obeying the altruistic spiritual influence now so strongly prevalent, human beings feel impelled to present each other with tokens of affection. Although it certainly is true that the practice of giving material gifts, in recent years, has degenerated largely into crass commercialism, the impulse to give — to offer something from oneself — remains inescapably powerful during the present season. When Christmas is over, however, the impulse lessens and the general time of giving presents also is over until the next year.

The birth of the Christ Within, too, is accomplished by the giving of a gift — the initial dedication of the self to the Christ and His service. In this case, however, as the internal Christ matures, the giving of gifts does not cease; it intensifies. From the moment of this spiritual birth and on throughout our lives we continue to give the fruits of ever-growing spiritual awareness and abilities to the external Christ and, more directly, to our fellow men.

In this context of giving we, as spiritual aspirants, can emulate within ourselves, if we will, the events of that first Christmas Eve. We can cause the Christmas star to shine within us. We can present our offerings to Him, as did the Magi. We

can worship and adore Him, as did the shepherds.

The legendary Star of Bethlehem, occultists know, actually was no star at all, but the Mystic Midnight Sun — the vehicle of the Cosmic Christ Who enters our planet at the winter solstice and radiates the three divine attributes of Life, Light, and Love from the center of the globe. Taking the opportunity that these intensified Christ vibrations now offer us, we also, once the Christ Within us has been awakened, must begin to disseminate to our fellow men those first faint glimmerings of life, light, and love that we become capable of sending out. Obviously our offerings will be tiny compared to those of the Christ, but we must make a start somewhere. We must do what we can and gradually, in time, we will be able to do more.

The soul bodies of most of the human race still are too weak to send out uninterruptedly the golden glow of the mature soul bodies which will be our vehicles in the New Galilee. When the Christ Within us fully has come into its own, however, we will have greatly intensified our spiritual powers, and our own radiant, golden vehicles will shine in certain emulation of the Mystic Midnight Sun.

The gifts of the Magi, too, will be given to the Christ by all mankind before His Day of Liberation becomes possible. Gold is the emblem of the Spirit; myrrh represents the soul essence extracted from our experiences in physical incarnation; incense symbolizes the physical body. We now should be able to offer a modicum of these gifts although, again, we will not be able to present them fully until the Christ within us has matured. Still, we can offer as much of the Spirit as is aroused, as much of soul power as we have been able to extract from earthly experience, and as much of our physical vehicles as we have been able to refine and purify.

THE "NEW MAN"

Christ our Wayshower will be most

pleased with the gift of the New Man — the regenerated man — which in time will be given by each individual human being. The New Man, molded in Christ's image and bearing His characteristics, will appear as a living sacrifice to the spiritual evolution of the life-wave, humble in duty, joyful in serenity, confident in self-reliance, courageous and steadfast in service, and optimistic in knowledge and faith. Human foibles — feebleness and decay, peevishness and fretfulness, selfishness and despair — all then will have been relegated to the crystallized physical past, never again to intrude themselves on the human condition.

As all other spiritual gifts, the gift of the New Man will have to be given gradually. We will not be transformed overnight. We must transform ourselves — a slow and painful process; but the Christ rejoices in every evidence, however small, of individual progress, and whatever token we now can present of the perfected New Man to come will be a gift pleasing to Him.

THE GIFT OF JOY

Now, especially, we should be able to give Him *abundantly* the gift of joy, although it certainly is true that joy is not one of humanity's most prevalent qualities. But what more joyous moment could there be than the moment of His return to us? For what more joyous tidings could we yearn than the message: "Unto you this day is born a Savior"? The glad tidings again are echoing around the Earth. Can we greet them with other than rejoicing and, knowing that they will be sounded again and again in the coming years, can we do our work in the world in any spirit other than that of rejoicing? The expression of spiritual joy is our duty and our privilege. The Bible urges us to rejoice. Let us, therefore, be glad in His coming and in the heritage He brings us, and let us show our gladness, not only in psalms and song, but also in deeds and achievements.

THANKFULNESS

Thankfulness, too, is a gift which all humanity would do well to offer far more than we do now. We know well *why* we should be thankful to Him; the thought of what our plight would be in the absence of His annual sacrifice is too distressing to dwell upon. As on the first Christmas Eve, the angelic Choir even now is singing anthems of praise and thanksgiving. If we only could hear that celestial music, our consciousness would be elevated and our feelings of reverence and gratitude would be intensified. We know that our own prayers of thanksgiving and praise open a channel through which divine inspiration flows down to us. We would do well to utilize this channel often, and especially during this holy season.

THE GIFT OF LOVE

The gift of Love is His greatest legacy to us. Surely nothing delights Him more than to know that we human beings are distributing this gift among ourselves. Ideally, our gift of love to Him consists, not so much of loving Him — although this, too, is important — as of loving each other. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." The incredible human incongruity of professing to love Christ and God while hating one another has been a recurring pattern on Earth, in spite of the fact that He first acquainted humanity with the Gospel of Love almost twenty centuries ago.

Christ came that there might be a transmutation of the hatred and discord in the world — elements which were and still are far more painful a crown of thorns to Him than was the one placed on His head at the Crucifixion. The poisonous forces generated by our passions are carried away by the Life Forces of the Christ, but every evil human thought or act brings Him its own proportion of pain.

The Christ Principle — the Love Principle — truly is a solvent and a creator. It dissipates the hardening tendency of the lower passions, builds anew what those passions have destroyed, and dissolves the barriers within and among all life-waves. The chord of love is strong, and its vibration has the power to awaken a similar vibration in others.

Universal love has a harmonizing power that no physical agency, no governmental decree — indeed, no man-made sanction of any sort — can bring into being. The universal love now reaching the center of the Earth eventually will harmonize all mankind into the Brotherhood that we are meant to be. When the Christ Within is born, the person concerned begins to feel within himself this harmony, which originates in the World of Life Spirit and permeates all the lower worlds. Such an individual then learns to speak the language of Love — not necessarily in word, but in the very context in which he moves. Unaffectedly and without condescension he is able to meet people on their own ground, offering them the strength and support of his impersonal love that, in time, helps them raise themselves in their turn to more elevated evolutionary stature.

Is this not what Christ Jesus did? He came to men as one of them; He met people on their own ground. By means of His preaching and in His healing ministry He offered them, and He offers us, the strength and support of His impersonal love that, in time, helps us raise ourselves on the ladder of progress.

Our gift of love to our fellow men is particularly acceptable to Christ because, more truly in this situation than in any other, we grow as we give. The more love we send out from ourselves, the more love we will continue to send out. As man advances in spiritual progress — which is, first and foremost, progress in the expression of brotherly love — he absorbs more and more of the Christ emanations. In con-

sequence, and as from an unquenchable wellspring of life, more and more is forthcoming from within himself.

Again we see a parallel with Christ, for, surely, He, too, grows as He gives. There is no doubt that, because of His annual sacrifice to Earth — His outpouring of Light and Love — He is ascending to evermore sublime heights, far beyond even the exalted place in the Cosmos which He now holds.

George MacDonald, a nineteenth century author of unusually moving spiritual prose and fiction, beautifully stated his longing to partake of — to participate in — universal love. This longing, which lies deep in all our hearts whether or not we allow ourselves to be aware of it, truly expresses what Christmas is all about. He said:

"To be for one moment aware of such pure simple love towards but one of my fellows as I trust I shall one day have towards each, must of itself bring a sense of life such as the utmost effort of my imagination can but feebly shadow now — a mighty glory of consciousness! There would be, even in that one love, in the simple purity of a single affection such as we were created to generate and intended to cherish towards all, an expression of life inexpressible, unutterable. For we are made for love, not for self.

"Our neighbor is our refuge; *self* is our demon-foe. Every man is the image of God to every man, and in proportion as we love every man, we shall know that sacred fact" (*Creation in Christ*, p. 200)

CONSECRATION

Then, finally, if for some reason of ill-preparedness, uncertainty, or the backsliding to which we all are prone, we believe ourselves unable at present to offer any other gift, we always can offer the gift of consecration. Consecration must underlie everything we do on the spiritual path. Without consecration we never will be able

to purify and refine the dense body and extract the spiritual essence therefrom. Without consecration we never will be able to offer up Spirit, soul, and body wholly and unreservedly to the Christ, as we are expected to do and as, within our heart of hearts, we *want* to do. Consecration, to be most meaningful to the easily-distracted human beings that unfortunately we are, bears constant repetition. We are urged from time to time to "consecrate ourselves anew," and what better time for that renewal than at the very moment of His return as our Savior, our Wayshower, and our Friend.

As we offer our gifts to Him during this sacred season, let us do so in full understanding of the meaning of Christmas. Christmas represents the "fullness of time" — the consummation of the glorious prophecies of the Old Testament. It stands for the realization of hopes which have inspired heroic men of the past. It signals the awakening of the Christ Within our own natures. It presages the salvation of men, the triumph of right over wrong on Earth, and the eventual coming of His Kingdom.

The union of regenerated humanity in universal brotherhood under the leadership of the returned Christ, the King-Priest, will be the final culmination of the Christmas festivals of centuries. Before that culmination is reached, we will have perfected ourselves practically to the limits of our present imaginings. Our soul bodies will have become radiant and strong on the foundations of service, and incarnation in dense bodies will have become a thing of the past. Christ's liberation from earthly imprisonment will be complete, and humanity will move confidently into a magnificent new stage of evolution.

"For unto you is born this day. . . a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."
— Luke 2:11



CHRISTMAS



SYMBOLS

MICHAEL MILES

At this time of year, we see all around us familiar Christmas symbols such as the Advent wreath, the mistletoe, Christmas trees, and bells. Since they are used each year for Christmas we often become numb to their meaning and complacent to our feelings about them. So, let us consider these symbols and ascertain what they mean to us.

THE ADVENT CANDLES

Centered around the Advent wreath is the activity of lighting four candles during the four weeks before Christmas. In the first week, the first candle is lit, in the second, the second candle, and so on. What does this lighting of four candles mean?

We understand esoterically that, starting at the time of the Fall Equinox, the spiritual energy of Christ slowly begins to enter into human consciousness and into the Earth itself. This gradual descent of the Christ Force culminates at Christmas. To understand this spiritual energy, we must first encounter it as a thought. Perhaps we can say, then, that the first candle we light represents that first thought, that first inkling we have within ourselves that Christmas is coming. Then, slowly but surely, as the Christ Force comes closer to the Earth, it becomes more than just a thought. It becomes a feeling. From the feeling, which we might say is the second candle, the third candle is lit. The Christ Force now has become more than a feeling; it has become part of our lives. The fourth candle represents the expression of Christ into the Physical World.

The lighting of all four candles, then, represents something that we experience personally within ourselves. It is a fact that, for people who try sincerely to understand the principle behind the Cosmic Force entering into the Earth, Christmas begins a little bit earlier every year. They begin to feel the Christ vibrations, the upliftment, the expanding love for their fellow men, a little earlier than just a week or two before Christmas. This is because they begin to perceive the Cosmic Force that each year eventually enters into the consciousness of man.

The Advent wreath is made of evergreens and, sometimes, of holly. The evergreen represents eternal life. The gradual lighting of the four candles can represent the spiritualization of the four vehicles of man: his thoughts, desires, life, and physical body. The symbols of evergreen, holly, and candles will help bring us closer to the spirit of Christmas and to the Christ if we set them on display in our lives.

MISTLETOE

In ancient times, before Christ, mistletoe was considered to be under the rule of the goddess Freia, or Venus, the Goddess of Love. Perhaps there is a residue of this in the fact that we kiss one another under the mistletoe. This symbol represents the love of humanity and the bringing together of people, which are intensified at Christmas. At no other time during the year is this feeling of sharing stronger and more alive.

CHRISTMAS BELLS

The bell always has represented the Cosmic Word. We read in *John* 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." This bell represents this primordial Tone, this cohesive Force which draws matter together so that Life can manifest. In a sense, the bell is a representation of the Word, which is Christ. Christ is the Sound of God in manifestation — the son of God in manifestation. When we listen to the bells at Christmas, there is something almost celestial about them. Tone is elusive; bells sound a calling-together of people for that "something" that has to be recreated over and over again. Bells, then, draw us together — the cohesive force of humanity uniting for the worship of Christ.

