

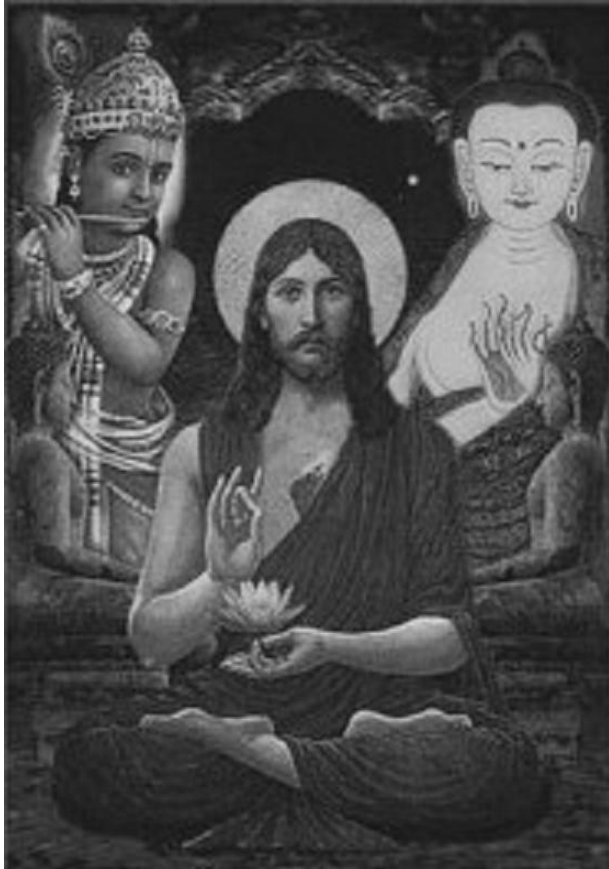
# Selfishness and Self-Will

The Path to Selflessness in World Religions

By Marilyn Hughes

*The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation!*

<http://outofbodytravel.org>





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If this book is unavailable from your local bookseller, it may be obtained directly from the Out-of-Body Travel Foundation by going to [www.outofbodytravel.org](http://www.outofbodytravel.org).

Having worked primarily in radio broadcasting, Marilynn Hughes spent several years as a news reporter, producer and anchor before deciding to stay at home with her three children. She's experienced, researched, written, and taught about out-of-body travel since 1987.

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# Selfishness and Self-Will

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## INTRODUCTION

Years ago, I had met with Christ in a Near Death Experience. He had shared with me the secret to our existence on earth. "It is the goal of human existence," He had said, "to go from selfishness to selflessness."

That directive has remained with me since that time and this book is the result of further out-of-body travels wherein He came to me and directed me to gather those sacred texts that show us how to accomplish this vital task of our human existence.

In the texts to follow are the secrets to this marvelous and praiseworthy task. Contained within them are instructions on going from selfishness and self-will to selflessness. (All texts are in the Public Domain.)

*"The world has been controlled by two parties: those who have governed by 'love of self to the point of contempt of God' and those who have governed by 'love of God to the point of contempt of self.'"*

St. Augustine: The City of God

*"It is part of our human nature but there is that within us which always wants to make self the center of its own universe and, in that selfish way, wants to tear God from His throne and deny his brother and advance his own ambition."*

Robert R. Brown

*"Every personal consideration that we allow, costs us heavenly state. We sell the thrones of angels for a short and turbulent pleasure."*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

*"If you wish to travel far and fast, travel light. Take off all your envies, jealousies, unforgiveness, selfishness and fears."*

Glenn Clark

# Hinduism

## The Crest-Jewel of Wisdom

BY Vivekachudamani

First Steps on the Path

### PROLOGUE

(Verses 1--15)

I BOW before Govinda, the objectless object of final success in the highest wisdom, who is supreme bliss and the true teacher.