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

The next symbol is that of the Christmas tree. Christmas trees now are largely taken for granted. Esoterically, however, they have a deeper significance than that of being merely ornamental. The tree we use for Christmas is not the deciduous tree common in the forest. It is an evergreen. The evergreen, as the name implies, is ever green. It does not change with the seasons as other trees do. It is green throughout the whole year. This symbolizes what Christianity is supposed to bring to the individual.

Christ said: "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." — *John* 4:14. The evergreen tree is a representation of everlasting life. Since it does not "die" seasonally, as other trees do, we can say that, in a sense, the Christmas tree represents the tree of life. It represents what happens within us when we become attuned to the Spirit of the Christ Within. We begin to become trees of life

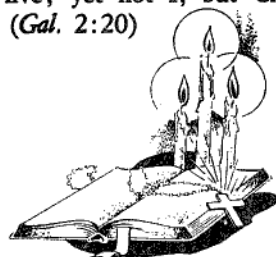
ourselves. The lights and ornaments we hang on the tree represent the light-thoughts we send out from ourselves. Every time we think a good thought, we put our light on a hill. We ourselves begin to shine.

The Christmas tree, then, is a representation of ourselves, individually and collectively. When we all aspire together toward the spiritual principles which Christmas represents, we, too, become trees of life. We begin to put our lights on a hill, and we shine for all to see.

SYMBOLS WITH SUBSTANCE

Now we have arrived at an understanding of a few of the symbols of Christmas. Perhaps, if we seriously think about them, next year when Christmas comes we will be able to do the things which they represent a little more consciously. What good is it to review these spiritual symbols if we don't make them a part of our lives? If we do not bring these ideals down to the level of manifestation and attempt to live them, they are mere chaff without substance.

As we fill ourselves with the spirit of Christmas each year, let us use these symbols to heighten our experience of the Cosmic drama they are meant to represent. Let us use them knowingly and self-consciously that we may become more a part of the forces which are working through us. By doing so we help to transform the world from a world of pain and suffering to a "star of wonder, star of light." As Christmas becomes more a part of us then we become more a part of Christ and then we can truly say as Paul did: "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." (*Gal.* 2:20) ★



Our Star

A Story of the Star of Bethlehem of Today

R.T.O.

*"And the light shineth in the darkness;
and the darkness comprehended it not."*

O Blessed Star of Bethlehem,
Thou Herald of the Light!
Most precious one of all our gems,
That shineth in the night.

Thou mystery of radiant life,
Thou Teacher from above,
Accept our tears in times of strife,
As tokens of true Love.

And may Thou guide us further still,
Until we reach the Source;
Through Thee may we our mission fill,
Complete our wondrous course.

In these days of competition when alertness of mind is so essential to success, let us pause a minute to try to understand the good in the seemingly bad, the necessity of this "curse of competition," this Angel of Destruction, which appears to be making nervous wrecks of the human race.

It is hard for us soemtimes to see the life in the form, and small wonder it is that we, similarly to the Jews of the past, exclaim: How can any good come out of this Nazareth of competition?

Our past course was along the Road of Destruction, the path of selfishness and separativeness; but now we have emerged into a broader way, the Road of Construction, with a new Star for our light to guide us out of the mazes of materialism and commercial strife. Formerly we tore down and took apart; now we are learning to build up, to put together, to centralize!

The knowledge that to become Builders or Masons we must first serve an apprenticeship which includes tearing down or analyzing shows us the frequent necessity of destruction, for if there were no destruction nor breaking up of worn-out forms, there could be nothing new. Creatorship could not exist. Therefore destructiveness at times, as in the case of competition, is absolutely necessary for us in order that we may develop that which is within, for thus do we later become instruments of Love in the service of our Father.

As students of the Western Wisdom Teachings, we are to become self-conscious builders, working with the principle of Unity. We seek not differences but similarities, following the great Law of Correspondence, of Relationship. In this work we must become aware of the true nature of the wonderful Life Principle, which has been hidden from our sight in the past through the clouding of our vision by form. Knowledge of the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden was safely guarded by the Cherubim, but now the Flaming Sword has been withdrawn and replaced by the symbol of purity, an open flower. Therefore we have the words of the great Teacher: "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."

In our quest for further light in this connection there came to us the following visions:

1. *The Star of Tradition*

The night before Christmas was clear and cold. The Earth lay still beneath her covering of glistening snow, while from above in their setting of deep blue the stars united in one majestic song of love.

Some of this heavenly music fell on the Land of the Trees in the far North. Here in the midst of a clearing it hovered around a large log cabin, the home of a pioneer; then, leaving its message, it departed.

The living room of this cabin was a place of coziness and comfort, made so by the cheerful log fire which blazed merrily on this cold night and gave to those present its heat and light.

The father, as he gazed into the fire, was pondering the problem of wresting a living from Nature, while the mother was a girl again as she saw herself in the land of the sunny South, awaiting the man who was now so serious, whose big Spirit had hewn out from the wilds a home for them.

The silence of love which surrounded these two was suddenly broken by the eager voice of a small child, whose sturdy form, steady eyes, and ruddy cheeks portrayed true health.

"Mother," said she, "tell me, how did the Wise Men find the Babe in the Manger? Who told them he was there?"

Replied the mother: "They were led there by a wonderful star that shone in the heavens and guided them to Bethlehem; it then disappeared and was seen no more. Because of this, that star was called the Star of Bethlehem."

"Mother, will that Star come again and will I see it?"

"I do not know, Dear. It was the work of God, and His ways often are hard to understand."

That night, as the child knelt down to offer thanks to Him, the recording Angel registered a new petition, and on the Book appeared: "Dear God, may I sometime see the Star of Bethlehem."

II. *The Astronomical Star*

Once more it was night, yet now the stars had lost some of their lustre, for the Queen of the Night chose to clothe our planet with the light of her own fullness and glory as she reigned from above.

In a spacious room in a large city

was gathered a class of students of the Stellar Script, desiring to know the Message of the Stars. One of the scholars was our child of the woods. She rose and asked the teacher: "Can you tell me if there really was a Star of Bethlehem?"

The teacher paused for a moment as his eyes rested on the gentle face of the maid, and then replied:

"Kepler, the astronomer, calculated that at about the time of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth the three planets, Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars, were together, forming a conjunction in Pisces. The Wise Men of the East must have seen this unusual stellar display as they were searching the heavens for a special sign which was to proclaim the birth of a Great Teacher. Therefore it seems reasonable to infer that this wonderful stellar manifestation, the conjunction of the three planets, became the Star of Bethlehem.

"We know that Pisces is the sign of divinity, and of the House of the Hebrews. Naturally, then, they would travel to the principal city of the Jews, Jerusalem, search the old Hebrew prophecies, and, finding that the Messiah was to be born at Bethlehem, they would proceed there. Thus the Star would have led them.

"Further, to support this, Saturn represents the Father, Jupiter the Son, and Mars the Holy Spirit. Thus we have the mystery of the Three in One, the Trinity in Unity, the Silent Witnesses."

III. *The Mystic's Star*

Night again. The lamps of heaven shine forth in all their splendor, bathing in light and beauty an old castle which stands majestically on high, rocky land towering above the sea. This, the past home of a once warrior-king, has become the center of a school of mystics. Into this atmosphere come the pupils, who draw closer to the Master as he begins to speak.

"Fellow students and followers of the great God of Love and Light, seekers of His will in all things, tonight we examine the mystery of the Star of Bethlehem. In order to do this we must have a

knowledge of our great Day Star, the Sun, whose Spirit is the Cosmic Christ.

"You are aware that this magnificent star, the center of our solar system, the giver of light and heat to the physical world, is the source of our spiritual and physical force. It is the life principle in Nature, the fructifier. This physical solar energy is greatest in midsummer when the days are longest and the nights shortest. Then, however, the spiritual solar energy is at its lowest ebb and is inactive. This force expresses itself at midsummer along the negative pole of material manifestation. This is the reason for the inertia of the spiritual or positive side of nature in summer.

It is a law of Nature, a cosmic principle, that the force or Spirit in all things must manifest alternately through each pole according to the principles of rhythm and polarity. According to these principles, there must be a time when this force manifests through the positive pole, when the pendulum swings to the other extreme; when the spiritual force is at its zenith and the physical force inactive. This condition is most fully realized on the night between December 24 and 25, which is therefore the most holy night of the year. It is then that the zodiacal sign of the Virgin stands at midnight upon the eastern horizon, and the Sun of the New Year is born. This then proceeds on its northern course to give light and heat to all things in the physical world, and it is therefore called the savior of the world.

"Now it follows that at the time of Holy Night, the spiritual forces being at their strongest, it is easiest to get in conscious touch with the spiritual Sun for the first time. Therefore at this time, by raising one's vibrations, one can transcend physical conditions. The spiritual vision then is opened, and the solid Earth becomes transparent. Then one can see the Sun at midnight, the Mystic Midnight Sun, the Star!

"This is not the physical Sun, but the Spirit of the Sun, the Christ, the

spiritual savior, even as the physical Sun is the physical savior; for the Christ, although partly confined to the Earth as its Regent, is also Regent of the Sun.

"This is the Star of Bethlehem that shone on that first Holy Night, and which is shining every night for the mystic who would learn the deeper truths.

"Tonight you have been given an intellectual understanding of this mystery. This is not an end in itself; it is the positive pole of understanding, the knowledge of the heart; you must actually *feel* these things. This is accomplished only by *living the life!* This is the only way to know the life in form, for both to feel and know gives full consciousness!

As the voice of the Master died away, soft mellow tones pealed forth from the organ, flooding the room with heavenly vibrations, while the pupils, rising, joined in a song of adoration to Him Whom they worshipped:

"We praise thee, O glorious Star,
Out prophet, priest, and king.
Thou who comest from afar,
Accept the love we bring."

As the last note died away, one by one they quietly left the room. But the last paused for a moment ere she went out, and lo, she was our child of the woods! She had become a mystic, a young woman of rare beauty and grace. Answering her thoughts, the Master, with a divine comprehension, said in a tender voice:

"Child of purity, you have lived the life; you have traveled far on the Path of Attainment. Tonight you shall have your desire and behold the Star of Bethlehem. Tonight your prayer made in childhood shall be answered. You are ready for the Mystic's Initiation. Take your reward, the fruit of your labor, and may He Whom you worship see fit to pour upon you much of His Love and Light.

* * * * *

The pictures have faded, but to us should have come a greater insight and
(Continued on page 553)

SERVICE



JENNY DEMEREST

Throughout his writings, Max Heindel stressed *service* as the key to a useful, constructive, evolving life. "Loving, self-forgetting service" is the epitome of true greatness in the spiritual evolutionary sense, and the one standard that denotes a useful and meaningful life. It is the only legitimate — and certainly the only permanent — source of admission to the higher life.

Opportunities for service exist in every walk of life and in every environment. Every day we are faced with innumerable occasions when we can give of ourselves — occasions which we often do not recognize, or which we willfully ignore. Every day we encounter, not only the obvious necessity, but also the concealed need. Unspoken anguish in someone's heart, unexplained sadness in someone's eyes, yearning hesitation in someone's touch, timidity, pride, or ruthlessness, all indicate a need for understanding human contact.

The fact that we may have performed all our stated duties during the course of the day, and comforted those who were obviously sick, cheered those who were obviously unhappy, or supported those who were obviously weak, does not necessarily mean that we have given service to the fullest possible extent. We can serve *fully* only if we are alert to the least obvious of our opportunities to do so.

Retrospection can tell us much about the depth and degree of our service. If we say, "Well, I kept my nose to the grindstone during the eight hours at the office, so that was OK," we can be reasonably sure that all was *not* OK.

While keeping our nose to the grindstone — and certainly we should take care to do an honest day's work for our wages — were we deliberately or unconsciously ignoring pressing human needs around us? The friendly smile or the warm handclasp may well give a fellow worker a substantial reservoir of strength with which to face his own problems.

Was our attitude during the day grumpy, resigned, and centered on watching the clock, or were we open and generous with our thoughts, beaming positive, uplifting radiations to those around us?

It has been said that the most selfless service begins only after we have performed all our assigned duties and start to do the things that we do not have to do. Spontaneity often is a telling characteristic of selfless service. The sudden urge to give from within ourselves — coupled always with the discrimination that will make the difference between a wise, useful, creative gesture of lasting value to the person and a merely sentimental, superficial, or valueless gesture — speaks volumes about our innermost desire to serve.

Service is a ripe field for the development of our talents, and of epigenesis itself. Service awakens the Christ Power within, and it will be in service, rather than in any form of selfish undertakings, that we ultimately will attain to the godhead which is our destiny. Flexibility and creativity mark the Ego who has matured in service and can be depended upon to respond usefully to whatever needs he encounters.

The Gift and the Giver

William Corot

Although freely and perhaps excessively used in everyday life, "give" is a word the meaning of which is poorly understood. By definition, it "usually implies that the action expressed is done freely and without compensation." Our understanding of the true meaning of "give" depends upon our understanding of the terms "freely" and "without compensation."

Concerning the art of giving, Christ Jesus said: "Freely ye have received, freely give" (*Matt.* 10:8) and "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (*Acts* 20:35).

In what spirit do we give? Do we give "freely and without compensation" or thought of compensation? Or, do we give with an ulterior motive: from a sense of duty, or because we are slaves to custom, or because thereby we hope to prove to others that we are filled with human kindness? Do we make a sacrifice in order to give, or do we give only because we have more than we can possibly use?

Before considering the act of giving, it might be wise to remind ourselves of the source of supply from which all gifts originate. For example, we can take the material things, which all too often define the limits of giving. All material things, without exception, originate as natural resources — that super-abundant supply prepared and maintained by the Creator for the benefit of all mankind. As Paul tells us: "So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth: but God that giveth the increase" (*1 Cor.* 3:17). Obviously, the natural resource from which a material thing originates cannot be given as an original "gift" to a fellow human being, since God already has given it unstintingly to all. The gifts men give

each other then, can be considered only in terms of the amount of labor or service involved in preparing a natural resource for a specific use.

True giving, in the spiritual sense, is an art which is not easily mastered by most people. The true gift benefits both the giver and the receiver. Properly given, it benefits the giver by allowing the Law of Compensation to operate without hindrance while at the same time supplying the receiver with that of which, at the moment, he is in need. The Law of Compensation always seeks to fill the "Vacuum" created by want and need, but it is hampered in its expression by man's exercise of his right of self-determination. Man, through selfish action, can render the Law of Compensation inoperative for a time. Thereby he robs himself and others of their rightful heritage. However, if the giver gives freely of that which he has, without thought of sacrifice or compensation, the Law will take care that his bounty is returned to him a hundredfold.

Always, there are those among us who are in need. As Christ Jesus said: "Ye have the poor always with you" (*Matt.* 26:11). He also warned, however: "Neither cast your pearls before swine" (*Matt.* 7:6). We know that to give at the wrong time or to bestow an unsuitable gift may well prove to be a detriment rather than a help to the recipient.

The *motivation* of the giver is of paramount importance. Paul counsels: "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give: not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver" (*2 Cor.* 9:7).

What motivates our usual giving? Do we limit our gifts to relatives and

friends and then give only because we think we "should?" Do we give only to those who are incapacitated in some way and then only that we may escape the criticism of others or be able to say, the next time we are asked, "I already gave at the office"? Do we donate only to victims of well-publicized tragedies and then only that we may flaunt our own "goodness" or affluence to satisfy the egotistic urge? Or do we give out of love, without fanfare or recognition, wherever and whenever we see a need to which we can respond, desiring solely to benefit others who are undergoing the trials of life?

Before we bestow any gift, it would be well for us carefully to consider the motivation. "But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" (*Matt. 6:3*). Gifts, to be of greatest possible value to all concerned, should be given as the result of sincere desire to perform a service and without thought of reward, recognition, or appreciation. It is not wise, generally, to discuss the gift either with the recipient or with other people. Unless the motivation is purely unselfish, no spiritual value accrues to the donor, and the recipient, too, cannot benefit most fully from the gift. If the gift causes the recipient to feel a sense of obligation or inferiority, certainly, something is lost to him.

There is also the consideration of whether the gift, whatever its nature and whatever the motivation behind it, will assist or hinder the recipient. There is no question, for instance, that a gift of money to an inebriated man, whose sole desire is to prolong the debauch, would be harmful. The same principle, too, is involved in helping a person who refuses to make an effort to help himself. To give material things to such a person is but to crystallize his disinclination to expend personal effort. This individual does need help — he does need a gift. In this case, however, the gift of *self* is paramount. This person must be helped to help himself, a situation requiring the active and caring presence

of the donor, not the offering of mere *things*.

A gift, to be most completely spiritual, must be made ungrudgingly and without obvious or implied strings attached. It should be given in such a manner that the recipient experiences no sense of shame or inferiority and that the giver receives no exaggerated or excessive acclaim. This does not mean that the value of the gift is reduced if the giver is thanked by the recipient, but both should remember that God is the source of all and that the thanks rightfully should be extended to Him. Once the gift has been made and acknowledged, it would be wise not to dwell on it further.

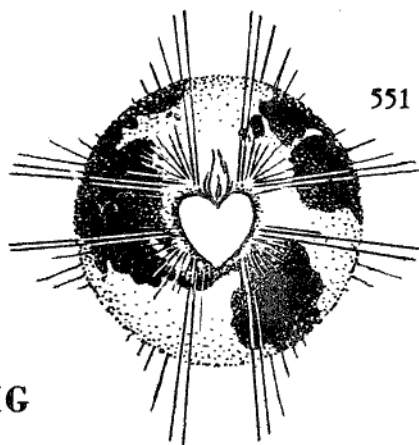
Good examples of this type of giving are found in rural areas where neighborliness is not yet a lost art. A house burns down or a farmer whose crops should be harvested is sick. The neighbors gather together to rebuild the house or harvest the crops, not because of a collective or individual sense of duty, but because they feel the spirit of neighborliness — of brotherhood. The recipient of the help does not experience the shame of charity nor does he feel inferior to his neighbors. The neighbors, on the other hand, do not feel a sense of righteousness or superiority. They simply are glad to have been able to help a fellow man. They do not afterward discuss the matter in any other context than that of another incident in community living.

Sometimes the giver, not content with the joy of giving, endeavors to savor, with the recipient, the pleasures of the gift. Suppose we meet a man on the street who is starving. We feel it our duty to give him enough money for a satisfying meal. Then we accompany him to a restaurant; we help him choose that meal which we, not he, would particularly enjoy; we watch each bite he takes, remarking on how good the food must taste. Do we truly give a gift in this

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the evolution of love

ALAN CRAIG



The origin of man and the goal of his existence as a sentient being are inextricably bound up in the Law of Love. Man was conceived in Love in the Mind of God and, through Love, was differentiated in God as a Virgin Spirit. From the beginning, man was endowed with the essence of all the powers of his Creator, chief among which is the power of Love.

In order to develop these powers from latency to omnipotence, man was sent forth upon an involutionary/evolutionary journey designed to take him from God to the nadir of materiality and back again to God. When he returns to God, he will have reached the highest degree of perfection possible to him in this Day of Manifestation.

Man received the germ of a physical vehicle and, in due course, the germs of the three other vehicles that also are his tools of progress, in order that he would be able to function in the various planes of existence through which he is intended to pass.

The inherent urge that leads man upward and onward along the evolutionary path is the urge of the Love out of which we came and to which we shall return. God is Love, and in Him — in Love — we live and move and have our being. God — Love — is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent. All that is owes its being to Love, and all that is constantly is being nourished by Love.

Seen in this light, the fact of existence takes on added meaning. Our understanding of truth as we now can know it is enhanced. Divine Love, in union with the

creative power of the Word, has fashioned and continues to maintain a Creation that has unique and enduring significance in the context of divine Love, but would have no lasting significance at all in the absence of that Love.

Love in its ultimate guise is more than the trusting love of child for parent, the self-sacrificing love of parent for child, the warm regard of friend for friend, the deep affection between man and woman, or even the adoring devotion of man for God. Love is the very Law of Life. It is the divine Influence that orders all things. It is the Power that causes the universe to function. This phenomenon exists in every atom, from the lowest life-bearing form to God Himself.

Love encompasses life, wisdom, and power. Man, who has life, must unfold his wisdom and power. With the acquisition of the mind, man became his own judge. Through the options open to him with the operation of free will, he learns in the school of experience. He reaps good or evil as he sows, and eventually develops the conscience which guides enlightened Egos in their choices. Thus, slowly, wisdom and power are developed.

Love alone is lasting; anything that is done or comes into being under any auspices other than those of Love cannot help but eventually defeat its own purpose, and decay. The growth toward Perfection, which is the aim of all existence, takes place only in the context of Love. History is replete with examples of individuals and nations who failed to be guided by the Law of Love. Their efforts at domination and at self-aggrandizement at the

expense of others, although often potent and destructive, eventually withered away and, in time, came to be remembered, if at all, only in text books.

Before the Advent of Christ, rule of Law determined earthly evolution. The Jehovistic race religions inculcated fear as the motivating factor in human conduct. Human consciousness had become immersed in the restrictions of outer form, and the inner growth of love was stymied in all but a handful of advanced individuals. Certainly most people were unable to recognize the infinite Love exemplified in Christ Jesus. People for generations had been expecting One to come Who would fulfill the promises of the Law, but they were not evolved enough to recognize in that One the Harbinger of the Love which transcends all Law and is in itself the fulfillment of all Law.

The Kingdom of God is based on Love. It is to be found, potentially, within every individual. The Kingdom of God has nothing to do with physical or even spiritual externals, as few people could understand in Christ Jesus' day or even now. The Kingdom of God has to do with the unfoldment of the Christ Within — the power of Love within — each individual human being.

Because the Kingdom of God is indeed "nearer than hands and feet" — because it is truly *within* the innermost part of the individual — it is difficult to find and more difficult to manifest. Man's consciousness for long eons has been centered on outward things. Man has been occupied with material phenomena, satisfying the wants of the body while neglecting those of the Spirit. Materialism, lust, and greed have overshadowed the Light that must shine from within. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. . ." is an admonition frequently quoted but too infrequently practiced by a humanity that has forgotten, or has never learned, the precepts of living a simple, spiritual life.

The Kingdom of God rests in the divine Spark of Light which shines in the heart of every man. This is the spiritual Flame that cannot be extinguished. It is the Flame of divine Love, waiting now for man to fan it into a blaze of incalculable Power. It grows in brightness according to the attention which each person, acting on his own volition and with his own strength, can, and is willing to, give it.

To fan this flame — to manifest our inner Kingdom of God that it may spread its Light in benediction to all — we first must learn to regard "the divine Essence within" each of our fellow men.

We must learn to experience the love of Spirit for Spirit, which knows nothing of the selfish physical, mental, or emotional demands and restrictions that to some extent pervert all forms of personal love. The love that Christ would have us bear one another is even that which He bears for us. It involves complete self-sacrifice and self-forgetfulness. It involves service, gladly rendered.

Often, the love that He would have us bear one another means receiving coldness or hatred in exchange for love, as He did. It means bearing rebuke patiently. It means putting oneself in the other person's place in order better to understand him, even as Christ Himself suffered temptation for our sakes.

The love He would have us bear one another is not demanding, although a voluntary expression of gratitude or returned affection brings great joy. It is not possessive. It involves the desire to serve another person, even if this service is taken for granted or ignored. It means sharing another person's joys sincerely and to the fullest, regardless of what one's own troubles may be. It means sharing his sorrows, no matter how foolishly he may have brought them upon himself. It means surrounding him constantly with prayerful thoughts and positive good wishes. It means negating one's own personal interests in the

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OUR STAR

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understanding of the Life in the Form, for we have touched higher realms and learned that the Star of Bethlehem, "Our Star," is a symbol used to represent the Christ, our spiritual as well as our physical Savior. He it is Who would bring us to the Father through "loving, self-forgetting service to others, which is the shortest, the safest, and the most joyful road to God."