For beings a human birth is hard to win, then manhood and holiness, then excellence in the path of wise law; hardest of all to win is wisdom. Discernment between Self and not-Self, true judgment, nearness to the Self of the Eternal and Freedom are not gained without a myriad of right acts in a hundred births. This triad that is won by the bright one's favor is hard to gain: humanity, aspiration, and rest in the great spirit. After gaining at last a human birth, hard to win, then manhood and knowledge of the teaching, if one strives not after Freedom he is a fool. He, suicidal, destroys himself by

grasping after the unreal. Who is more self-deluded than he who is careless of his own welfare after gaining a hard-won human birth and manhood, too? Let them declare the laws, let them offer to the gods, let them perform all rites, let them love the gods; without knowing the oneness with the Self, Freedom is not won even in a hundred years of the Evolver. "There is no hope of immortality through riches," says the scripture. It is clear from this that rites cannot lead to Freedom.

Therefore let the wise one strive after Freedom, giving up all longing for sensual self-indulgence; approaching the good, great Teacher (the Higher Self), with soul intent on the object of the teaching. Let him by the Self raise the Self, sunk in the ocean of the world, following the path of union through complete recognition of oneness. Setting all rites aside, let the wise, learned ones who approach the study of the Self strive for Freedom from the bondage of the world. Rites are to purify the thoughts, but not to gain the reality. The real is gained by Wisdom, not by a myriad of rites. When one steadily examines and clearly sees a rope, the fear that it is a serpent is destroyed. Knowledge is gained by discernment, by examining, by instruction, but not by bathing, nor gifts, nor a hundred holdings of the breath. Success demands first ripeness; questions of time and place are subsidiary. Let the seeker after self-knowledge find the Teacher (the Higher Self), full of kindness and knowledge of the Eternal.

## THE FOUR PERFECTIONS

(Verses 16--34)

He is ripe to seek the Self who is full of knowledge and wisdom, reason and discernment, and who bears the well-known marks.

He is ready to seek the Eternal who has Discernment and Dispassion; who has Restfulness and the other graces.

Four perfections are numbered by the wise. When they are present there is success, but in their absence is failure.

First is counted the Discernment between things lasting and unlasting. Next Dispassion, the indifference to self-indulgence here and in paradise. Then the Six Graces, beginning with Restfulness. Then the longing for Freedom.

A certainty like this--the Eternal is real, the fleeting world is unreal;--this is that Discernment between things lasting and unlasting.

And this is Dispassion--a perpetual willingness to give up all sensual self-indulgence--everything lower than the Eternal, through a constant sense of their insufficiency.

Then the Six Graces: a steady intentness of the mind on its goal;--this is Restfulness.

And the steadying of the powers that act and perceive, each in its own sphere, turning them back from sensuality;--this is Self-control.

Then the raising of the mind above external things;--this is the true Withdrawal.

The enduring of all ills without petulance and without self-pity;--this is the right Endurance.

An honest confidence in the teaching and the Teacher;--this is that Faith by which the treasure is gained.

The intentness of the soul on the pure Eternal;--this is right Meditation, but not the indulgence of fancy.

The wish to untie, by discernment of their true nature, all the bonds woven by unwisdom, the bonds of selfishness and sensuality;--this is the longing for Freedom.

Though at first imperfect, these qualities gradually growing through Dispassion, Restfulness, and the other graces and the Teacher's help will gain their due.

When Dispassion and longing for Freedom are strong, then Restfulness and the other graces will bear fruit.

But when these two--Dispassion and longing for Freedom--are lacking, then Restfulness and the other graces are a mere appearance, like water in the desert.

Chief among the, causes of Freedom is devotion, the intentness of the soul on its own nature. Or devotion may be called intentness on the reality of the Self.

Let him who possesses these Perfections and who would learn the reality of the Self, approach the wise Teacher (the Higher Self), from whom comes the loosing of bonds; who: is full of knowledge and perfect; who is not beaten by desire, who really knows the Eternal; who has found rest in the Eternal, at peace like a fuelless fire; who is full of selfless kindness, the friend of all that lives. Serving the Teacher with devotion and aspiration for the Eternal, and finding harmony with him, seek the needed knowledge of the Self.

### **THE APPEAL TO THE HIGHER SELF**

(Verses 35--40)

"I submit myself to thee, Master, friend of the bowed-down world and river of selfless kindness.

"Raise me by thy guiding light that pours forth the nectar of truth and mercy, for I am sunk in the ocean of the world.