That wondrous Star of Bethlehem,
The gift from Him above,
Who must be born to us within
To understand His love.

THE GIFT AND THE GIVER

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way? Do we perform a service? Do we manifest the Christ Spirit?

This example may sound silly, but is this not, in effect, exactly how we give many gifts? If we give clothes, do we not tell the person how well they fit or how well they look on him? If we give advice which is followed and produces good results, do we not congratulate the recipient on the excellence of the counsel he received? Or, if the advice is not followed and misfortune occurs, are we not prone to say, "I told you so?"

It is true that one cannot give a good gift without being amply repaid by the Law of Compensation. Christ Jesus said: "Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give unto your bosom. For with the same measure ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" (*Luke 6:38*). It is not the gift that is of primary importance, however, but the *spirit* in which the gift is given.

True giving in the spiritual sense is indeed rare, and its technique is difficult to achieve. To those who have mastered the art, however — to those who give gladly, freely, and without thought of

compensation — will be given, in turn, the joy of receiving abundantly. Having taken no thought of reward, they make it possible for the Law of Compensation to operate unhindered.

THE EVOLUTION OF LOVE

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furtherance of his worthy ones. It means putting the other person's welfare, health, and spiritual advancement ahead of one's own. It may mean losing one's life for his sake.

Lastly, it means doing all this without thought of reward, compensation, or even notice.

How many of us honestly can say that we are capable of loving even one other individual with this degree of selflessness? Yet this is the brotherly Christ Love, the divine Love which underlies all Creation. This is the love which will prevail on Earth when the Kingdom of God at last flourishes in all human hearts.



Studies in the Cosmo-Conception

HOW THE WORLDS INTERPENETRATE

Q. Are the seven Worlds which are the sphere of our development placed one above the other?

A. No. They all interpenetrate.

Q. What illustration might make this clearer?

A. Let us use a spherical sponge to represent the dense Earth — the chemical Region. Imagine that sand permeates every part of the sponge and also forms a layer outside the sponge. Let the sand represent the Etheric Region, which in a similar manner permeates the dense Earth and extends beyond its atmosphere.

Q. How does this apply to the Desire World?

A. Let us further imagine this sponge and sand immersed in a spherical glass vessel filled with clear water, and a little larger than the sponge and sand. We place the sponge and sand in the center of the vessel as the yolk is placed in the center of an egg. We now have a space of clear water between the sand and the vessel.

Q. What part of this represents the Desire World?

A. The water as a whole will represent the Desire World, for just as the water percolates between the grains of sand through every pore of the sponge, and forms that clear layer, so the Desire World permeates both the dense Earth and the ether and extends beyond both these substances.

Q. How may we picture the World of Thought?

A. We know there is air in water, and if we think of the air in the water (in our illustration) as representing the World of Thought, we shall have a fair mental picture in which the World

of Thought, being finer and more subtle, interpenetrates the two denser worlds.

Q. Is this the full extent of the World of Thought?

A. No. Finally, imagine that the vessel containing the sponge, sand, and water is placed in the center of a large spherical vessel; then the air in the space between the two vessels would represent that part of the World of Thought which extends beyond the Desire World.

Q. How does this illustration apply to the other planets?

A. Each of the planets in our solar system has three such interpenetrating Worlds, and if we think of each of the planets consisting of three Worlds as being individual sponges, and of the fourth World, the World of Life Spirit, as being the water in a large vessel where threefold separate sponges swim, we shall understand that as the water in the vessel fills the space between the sponges and percolates through them, so the World of Life Spirit pervades interplanetary space and interpenetrates each planet.

Q. Do all the planets swim in the common World of Life spirit?

A. Yes, it forms a common bond between them, so that as it is necessary to have a boat and be able to control it if we wish to sail from America to Africa, so it is necessary to have a vehicle correlated to the World of Life Spirit under our conscious control in order to be able to travel from one planet to another.

Q. Are we also correlated to other solar systems?

A. In a manner similar to that in which the World of Life Spirit correlates us to the other planets in our own solar system does the World of Divine Spirit correlate us to the other solar systems.

—Ref. *Cosmo* pp. 51—55

Max Heindel's



Message

The Planetary Spirit of the Earth

The law of analogy holds good everywhere. It is the master key to all mysteries, and what applies to the microcosmic man also applies to the Macrocosmic God or the Divine Power. The animals are guided now by Spirits from *without*. At a later period they will become *indwelling Spirits*, and learn to guide their vehicles without assistance from other sources. Similarly it was with the Earth, as stated in the *Cosmo-Conception* and various other parts of our literature.

Up to 2,000 years ago, Jehovah had charge and guided the Earth from without, as the animals are guided by the Group Spirits. Thus, the Earth was held in its orbit by His power, and He was up to that time the Supreme God, but at the change made on Golgotha the Christ Spirit drew into our Earth in order that He might aid us to evolve faculties which Jehovah could not give us.

Jehovah gave us laws which hold us in check, but the Christ gives us Love. One is the restraining force, applied *from without*; the other is an impelling energy applied *from within*. Thus the Christ is now guiding the Earth in its orbit from within and will continue until we have learned to vibrate to that great attribute, Love, whereby we shall be able to supply the power

to our own planet and thus guide it in its orbit from within.

Christ is the highest Initiate of the Sun Period and, as such, has His dwelling place in the Sun. He is the Sustainer and Preserver of the whole solar system. In one sense it is right to speak of That which dwells within our Earth as a Ray, yet this does not convey the exact idea of what is the case. Perhaps we can get at the matter by an illustration. Let us liken the great Spirit in the Sun to a refiner of metal. He has upon His furnace a number of crucibles and is watching them all. Heat is melting these metals and throwing the dross to the top. The refiner gradually is skimming the crucibles, until at last the metal is absolutely beautiful and clear and He can see His face in each.

Similarly we may see that Christ turns His attention from one planet to another, and as He turns Himself to our Earth, for instance, His image is reflected in the Earth, but it is not a dead image. *It is a living, feeling, sentient being*, so full of life and feeling that we ourselves in our present dead state, dwelling in these bodies of Earth, can have no idea of that faculty of feeling possessed by the Indwelling Spirit of the Earth.

Thus, for a time, His energy is im-

parted to the picture as a focus, and while really being in the Sun, the Cosmic Christ feels everything that is going on in the Earth as if He actually were here present. That picture within, which, it must be understood, is not a picture in the ordinary sense of the word, is a counterpart, a part, of the Solar Christ. Through it He knows and feels and senses everything upon Earth as if He were actually present.

This is something that should be very thoroughly understood. That is really what is meant by omnipresence, so that while the Christ is the Indwelling Spirit of the Sun, He also is the Indwelling Spirit of the Earth, and must continue to hold this office of helpfulness for us, feeling everything, enduring everything that goes or would go with an actual presence, for our sakes.

Let us now consider for a moment what that which we call the Earth really is — that is to say, its origin. The solidification commenced in the Sun Period, when we were unable to vibrate at the high rate demanded to remain there. Thus we gradually worked ourselves out of the Sun and were projected into space.

The rate of vibration gradually was lowered until the middle of the Atlantean Epoch, and thus the Earth crystallized into a mass of stone, we might say. Thus, we ourselves made the Earth what it was, and if no help had been given we should have been unable to extricate ourselves from the meshes of matter.

Jehovah from without endeavored to help us by *laws*. To know the law and to follow it would, in time, aid us, provided we had the requisite strength, but no man is justified by the law, and by the law all Spirits must become further enmeshed. Therefore a new impulse had to be given, which should inscribe the law *into men's hearts*, for there is a great difference between what we do because we must for fear of an outside master who metes out a just retribution for every offense, and the inner urge which impels us to do right because it is right so to do. We recognize what is right when the law is inscribed in our hearts, and then we obey

its dictates unquestioningly, even though it may cause our whole being to vibrate in pain.

Thus we, collectively, are the Spirits of the Earth. We must some day guide the vehicle we have created. Jehovah guided it for us from without by means of laws, but as this was not sufficient to bring us to the point of individualization where we shall be able to take care of ourselves, Christ came in as a Savior and is helping us until the time comes that we shall have evolved a Love nature within ourselves which is sufficient to float the Earth. So there have been no other Spirits in the Earth. The Christ is here only temporarily to help us, and in time it will be our privilege to take up the task for ourselves and guide our planet as we want and as we should. The increased vibratory force already has made the Earth much less dense — much lighter — and in time it will become ethereal again as it once was. It will cease to be dead in sin. It will become alive in Love.



The spiritual fires in the Earth are brightest at this time of the year; now is the best opportunity for soul growth, for investigation and study of the deeper mysteries of life. Therefore it behooves us to use this present time to the very best advantage, patiently and prayerfully, knowing that among all other things in the world which change, this great wave of spiritual light will be with us in the winter season for ages to come. It will grow more and more brilliant as the Earth and ourselves evolve to higher degrees of spirituality.

This season of the year is the most propitious time to give and receive, so let us be sure to let our light shine on the great cosmic Christmas Tree, that it may be seen of men and attract them to the truths we know to be of such vital importance in the development of our fellow men.

—Max Heindel

WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

—Matthew 5:13-16

The Great Teacher, in speaking to His Disciples, enunciates to all the people of the world who are ready to respond to the Christ Ray, the gems of Truth and wisdom which light the Way to the spiritual heights. In His utterances are to be found the keys to the process of spiritual alchemy which transmutes the personality into the eternal part of the human being.

Salt may be said to symbolize the Truth, which acts as a dynamic leaven in the nature of man, accomplishing his evolution out of matter into spirit. Those who follow His ways attract into their inmost being the divine leaven which not only acts as the transforming agent within the individual, but also radiates out into his surroundings and gives an impetus, be it ever so small, to others to rise out of the hampering toils of materiality.

But if the aspirant ceases to strive, there is no real essence left in the "salt" — it no longer contains its "savour." Truth can affect us only as we permit it to enter into our hearts and minds. The true aspirant ever strives to listen to the inner voice, which always

urges him to direct his life according to God's laws.

The process of transmutation (purity and self-forgetting service) brings into being the soul body, that garment of light which shines with a pervasive luster that brightens the darkest corners of man's habitations. Its presence is always felt, even though unseen by most people. It is truly a "city . . . set on a hill" which "cannot be hid," and by the combined power of the soul bodies of humanity in general will the final Liberation of the Christ be effected.

The true aspirant — he who steadily fashions his soul body — is always ready to share his understanding — his light — with his fellowmen. His service is given willingly and gladly, with no thought of gain for himself. His aspiration is only to help those who are in need, however and wherever he can, and thus to glorify God.

"As a child that is born into the world requires nourishment, so also the Christ that is born *within* is a babe and requires to be nourished to the full stature of manhood. And as the physical body grows by a continual assimilation of material from the chemical region, the solids, liquids, and gases, so also, as the Christ grows, will the two higher ethers grow in volume and form a luminous cloud around the man or woman sufficiently discerning to set his or her face heavenward; it will invest the pilgrim with light so brilliant that he 'walks in the light' as a matter of fact."

This is the "Light of the World," the Christ made manifest in men.



ASTROLOGY'S RAY OF HOPE

E.J. NOEL

Every now and then, students of prophecy, and of the pyramid, the Bible, and the stars, publish their conclusions about the future for those seeking guidance and assurance during these troubled times. On the whole, most of them predict a future shrouded with impending disasters, cataclysms, wars, and almost constant difficulty. Yet most of them are not without some optimism. They do point to certain gleams of hope, usually maintaining that even in the most trying and uncertain of times there is a way around or out of the tribulations confronting humanity.

Seeming exceptions to this hopeful attitude are the material astrologers. In general, they have seemed content to limit themselves largely to a delineation of the unpleasant possibilities of the major adverse aspects and to predicting a future quite unrelieved by any ray of hope.