"I am burned by the hot flame of relentless life and torn by the winds of misery: save me from death, for I take refuge in thee, finding no other rest."

The great good ones dwell in peace, bringing joy to the world like the return of spring. Having crossed the ocean of the world, they ever help others to cross over. For this is the very nature of the great-souled ones (Mahâtmas)--their swiftness to take away the weariness of others. So the soft-rayed moon of itself soothes the earth, burned by the fierce sun's heat.

"Sprinkle me with thy nectar voice that brings the joy of eternal bliss, pure and cooling, falling on me as from a cup, like the joy of inspiration; for I am burnt by the hot, scorching flames of the world's fire.

"Happy are they on whom thy light rests, even for a moment, and who reach harmony with thee.

"How shall I cross the ocean of the world? Where is the path? What way must I follow? I know not, Master. Save me from the wound of the world's pain."

## **THE BEGINNING OF THE TEACHING**

(Verses 41--71)

To him, making this appeal and seeking help, scorched by the flame of the world's fire, the Great Soul beholding him with eyes most pitiful brings speedy comfort.

The Wise One instils the truth in him who has approached him longing for Freedom, who is following the true path, calming the tumult of his mind and bringing Restfulness.

"Fear not, wise one, there is no danger for thee. There is a way to cross over the ocean of the world, and by this path the sages have reached the shore.

"This same path I point out to thee, for it is the way to destroy the world's fear. Crossing the ocean of the world by this path, thou shalt win the perfect joy."

By discerning the aim of the wisdom-teaching (Vedânta) is born that most excellent knowledge. Then comes the final ending of the world's pain. The voice of the teaching plainly declares that faith, devotion, meditation, and the search for union are the means of Freedom for him who would be free. He who is perfect in these wins Freedom from the bodily bondage woven by unwisdom.

When the Self is veiled by unwisdom there arises a binding to the not-self, and from this comes the pain of world-life. The fire of wisdom lit by discernment between these two--Self and not-Self--will wither up the source of unwisdom, root and all.

### **THE PUPIL ASKS**

"Hear with selfless kindness, Master. I ask this question: receiving the answer from thy lips I shall gain my end.

"What is, then, a bond? And how has this bond come? What cause has it? And how can one be free?"

"What is not-Self and what the Higher Self? And how can one discern between them?"

### **THE MASTER ANSWERS**

"Happy art thou. Thou shalt attain thy end. Thy kin is blest in thee. For thou seekest to become the Eternal by freeing thyself from the bond of unwisdom.

"Sons and kin can pay a father's debts, but none but a man's self can set him free, "If a heavy burden presses on the head others can remove it, but none but a man's self can quench his hunger and thirst.

"Health is gained by the sick who follow the path of healing: health does not come through the acts of others.

"The knowledge of the real by the eye of clear insight is to be gained by one's own sight and not by the teacher's.

"The moon's form must be seen by one's own eyes; it can never be known through the eyes of another.

"None but a man's self is able to untie the knots of unwisdom, desire, and former acts, even in a myriad of ages.

"Freedom is won by a perception of the Self's oneness with the Eternal, and not by the doctrines of Union or of Numbers, nor by rites and sciences.

"The form and beauty of the lyre and excellent skill upon its strings may give delight to the people, but will never found an empire.

"An eloquent voice, a stream of words, skill in explaining the teaching, and the learning of the learned; these bring enjoyment but not freedom.

"When the Great Reality is not known the study of the scriptures is fruitless; when the Great Reality is known the study of the scriptures is also fruitless.

"A net of words is a great forest where the fancy wanders; therefore the reality of the Self is to be strenuously learned from the knower of that reality.

"How can the hymns (Vedas) and the scriptures profit him who is bitten by the serpent of unwisdom? How can charms or medicine help him without the medicine of the knowledge of the Eternal?

"Sickness is not cured by saying 'Medicine,' but by drinking it. So a man is not set free by the name of the Eternal without discerning the Eternal.

"Without piercing through the visible, without knowing the reality of the Self, how can men gain Freedom by mere outward words that end with utterances?

"Can a man be king by saying, 'I am king,' without destroying his enemies, without gaining power over the whole land?