As most astrology students know, the more slowly the planets move and the longer their aspects to each other last, the more important and far-reaching their influence. Hence great emphasis rightly is placed upon the major configurations. A calculation of the general positions of the major planets up to the year 2000 is sufficient to show that Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune form a long series

of adverse aspects to each other in a manner which has not been duplicated for a long time. These "hostile vibrations" substantiating other means of predicting the shape of things to come *are* to be seen in the heavens. Since they seem to have held the almost exclusive attention of astrologers, the harmonious aspects which the same planets will form to each other in the decades ahead too often are ignored.

Perhaps the chief difference between "good" and "bad" aspects lies in the way the related forces of the planets concerned seek expression. In so-called good aspects between planets there is a harmonious blending of the combined forces leading to a happy consummation of their essential characteristics in a mutual endeavor, while in so-called bad aspects harmony is lacking, and stress, conflict, and discord prevail. Yet the goal may be the same, though the form or method of attaining the final result is radically different.

Besides the less numerous and perhaps less spectacular harmonious aspects which Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune form to each other, there is a close sextile of Neptune and Pluto lasting over ninety years. It is a rather striking fact that although it takes the slow-moving Neptune about thirteen years to transit a sign, it will have traveled more than

half way around the zodiac and be in Taurus before it moves out of orb of the sextile of Pluto. This aspect, which extends well into the next century, is due to the erratic orbit of Pluto, which causes the two planets to move at about the same speed decade after decade. Since they are on the outer fringe of the solar system, all the other planets and all that they signify — in fact, all that transpires within the solar system — must necessarily come within the scope of this constructive aspect. It is an aspect which towers over all other major and minor configurations and therefore over all temporary conflicts, upheavals, and world pain, casting a shining ray of hope in a dark and confusing world. Here we have a power for good far exceeding the ordinary course of events.

Granting that the mutually adverse aspects of Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune indicate a long series of tedious conflicts, hostilities, crises, and negative necessities, encountering the inevitable need not lead to a series of collapses or a spiraling downward to destruction and death of our civilization. For, much as a greater, more fundamental law may be invoked to overrule a lesser law, so may an aspect formed by the slower, more remote planets offset or dominate the aspects of the faster planets encompassed within their orbits.

The present sextile of Neptune and Pluto not only is above and beyond all the malefic aspects of all the other planets, but it also is of an unprecedented duration, exceeding that of all other major aspects combined. Moreover, the keyword of the sextile is "opportunity," hinting of opportunity such as mankind may not have known for ages.

Our analogy relating aspects and laws may be carried one step farther: just as a higher law seldom swings into activity unless strenuously invoked, neither may the stupendous resources and energies of divinity contained in this sextile intercede in the affairs of man unless humanity does all in its power to invite such

intercession. The measure of man's goodwill, his longing for a righteous peace, his mode of living, and his efforts for the universal welfare may well determine how soon and how much of the potencies behind this great aspect will come to our planet. Man is ever the arbiter of his destiny, and no combination of powers in the heavens can force him to choose the course he will pursue.

In general, humanity faces present and impending tribulations because of two fundamental needs: (1) the need of breaking away from the fascination of materialistic ideals — from the easy, expedient ways of dark selfishness and evil; (2) an equally urgent need of facing up to basic issues of human relationships, social betterment, universal progress, and freedom. The adverse aspects mentioned may be regarded as an index to the first need, and the Neptune-Pluto sextile as an index of the divine intent, working as a steady pressure toward the highest possible good of all concerned.

In a way, this sextile is like a symbol bringing to mind the rainbow which appeared in the clearing Atlantean atmosphere as a promise of God's sustaining love and help for the people of that day. He still reigns over all and His all-pervading "will to good" will yet establish His kingdom on Earth. Therefore, we need not despair that there is as yet so little response to the truth, blessedness, and fullness of the life Christ came to teach humanity.

When afflicted by other planets, neptunian energy expresses itself as the extreme left in politics, the perversions, crimes, and corruptions which prey upon humanity, the confused opinions arising from complicated and chaotic conditions, the feelings of futility and frustration resulting in the apathy which overwhelms so many, and as other sources of weakness and pain. Under aspects permitting its constructive expression, Neptune brings occult or mystical revelations and presents factors of divine and infinite importance. To it

must be attributed that rare generosity and infinite kindness which give without hope or thought of return, and an un-failing compassion for the unfortunate. His effect on groups and nations is felt as leveling, equalizing social processes, and on individuals as the ecstasy of self-surrender and other godly urges.

From Pluto radiate forces fostering great political, social, terrestrial, or personal cataclysms of all sorts. It deals ruthless destruction to forms and conditions no longer adequate and seeks ever to purge humanity of that which stands in the way of progress and in need of being relinquished. Negatively, Pluto has much to do with the ruthlessness of gangsters, racketeers, and dictators, the devastations of modern warfare, restrictive bureaucracies, compulsory or terroristic methods, and cyclonic conditions in general. Even in its better manifestations, Pluto does not hesitate to use forceful methods or even decree death to the part for the good of the whole, and, in the mystic, death to the lesser preceding birth to that which is greater. When entirely constructive, Pluto promotes regeneration, renewal, and raising of that which is old or dead, rebirth, and the greater life which follows death. It is a transforming, transfiguring fire bringing purification and life through pain.

The radiations of these subtle, remote planets are not easily "tuned in to" or easily directed. They require the coordination of many factors, and they affect groups primarily, though also those rare individuals well advanced in either good or evil. Here and there may be found the few but real enemies of Light, who react powerfully but negatively and destructively to these rays.

Apparently, only the truly noble souls who are the conscious or unconscious representatives of the Great White Brotherhood sense or respond to the benefic, upper side. As is ever to be expected when a new phase of divinity comes into expression on Earth, a strong, unremitting

effort is required of either groups or individuals to make themselves responsive. During this world period, at least, so great are the potentialities of Neptune and Pluto that they generally work out more readily through groups and nations than through individuals, although indirectly, and usually only through group work, they can and do transform human qualities by an infusion of the divine.

The possibilities of an ever-becoming, ever-new divinity are infinite and therefore quite incomprehensible. One hardly can hope to grasp much in advance what could happen as the result of a prolonged down-pouring of the combined benevolence of Neptune and Pluto on our troubled planet. However, faint impressions may perhaps be sensed, and meditation upon such impressions does pave the way for their manifestation. It is reasonable to believe that, among a host of other things, there will be much new scientific exploration above and beyond anything now known — explorations up through the stratosphere and far into interplanetary space on the one hand, and deep within the etheric and divine nature of man on the other, as science increases its awareness of cosmic and super-natural energies. It is inevitable that there be many surprising discoveries as more of Light descends on Earth.

Eventually, it is reasonable to hope, great numbers of men and women in all nations will respond as eagerly to an inner urge for spiritually significant living as they now succumb to the selfish urge for material and personal gain. In their quest for right solutions to age-old problems, they will arrive at new conceptions of God and of man, resulting in added "glory to God on high, and on Earth peace and goodwill toward all men." With the widespread abandonment of materialism mankind has chosen to follow for so long, the world will become ready to experience, not just a return of medieval mysticism or a revival of apostolic religion, but entirely new spiritual revelations. Moreover,

from humble, imperceptible beginnings may come the long awaited reappearance of the Mystery Schools on Earth — schools presenting further glimpses into the Eternal Wisdom as God reveals more of Himself and His work in new ways to meet the added capacities of new men.

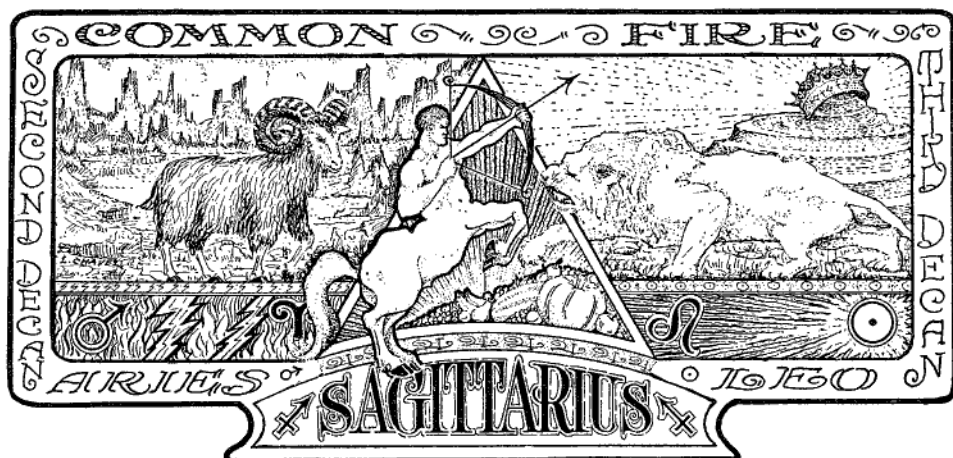
Man, heavily burdened and seeing only the immediate foreground, may sometimes question both the willingness and ability of God and His Angels to save humanity from grave disasters. Yet the seemingly slow release into the hands of man of the means and forces with which he can work out his salvation may well be a precautionary measure on the part of the Great White Brotherhood to minimize as far as possible the dangerous tendency of humanity to involve itself in self-destructive projects, in senseless departures into unknown, undesirable directions under the guidance of false "spiritual" leadership, and in pursuit of equally false mystical, social, and political goals. We may be certain that when the time is ripe, God will act through His agents, and that for the present man has much need of "patient persistence in well-doing" — even in the face of frequently disheartening conditions.

One wonders how much needless fear and anxiety could be spared the masses and their intellectual and political leaders in every nation had they but the sure knowledge occult students have of the existence of the Great White Brotherhood — the Invisible Government — as it seeks to guide with illimitable wisdom and resources the destinies of humanity. We who have this knowledge know that humanity never is permitted to be tried or burdened beyond its strength to endure, and that the very extent to which ancient errors and tendencies are being worked out in the present hardships is a tribute to man's inherent divinity and his strength.

In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the Lord is quoted as saying: "Whosoever there is the fading of the good and the uprising of evil, then I loose Myself forth into

birth. For the deliverance of the good, for the destruction of evil, for the enthroning of the right, I am born from age to age." This is an expression of the law behind the periodic appearance of world helpers and teachers of various grades and types. Always, when conditions on Earth become intolerably difficult, the Loving and Compassionate One Who is our God sends into incarnation a world helper who is in himself the embodiment of the particular fragment of His divinity that will meet the need of the time. The greater the need, the greater the one He sends. Remembering that the world situation was incredibly bad and hopeless at the time Christ came 2000 years ago should enable us to believe that the worse the present condition becomes, the more certain we may be that assistance will be given if it is sufficiently desired. Generally speaking, a world helper does two things: he brings from some high source the wisdom and spiritual energy needed (as Christ brought love), and he teaches humanity how to use the divine gift in working out its salvation.

Belief that a deliverer is coming is woven into many religious faiths and is therefore world-wide, being sensed by many. Among many Christians it is believed that Jesus or even the Christ is to come. Max Heindel stated that a world teacher would come "to give the Christian Religion impetus in a new direction." In view of the fact that he mentioned Capricorn as a sign closely linked with world saviors, it is significant that late in this century and within a space of a few years, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune make repeated conjunctions in that sign. However, it is hardly likely to prove profitable to concern ourselves with undue speculation as to who will come or how and when and where he will appear. If we can accept the possibility of such an appearance, we should be able to believe that whomever the Father sends will come in time, and that he will be well qualified to meet the needs of the time.



The Children of Sagittarius, 1978

Birthdays — November 23 to December 22

Third of the fiery triplicity, the sign Sagittarius represents common fire or mutable spirit. Natives of this sign are usually to be found in the shifting strata of life. Constant change in activity and circumstances seems necessary for their well-being.

The great benefic, Jupiter, rules Sagittarius and seems to shed a benign influence over the lives of those born under this ninth-house sign. Usually cheerful and optimistic, these natives are apt to be well-liked in their spheres of activity, especially if the Sun is well aspected.

Natives of this double-bodied sign may partake predominantly of the animal side of its symbol, the Centaur, or they may have progressed to the ability to respond to the human part of the Celestial Archer. The latter generally are honored and respected for their integrity, honorable conduct, and philanthropic works.

The easy-going, optimistic Sagittarians seek to make a favorable impression upon their associates with their genial, understanding ways. Most of them have a great love for personal freedom and

truth and may appear to be continually occupied in a restless search for experience and wisdom.

Among the occupants of this fiery sign are to be found members of legal, religious, medical, educational, and political positions where higher learning, idealism, and benevolence are required. A desire to impart the fruits of their experiences or discoveries to others may cause them to excel as writers, lecturers, divines, or legislators. Outspoken in their opinions, they usually are fond of formulating theories, opinions, and legal or moral codes in behalf of law enforcement and conventional conduct.

As children, these natives seem to learn quickly from observation, are as a rule truthful and obedient, but may be restless and blunt. Acquiring tact, persistence, and a sense of responsibility in youth will be a strong factor in later worthwhile accomplishment.

As the solar month opens on November 23, the life-giving Sun and the Great Benefic Jupiter are in trine aspect, and this powerful vibration is a strong indication of health, wealth, and happiness. There is an abundance of vitality, which is proof against very severe onslaughts of

disease, and even when particularly unfavorable planetary influences succeed in breaking down the native's resistance, recovery likely will be so rapid as to seem miraculous. This nearly impregnable condition of health is all the more unassailable because it is backed by a disposition that is at once sunny and jovial. This characteristic also inclines the fortunate possessors of this aspect to be beloved by all with whom they come in contact. They are trusted because they never betray a trust and their good judgment and executive ability enable them to help others. Financial fortune is favored, and though apt to be religiously conservative, these people shine in government work.

A less desirable side of the jupiterian influence is indicated by the square of Venus, which lasts from November 23 to December 18. These natives need to cultivate control of the emotions, to practice abstemious living, and to respect the laws of convention and decency.

Mercury conjuncts Neptune as the solar month opens, and continues until December 7. This planetary pattern gives a mind peculiarly adapted to the occult art. Such people usually succeed in occult science and often develop a supernormal faculty. They are particularly good as magnetic healers.

A more materialistic mental influence is indicated by the conjunction of Mercury and Mars, lasting from November 23 to December 3. Mental energy, enthusiasm, and dexterity are hereby indicated, but whether these qualities are used for constructive or destructive purposes will depend upon the sign, house position, and other aspects.

Also beginning as the solar month opens, and lasting until November 28, is the square between Saturn and Mars. This vibratory pattern indicates that the native has yet to work out of his nature such undesirable traits as selfishness, cruelty, a quick temper, and untruthfulness. Although this is a thoroughly

"bad" aspect, it should be remembered that if the other configurations in the chart are favorable, it will only apply in a mild measure.

Saturn sextiles Uranus from November 23 to December 22, indicating for all those born during this solar month a strong intuition, along with ambition, determination, and the ability to concentrate upon large problems, and to exercise authority, plan, and systematize. The mind is both mechanical and ingenious.

The square of Saturn to Neptune all solar month gives a tendency to loss by deception, treachery or fraud.

Jupiter trines Mars on November 23, but quickly edges off. This aspect favors financial prosperity, and indicates ingenuity and constructive ability, as well as good health. There is a love for travel.

The conjunction of Mars with Neptune lasts from November 23 to December 4, indicating the need for these natives to cultivate self-control, moderation in speech and action, refinement, and respect for law.

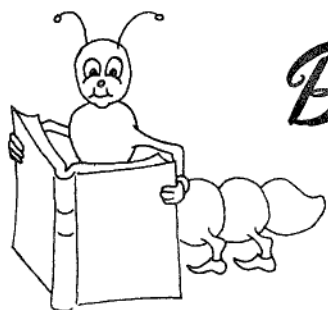
The conjunction of Sun with Neptune lasts from December 2 to 18, raising the vibrations of the native's aura, but undesirable elements are apt to be attracted from the invisible world. High ideals, positive thinking, and clean living are goals for these natives to seek.

From December 2 to 9 the Sun and Mercury are in conjunction, favoring the memory and mentality on the days when the aspect is more than 3 degrees.

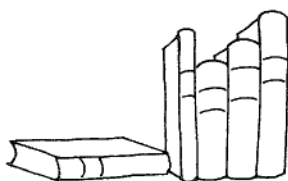
An excellent mental aspect, Mercury trine Jupiter, lasts from December 4 to 22. A cheerful, optimistic attitude here is indicated. The mind is broad, versatile, and able to reason correctly and form a reliable judgment.

The Sun and Mars are in conjunction from December 14 to 22, producing a super-abundance of vital energy along with dauntless determination and courage. The disposition is frank and open but

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Book Review



EMMA & I

Emma & I, by Sheila Hocken,
E.P. Dutton, New York, 1977.

This is a vividly-written account primarily of a woman's experiences with her seeing-eye dog. Almost blind in childhood, Mrs. Hocken ultimately became completely blind. Eventually she was found eligible to receive the devoted, chocolate-colored Labrador, Emma, who was to become her guide, companion, and "court jester."

Emma's personality, intelligence, and sense of both purpose and fun seemed to be unique, even in dogdom. Thoroughly competent and businesslike when "in harness," she was not above making a ritual of sneaking food from the cat's dish during her free time — knowing perfectly well that Mrs. Hocken could not see what she was up to. She once saved Mrs. Hocken's life by pushing her out of the path of a speeding car and always unerringly guided her to her destinations. Often, just the name of the desired store was sufficient to bring Emma to the proper location. On the other hand — and this seemed to be her only lapse of discipline when on the job — time and again Emma guided an embarrassed Mrs. Hocken into the butcher shop when she

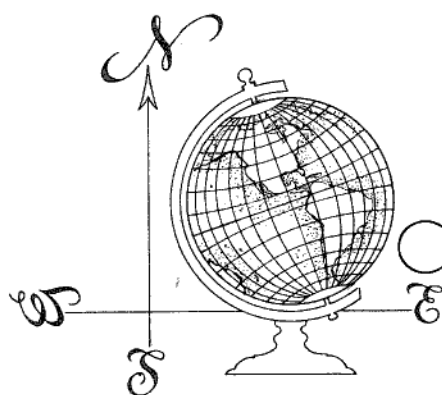
did not want to go there, to receive a "handout" from an amused butcher.

In addition to the lively descriptions of this delightful dog's character, devotion, and friendliness, the book offers insight into the training given to both seeing-eye dogs and their owners. It also makes the reader aware of the mental and emotional stresses under which blind people live and of the prejudiced behavior of a well-meaning but not sufficiently sensitive public that only adds to their problems.

The book ends on a note which many stories of this type cannot attain. Mrs. Hocken determined to undergo an operation, the results of which could not be predicted — "What did I have to lose?" — and, "miraculously," her sight was restored. The story of her adjustment to light, color, the printed page, and "the way people look," here compressed into a few pages, would make a revealing book in itself.

Emma, who had guided her faithfully for nine years, then was honorably retired into a carefree, joyous "dog's life."

This book is an enthralling animal story, an inspiring tale of one handicapped woman's determination and ability to live as normal a life as possible, and a true account of hope triumphant. We recommend it to everyone.



COMMENTARY

In its March 6 issue, *Newsweek* discussed the relatively new "lay reform" movement that is gaining momentum among the various Christian denominations. The article, entitled "Power to the Laity," defines the phenomenon as follows:

In essence, the New Reformation is a rising independence among millions of laymen, mostly Protestant, who no longer feel any real need in their lives for directions from an ordained clergy. Like the Protestant sectarians who followed Luther literally in creating a "priesthood of all believers," the most radical of these lay Christians have established their own prayer groups, "house churches" and other religious communities where members worship and minister to each other without benefit of clergy.

In recent years the lay Christian movement has grown rapidly within established church circles. One advocate of lay reform is quoted as saying: "There's a tremendous quest for being Christian in the world, not in the church." Advocates attend fellowship retreats run by laymen, take courses in "lay theology," and respond to the "preaching" of other laymen speaking as evangelists, poets, or in other capacities.

Many members of this reform movement are charismatics of both Protestant and Catholic faiths. These people believe that, by experiencing the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they have been "born again" and do not require the ministrations of churches or ordained clergy. On the contrary, many of these individuals themselves now want to preach and minister to their fellow men, as lay-preachers in their own right.

In addition to this individualistic trend, there is, as said, also a trend toward the establishment of small "house churches," in which several families living

in the same vicinity pool resources "and try to live total Christian lives by ministering to each other and to the poor." Said a spokesman for one such group: "The only way *we* can really be a Christian church is to live as a community with pastoral leadership that is tested and affirmed by the whole community — not one that is imposed on us by the outside."

Although it is too soon to evaluate completely the effect of these trends upon organized religion, there can be little doubt that the influence of established churches and their clergy is not as widespread as formerly. The "religious establishment" — of whatever denomination — undoubtedly has lost some of its dominion over the populace. Some clergymen, indeed, have expressed themselves in sympathy with the individualistic trend but, as one Jesuit theologian, himself a charismatic, said: "My main concern is that this personal experience will lead to a very privatized understanding of the Christian vocation which the Gospels never intended."

A more active lay movement within the churches — particularly the Catholic church — also is making itself felt. These people, although wishing to remain within the sanctuary of the organized church, also seek a wider role for the individual in matters that traditionally have been considered the exclusive domain of clergy.

The article concludes:

Indeed, without an active laity there would be no churches — a fact that makes many clergy welcome the lay movement despite its incipient anti-clericalism. But if the movement is to transform the churches, the clergy will have to rethink its own role and purpose. Protestants and

Catholics are beginning to realize that Jesus himself was not an ordained clergyman and that the real Biblical distinctions between ministers and laymen are based on function rather than status. The best of the new breed of laymen seem bent on transforming churches into places where members can minister to each other and to the world — which is presumably what Jesus intended in the beginning.

Throughout all this, the call to *individual service* seems to sound a dominant note. The individual desire to preach, and more importantly, to *minister*, to others, is becoming prominent in the hearts of thinking, concerned persons. Many people no longer are content to be part of a passive congregation, being preached to from the pulpit and unquestioningly following theological directives. The desire for active participation in the solution of human problems and the meeting of human needs, in a spiritual frame of reference, is becoming ever more powerful and will not be denied.

In *Letters to Students*, p. 93, we are told that there are so many religious cults in the world because human beings are separated from each other by their existence in dense physical bodies. "Because of this limitation, (the Ego) is incapable of appreciating absolute and universal truth; and, consequently, religions teaching only partial truth had to be given."

We know, also, that the various human Races must be broken down into individuals before a strong, united humanity fulfilling its divine potential can come into being — on the same principle that old houses must be reduced to their individual bricks before these bricks can be brought together to build a single sturdy new edifice.

Perhaps this is true in a religious sense, also. Perhaps members of the various denominations of the Christian Church must be allowed wider latitude to act as individuals within their organized churches (or outside of them, if necessary) before all humanity can and will unite together in the esoteric Christianity that is to be the future universal religion of love and brotherhood.

On the other hand, in view of the importance of ritual to the strengthening of the vital body, an exodus of parishioners from churches in which ritual still plays a significant role may signal a loss for those individuals.

The vital body also is strengthened by sincere, selfless service, however. To the extent that any proponent of the "lay reform" movement does embark upon and maintain an individual ministry of service to his fellow men, he cannot help but reap the benefits of soul growth.



THE CHILDREN OF SAGITTARIUS

(Continued from page 563)

apt to be too blunt at times. These are people of action, foremost factors in the world's work, but they may need to cultivate gentleness and consideration for others.

From December 15 to 22, Venus and Uranus are in conjunction suggesting mental alertness, quick, intuitive perception, and personal magnetism. There is a love for art, music, and poetry, but the native needs to strive toward high ideals in all endeavors.

A splendid aspect to Venus is the sextile from Saturn, lasting from November 25 to December 22. These natives have so lived in past lives as to be faithful and true, just and methodical, dependable, and of sterling honesty. They are of unimpeachable morality and have simple taste, so that they are apt to incur honor, esteem, and good health.

The sextile of Neptune to Pluto all the solar month increases the spiritual qualities of the nature — fine, basic tendencies for better living.

??? READERS' QUESTIONS ???

SPIRITUAL vs. PSYCHIC DEVELOPMENT

Question:

I have seen people perform feats of psychic ability, such as bending spoons by thought control. Are psychic and spiritual development the same thing?

Answer:

Psychic and positive spiritual development, although in a way related, are two different qualities leading the individuals concerned essentially in two different directions. Psychism indicates a sensitivity to the inner Worlds that is not necessarily one of understanding. Neither is it necessarily under control of the will of the psychic individual. Positive spiritual development also indicates sensitivity, but of an affirmative sort. It represents an active, knowing, willful endeavor by the person to increase his abilities to function in and comprehend the higher Worlds — as well as the Physical World.

Spiritual development posits a strengthening of the individual's inner soul power, which manifests as love, kindness, and an ever-intensifying moral sense in which ideals such as goodness and honesty are refined far beyond the average person's conception thereof. It requires inner purity, a continuing endeavor to live strictly within the bounds of natural Law, and an intense, earnest devotion to God and to the principles of selfless service that shows itself in every facet of the person's being, thoughts, and activities. Only on the basis of so affirmative — indeed, so *noble* — a code of conduct and life style, can anyone expect eventually to penetrate fully the mysteries of the inner Worlds and become a creative participant in their continuing fulfillment.

Spiritual development, in other words, demands hard and unrelenting work on

one's character. Psychism, on the other hand, is by and large a negative state in which the individual, although perhaps able to perform feats that excite the awe and admiration of his fellow men, rarely operates entirely under his own volition. Psychics can come under the control of earthbound Spirits who constitute themselves as "spirit guides" and are, in many cases, unscrupulous entities seeking to coerce human victims for their own nefarious purposes. Rarely, too, does psychism promote concern with one's overall inner development.

A psychic who, for instance, can bend spoons by thought control, does of course attract attention to himself and perhaps does perform a useful function by demonstrating to a still skeptical public the power of thought. Unless at the same time, however, he endeavors in a positive way to develop himself *spiritually*, along pure, selfless lines and with selfless service as his object, he is to some degree "missing the boat" as far as his own evolution is concerned.

Eventually the entire human race is destined to achieve perfect spiritual development, in the image of Christ. Those who now perform feats of psychic legerdemain solely for the worldly glory in which, consequently, they bask, probably will find it much more difficult in future lives to engage their motivations and their will power to move along lines of positive progress — which, eventually, they will have to do.

PRE-BIRTH PANORAMAS

Question:

We are told that, before an Ego comes to re-birth on Earth, he is shown panoramas of several possible forthcoming lives and allowed to make his choice. This sounds much like a replay — as though we have been through these

experiences before, played our parts incorrectly, and now will have to play the scene again. Is this a correct appraisal?

Answer:

In a limited sense, it is. Certainly each of the prospective lives, from among which the Ego is allowed to choose one, has its portion of debts of destiny and lessons to learn left over from former lives. In this sense, the panorama could be viewed in the nature of a replay. That is, because the Ego made specific mistakes or omissions in the past, he may expect to find himself in certain situations in a future life that will require either a repetition of former circumstances (although probably in different guise or on a different level) or, at least, renewed involvement with other Egos with whom he has maintained contact in the past.

We must bear in mind, however, that the pre-birth panoramas can appear in outline form only. General, overall situations are indicated to the Ego, but not the details. It will be the Ego's task to furnish these details in the life he chooses to live — that is, the attitude, conduct, practical measures, and degree of understanding, compassion, etc., that he will elect to manifest as he (hopefully) learns the lessons of his new life. There is no way in which a pre-birth panorama could show this, since the Ego determines the details for himself only after he encounters the "hard material realities" of earthly life.

While still in the heaven worlds, spiritually astute and unfettered by physical clogs, the Ego is much wiser than when on Earth. He readily understands the need to satisfy the Law of Cause and Effect as well and as quickly as possible in order to get on with his evolution, and he is likely to be quite willing to accept a "hard" life if it is pictured to him. Once born, however, enmeshed in material surroundings and somewhat removed from the cushioning of the spiritual worlds, he will find the going difficult. The degree of determination, persistence, and spiritual understanding which he then commands will deter-

mine how well he fills in the details of his new Earth life.

PERFECTION OF GOD; IMPERFECTION OF MAN

Question:

Since we are not perfect, but are a part of God, does it not follow that God Himself is not perfect, and that He is still in the making of Himself?

Answer:

At first glance, it indeed may seem that God is imperfect since we, as components of His Being, are imperfect. Closer examination of the facts, however, will show that this is not so.

One of the reasons for human imperfection is the fact of the personality's selfishness. This results in all the difficulties we cause each other. The personality is selfish, however, not because God Himself is imperfect and therefore cannot stop us, but because He allows us to be so. He gives us the choice of being selfish or unselfish, that we may learn from our own actions. When, in consequence, we do choose to think only of ourselves, God is able to turn this to good, both because other people learn from what we do and because we ourselves eventually will have to face and transmute the deeds done.

To be able to turn evil into good while at the same time allowing the development of free will, which encompasses both good and evil, shows, we believe, a great deal of perfection. God knows that even our wrongs eventually will lead us back to Him, because He is the Source of all in our solar system.

We see, then, that Perfection is able to allow imperfection to manifest without compromising its own integrity.



Blessed is he who is such a friend to humanity that he sees the good in every man, for his own Spirit shall be constantly enriched by the Christ Spirit.

WHOLENESS OF BEING

DIANA DUPRE



“Wilt thou be made whole?” was the question Christ Jesus asked the invalid waiting beside the Pool of Bethesda. (*John* 5:6) It is a question that also might well be asked of every human being today.

By being “made whole,” Christ Jesus did not refer to physical well-being alone. He referred to the spiritual, mental, moral, and emotional, as well as the physical, characteristics of the individual — to all four of his vehicles. Wholeness cannot be based on the health or perfection of one element alone, because all facets of a person’s being are intricately intertwined and cannot be separated from each other. The weakest link in an individual necessarily will reduce the efficiency of all his other attributes, just as the weakest link in a chain will impair the usefulness of the entire unit.

We know that many adults who are physically mature are not mentally or emotionally mature. As a result, deficiencies in such a person’s attitude and performance exist, sometimes so severely as to require help from, or interference by, psychiatrists, social workers, law enforcement agencies, and others. These individuals have not developed a mature outlook on life and, despite evident physical preparedness, they are not ready, mentally or emotionally, to take on the duties of responsible adulthood.

Occult students know that certain laws govern the maturing of human bodies and the unfoldment of human spiritual powers. Unless these laws are obeyed, imbalances occur, with a resulting lack of wholeness apparent in the individual. Some people transgress these laws in ignorance, and they will have to reap the consequences. Other people, fully cognizant, knowingly

flaunt these laws, and their penalties will be far more severe because they deliberately have sinned.

The one law that, more than all others, has an effect on human maturity and wholeness of being, is the Law of Consequence, sometimes known as the Law of Cause and Effect. The mature person accepts the fact that, as we are told in *Gal.* 6:7, “What a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” Every individual alone is responsible for the condition of his bodies, for his attitude, and for the surroundings in which he lives and works. He has presided at the construction of his archetype and at the building of his various vehicles, and he has, in concert with other human Egos and beings from other life-waves, assisted in laying the foundation of his immediate earthly environment.

Acceptance of individual responsibility for one’s actions is a major step toward wholeness of being. When we begin to accept responsibility, we begin to concern ourselves with the nature of our thoughts and deeds: if they are basically useful to others or if they are selfish; if they are in harmony with what we know of Natural Law; if they have accomplished the purposes intended; if sufficient judgment and discrimination have been used; if they have been, not only well-intentioned, but also appropriate to the situation.

This type of examination is best accomplished in the exercise of retrospection, when we review our deeds of the day just ended. Thus retrospection, regularly and sincerely performed, aids in achieving wholeness. Once we learn consistently to distinguish among our wise and foolish actions and to build on the wise while making amends for the

foolish, we are well on the way to correcting our internal imbalances. To act positively on what we discover about ourselves in the retrospective process automatically is to begin to correct undesirable conditions which, heretofore, have hindered us from realizing our full potential as adult human beings. Of course, sincerity and intensity of effort both are essential to this corrective action.

The Law of Rebirth, too, bears considerably on the state and degree of our wholeness. A person's condition in the present life is in large part closely related to developments in his previous lives. If retrospection fails to reveal the reason for a particular state of ill health or for particular difficulties in his relationships with fellow human beings, he can be reasonably sure that something self-engendered from his more remote past is accountable. What we learn in one life is available for us to use in the next life. What we do not learn and, more significantly, what we *refuse* to learn, is presented to us in more intense lesson form in a subsequent life, until we finally bow to evolutionary pressure and learn, perhaps in spite of ourselves.

Because we have a measure of free will, we ourselves determine what we learn in a particular lifetime and what we put off until later. The more we choose to put off, the more we will suffer from a lack of wholeness. Thus free will, too, plays a significant role in the state of human well-being. Although some of our encounters and experiences are pre-destined, stemming from causes unleashed in former lives, we alone determine the way in which we will react to these, and to all, our experiences. If we approach life positively, sincerely striving to do the right thing, we increase our margin of growth — of wholeness — significantly. If, however, our attitude is resentful, hateful, lazy, or unabatedly selfish, we will not make progress and, indeed, we will

intensify our imbalances and create difficult future conditions for ourselves.

The degree of wholeness which a person has attained may be judged by the extent to which his approach to life and its problems has become positive. The mature person sees the experiences of life as opportunities for growth, and he tries to learn from them whatever lessons they offer for his inner fulfillment. He wastes no time in self-pity or in making excuses for himself. The mature individual is not easily swayed or upset. He had become stabilized by the power of the Christ, the Love-Wisdom aspect of Deity.

The mentally or emotionally immature person, however, reacts in kind to the vibrations directed toward him: hate is met with hate, force with force. To him, problems become injustices, and resentment rather than desire to learn colors his actions. The love of which he is capable is primarily that of self, and there is little doubt that he will have many harsh lessons to repeat at a later time.

An understanding of the twin Laws of Rebirth and Consequence increases a person's appreciation of the wisdom and justice of Deity, and offers the expanded vision necessary for wholeness of being. The person goes beyond his own immediate individual interests to the realization that the welfare of every human being is equally precious in the sight of God. Every human Ego is subject to the twin Laws, and every human Ego must undergo the same struggle to establish and maintain wholeness. Selfishness and personal ambition have no place in this scheme. Only as we work together, helping each other achieve the common goal, will the human race advance into its pre-destined state of perfection.

The sooner we make the decision for wholeness, the sooner we will have inner peace, and the sooner outer peace and the wholeness of human unity will prevail throughout the world.



HEALING

COOPERATION WITH THE HEALING FORCE

Healing Power permeates the universe. By developing purity and love, we can become instruments for and channels of this divine Force. By eliminating all that is negative within us, and by devoting ourselves to the interests and welfare of our fellow men, we can open for others the floodgates of cosmic love and healing.

The patient who requests healing must have faith in this Power, and respond to it by endeavoring to develop purity of consciousness and love of all life. Just as every effective channel for the Healing Force must be a "clean vessel," so also must every potential recipient of healing try to enhance his own purity, so that the Power may most effectively flow through him. Both the channel and the recipient must remain conscious of the essential unity between themselves and God, the Source of the Healing Power.

Spiritual healing begins when the patient's awareness of his relationship to God, the Great Healer, is intensified. If the patient can open himself sufficiently to feel the Healing Power flowing through him, his Higher Self — the god within — is aroused. As a result, he is strengthened to work more actively on his own problems and transmute the factors leading to his illness.

If the patient responds in this way, he learns, in time, to become his own healer. This is the normal state of affairs for each Ego. The admonition, "Physician, heal thyself," is applicable to everyone and,

eventually, will have to be followed by every human being.

There is nothing phenomenal about perfect health; it is the predestined state of mankind. The human healer — that is, the one who serves as a channel for the Healing Force — can inspire the patient with this truth by demonstrating his own positive demeanor. Such an example also may encourage the patient to correct his previous misconceptions and misbehavior and strengthen both the faith and the willingness to cooperate with Natural Law that encourage well-being.

Relax, close your eyes, and make a mental picture of the pure white rose in the center of the Rosicrucian Emblem on the west wall of our Pro-Ecclesia, and concentrate on *Divine Love and Healing*.

Visible helpers are just as necessary as Invisible Helpers and our friends and patients may share in a high privilege, as well as add much to the power of liberated healing force, by joining us in prayer for the sick. Our Healing Service is held every evening in the Healing Temple at 6:30 P.M. and Pro-Ecclesia at 4:45 P.M., when the Moon is in a cardinal sign on the following dates:

December..... 2 — 8 — 15 — 23 — 29



GOD'S EXTRA SPECIAL LIGHT

DAGMAR FRAHME

"Come on, Rebecca, it's not far," urged Daniel, tugging gently on his little sister's arm.

"I don't want to," whispered Rebecca, pulling back.

"But you *like* babies," Daniel said.

"But I don't like to go anywhere. You know that," said Rebecca in a soft, sad little voice. "Everybody laughs at me when I walk."

"Nobody's going to laugh at you when I'm around," Daniel said fiercely, pulling back his shoulders and trying to look taller than he was. "Didn't I punch Levi in the nose last week when he laughed at you?"

Rebecca nodded. "But they'll laugh anyhow, later. They always do. Please, Daniel, I don't want to go."

Daniel frowned. He knew why Rebecca didn't want to walk anywhere. One of her legs was withered and much shorter than her other leg. She had to drag it along behind her because she couldn't make it move the way it should. And besides that, she couldn't walk anywhere without a cane.

Daniel knew that the children of the village did laugh and jeer at her when she went by, and he knew that sometimes even grownups whispered about her behind their hands.

Once the wife of the village scribe had said, "What a burden Rebecca's poor mother has to bear, with such a deformed child. I don't know how she can stand it. Thank heaven all my children are healthy and strong."

Rebecca had heard this, and it made her so unhappy she cried all night. After that, she hardly ever went out of her own yard. She often hid in the goat shed when visitors came to the house, and she wouldn't go anywhere unless her mother or her father told her she had to.

"You can't stay home all the rest of your life," Daniel said impatiently. He didn't mean to sound impatient, but he so much wanted Rebecca to go with him that his words came out that way. "And you can't hide all the rest of your life, either."

"I *am* going to stay home all the rest of my life," said Rebecca. "And I *am* going to hide. I don't want anybody to see me, ever!"

"Please, Rebecca," begged Daniel. "Come with me just this one time."

"No!" answered Rebecca, sounding more unhappy than Daniel ever had heard her. "And quit bothering me!"

Daniel looked at her, then shrugged his shoulders and, without another word, turned and went out the door.

"What do I care if she sees the baby or not," he muttered to himself, kicking a stone as he started down the path across the fields. "It's just a baby. She's seen babies before. It doesn't matter if she sees this one."

That is what Daniel said, but deep down inside, it was not really what he thought. Something kept telling him that it was very important for Rebecca to see this baby, and he couldn't make that something be quiet.

"Nuts!" said Daniel, kicking the stone so hard that it was lost in the grass.

Daniel went on down the path, in the direction of the cave where travelers who stopped at the inn usually kept their animals. He didn't really want to go there again. He had been there the evening before with his parents. Now he wanted to play with his friends. But there it was, that mysterious something, again pushing his feet in the direction of the cave.

Just what was so special about this baby, Daniel could not have said. It *was* strange for a baby to be born in the animals' cave, he knew, but the village was so full of strangers now that the inn really wasn't big enough to hold all of them. Many of them had to sleep by the side of the road, even though the weather was very cold and the wind blew hard at night. So it probably was a good thing that the baby could be in the cave, where it was at least a little warmer.

Daniel came to the cave and looked inside. There was the baby, still in the manger as it had been the night before, and there was the baby's beautiful mother. Daniel didn't see the baby's father. Maybe he had gone out to buy something for his family to eat. The animals were there too, lying still, and Daniel was surprised at how quiet they were. It was almost too much to expect that sheep and oxen and the innkeeper's big, yellow dog would be quiet just so a baby could sleep — but, Daniel had to admit, there *was* something unusual about this baby.

Daniel tiptoed to the manger, and the beautiful lady looked at him and smiled.

"Hello, Daniel," she said.

Daniel wondered how she knew his name. He hadn't told her when he had been there the evening before.

But he smiled back and said, "Hello." Then he said, "Have you named the baby yet?"

"His name is Jesus," answered the lady.



Daniel looked down at the baby. He was smiling in his sleep, and a soft light seemed to be glowing all around him.

"I want my sister to see the baby," Daniel blurted out without meaning to, "but she won't come."

"Your sister is Rebecca, isn't she?" asked the lady.

"Yes, but — but — how did you know?" Daniel was surprised.

"Your mother came back to see us this morning," said the lady. "She told me all about you and Rebecca."

"Oh," said Daniel. "Then you know that Rebecca walks funny and that people laugh at her."

"Yes, I know," the lady said gently. "I know she finds it hard to go anywhere, but I would like to meet her, and I would like her to see the baby."

"Do you think it's important that she sees the baby?" asked Daniel.

"Yes, I do," answered the lady.
 "I do too, but I don't know why," said Daniel. "Do you?"

"Yes, but instead of telling you why, it would be better for Rebecca just to come. Then you both will see."

"Oh," said Daniel again. He wasn't at all satisfied with that, but something told him not to bother the lady any more. So he simply said, "I'll try to make her come, but I'm not sure she will."

"Try hard, Daniel," the lady said. "It really is important."

Daniel walked slowly home, trying to think of how he could talk Rebecca into going to the cave with him. Mother or Father could make her do it, but he didn't want to ask them, because he really couldn't explain to them why he wanted Rebecca to go.

Then, suddenly, Daniel stopped in his tracks and smiled.

"That's it!" he said to himself. "Why didn't I think of that before?"

And he ran the rest of the way home, quite sure now that everything was going to work out just right.

Late that night, after their parents were in bed, Daniel tiptoed into the little room where Rebecca slept. He touched her shoulder gently.

"Wake up, Rebecca," he whispered.

Rebecca blinked her eyes and raised herself up on her elbow.

"Daniel!" she exclaimed. "What do you want? It's the middle of the night."

"Shhh," whispered Daniel. "Don't wake Mother and Father. We can go see the baby now. Everybody is asleep, so nobody will be outside to laugh at you."

"But it's the middle of the night!" repeated Rebecca.

"Would you go any other time?" asked Daniel, sounding almost angry.

Rebecca stared at Daniel, his face stern in the flickering light of his candle.

"You really want me to go that much?" she asked.

"Yes, Rebecca, please," he whispered. "It's important."

"Why?" asked Rebecca.

"I don't know," said Daniel with a sigh. "I just know it is. *Please* come."



Rebecca looked at him again and smiled just a little. Daniel always had been good to her, and besides being her brother, he really was her only friend. If visiting a baby in the middle of the night was so important to him, she decided, she could do what he asked this once, even though she thought it was a silly idea.

"All right, Daniel," she said. "I'll go."

A little while later, Daniel closed the door quietly behind them, and they started down the path toward the cave. There was little moonlight, but the bright star that had shone over the village the night before was still there, so it was not too hard to see.

Still, it was a long walk for Rebecca, and she was glad she had Daniel's strong arm as well her cane to lean on. She also was glad no one else was up to see her go by. At least, for once, she could go somewhere and know that no one was laughing at her or talking about her bad leg.

When they came to the cave, Rebecca

was surprised to see how light it was inside, even though no candles or torches had been lit.

"That's how it was last night, too," whispered Daniel.

The baby's mother and father were seated on a pile of straw that had been placed next to the manger. They looked up as Daniel and Rebecca came in.

"So you have come after all, Rebecca," said the lady, smiling. "I am so glad."

"Daniel said I should see the baby," said Rebecca, looking down at little Jesus, who was awake and looking up with wide, bright eyes.

Rebecca had seen many babies. Her mother's friends often brought them to the house. She liked babies. They gurgled and cooed when she held them and tickled the bottoms of their feet, and they never laughed at her or even noticed her bad leg.

But, somehow, she never had seen a baby just like this one. He looked like other babies, but there was something different about him, too. The light all around him was one special thing, but there was something else, too — something she couldn't explain.

"He is special, isn't he?" she whispered at last.

"Yes, my dear, he is special," the lady said softly. "Someday, when he is grown up, God will send a great Light into him. And when people see that Light, they will learn to love each other and to help make each other well."

Rebecca thought about this for a minute. She knew that if people really loved her, they wouldn't laugh at her. She knew that the wise doctors who had examined her leg said there was nothing they could do to help her get well.

"That's hard to do, isn't it?" she asked.

"It is very hard to do," the lady agreed. "It is so hard to do that people can't seem to love each other or help make each other well all by themselves. And so little Jesus is going to let God

shine His extra special Light down on him. Then the Light will be there for all the people to see."

"But little Jesus has light around him already," said Rebecca.

"That is because he already is so exceptionally good, even without God's extra special Light," the lady explained.

Rebecca stood, leaning on her cane and looking down at the baby. It was hard to believe that such a little boy someday would help people make each other well.

Finally she sighed. "I wish — " she began, but didn't finish what she was going to say.

"What do you wish, Rebecca?" the lady asked in her sweet voice.

Rebecca hesitated. Then she whispered, "I wish God's extra special Light were shining already. Then maybe my leg could get well and I wouldn't walk funny any more."

"Maybe that extra special Light already is shining, my dear," the lady said softly. "Wait a little while, and see."

Daniel and Rebecca both looked at her, surprised, but she didn't seem to want to talk any more. So they said good-by and went out of the cave, back into the cold night.

* * * * *

Next morning, the children's mother was baking bread over the hot coals of the fire when she heard a giggle. Looking over her shoulder, she saw Rebecca and Daniel standing, hand in hand, in the doorway. She never had seen Rebecca look so happy or so straight and tall. Instead of scolding them for not doing the early-morning chores, which they should have been doing, Mother smiled and said, "What are you two up to?"

Then Rebecca took her hand out of Daniel's and started to walk across the room.

Mother stared. Rebecca was not using her cane. She was not dragging her

withered leg. In fact, her leg was not withered any more. It was a good, strong, healthy leg, and Rebecca was walking the way everybody else walked. There seemed to be nothing wrong with her at all.

"Look, Mother!" Rebecca was so happy, she couldn't help laughing. "Look at me! My leg is well! I don't walk funny any more! Nobody is going to laugh at me any more! The lady said God's extra special Light was already shining, and it really was!"



"What?" whispered Mother, quite unable to say another word. Then she hugged Rebecca, and she hugged Daniel, and she wiped tears out of her eyes, and she sent Daniel to get Father, who was milking the goats in the shed.

And much later, after Daniel had told them how he finally got Rebecca to visit little Jesus, and after Rebecca had told them what Jesus' mother had said about God's extra special Light, and after the wise doctors had come and examined Rebecca and scratched their heads and said she couldn't have gotten well because they couldn't make her well, Father said, "Let us go back to the cave, and thank God for what He has brought to pass."

And so they all started down the path across the fields, Rebecca going on ahead with Daniel. Sometimes she walked,

sometimes she ran, and sometimes she even skipped. Many people turned to stare at her as she went by, but nobody laughed.

Some said, "Rebecca, you're walking!" and some said, "Rebecca, what happened?" and some said, "It's a miracle!" and some said, "Stop! Tell us about it."

But to all of them, Rebecca's father said, "Later. Later we will talk about it. There is something we must do first."

When they got to the cave, the baby's mother greeted them with great joy. She hugged Rebecca and she hugged Rebecca's mother. The baby's father and Rebecca's father warmly clasped hands, and it seemed to Rebecca that they had known each other for a long time, even though she first had thought they were strangers.

Then they all knelt down beside the manger and bowed their heads, and, as the baby Jesus stirred and once again smiled in his sleep, God's extra special Light clearly could be seen, shining down from heaven and covering them all.



Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes

Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long:
And then, they say, no Spirit dare stir abroad,

The nights are wholesome, then no planets strike,

No fairy takes nor witch hath power to charm,

So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

—*Shakespeare*



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