"Through information, digging, and casting aside the stones, a treasure may be found, but not by calling it to come forth.

"So by steady effort is gained the knowledge of those who know the Eternal, the lonely, stainless reality above all illusion; but not by desultory study.

"Hence with all earnest effort to be free from the bondage of the world, the wise must strive themselves, as they would to be free from sickness.

"And this question put by thee to-day must be solved by those who seek Freedom; this question that breathes the spirit of the teaching, that is like a clue with hidden meaning.

"Hear, then, earnestly, thou wise one, the answer given by me; for understanding it thou shalt be free from the bondage of the world."

## **Self, Potencies, Vestures**

THE first cause of Freedom is declared to be an utter turning back from lust after unenduring things. Thereafter Restfulness, Control, Endurance; a perfect Renouncing of all acts that cling and stain.

Thereafter, the divine Word, a turning of the mind to it, a constant thinking on it by the pure one, long and uninterrupted.

Then ridding himself altogether of doubt, and reaching wisdom, even here he enjoys the bliss of Nirvâna.

Then the discerning between Self and not-Self that you must now awaken to, that I now declare, hearing it, lay hold on it within yourself.

## **THE VESTURES**

(Verses 72--107)

Formed of the substances they call marrow, bone, fat, flesh, blood, skin and over-skin; fitted with greater and lesser limbs, feet, breast, trunk, arms, back, head; this is called the physical vesture by the wise--the vesture whose authority, as "I" and "my" is declared to be a delusion.

Then these are the refined elements: the ethereal, the upper air, the flaming, water, and earth.

These when mingled one with another become the physical elements, that are the causes of the physical vesture. The materials of them become the five sensuous things that are for the delight of the enjoyer--sounds and other things of sense.

They who, fooled in these sensuous things, are bound by the wide noose of lust, hard to break asunder--they come and go, downwards and upwards on high, led by the swift messenger, their works.

Through the five sensuous things five creatures find dissolution to the five elements, each one bound by his own character: the deer, the elephant, the moth, the fish, the bee; what then of man, who is snared by all the five?

Sensuous things are keener to injure than the black snake's venom; poison slays only him who eats it, but these things slay only him who beholds them with his eyes.

He who is free from the great snare, so hard to be rid of, of longing after sensuous things, he indeed builds for Freedom, and not another, even though knowing the six philosophies.

Those who, only for a little while rid of lust, long to be free, and struggle to reach the shore of the world-ocean--the toothed beast of longing lust makes them sink half way, seizing them by the throat, and swiftly carrying them away.

By whom this toothed beast called sensuous things is slain by the sharp sword of true turning away from lust, he reaches the world-sea's shore without hindrance. He who, soul-destroyed, treads the rough path of sensuous things, death is his reward, like him who goes out on a luckless day. But he who goes

onward, through the word of the good Teacher who is friendly to all beings, and himself well-controlled, he gains the fruit and the reward, and his reward is the Real.

If the love of Freedom is yours, then put sensuous things far away from you, like poison. But love, as the food of the gods, serenity, pity, pardon, rectitude, peacefulness and self-control; love them and honor them forever.

He who every moment leaving undone what should be done--the freeing of himself from the bonds of beginningless unwisdom--devotes himself to the fattening of his body, that rightly exists for the good of the other powers, such a one thereby destroys himself.

He who seeks to behold the Self, although living to fatten his body, is going to cross the river, holding to a toothed beast, while thinking it a tree.

For this delusion for the body and its delights is a great death for him who longs for Freedom; the delusion by the overcoming of which he grows worthy of the dwelling-place of the free.

Destroy this great death, this infatuation for the body, wives and sons; conquering it, the pure ones reach the Pervader's supreme abode.



This faulty form, built up of skin and flesh, of blood and sinews, fat and marrow and bones, gross and full of impure elements;

Born of the fivefold physical elements through deeds done before, the physical place of enjoyment of the Self; its mode is waking life, whereby there arises experience of physical things.

Subservient to physical objects through the outer powers, with its various joys--flower-chaplets, sandal, lovers--the Life makes itself like this through the power of the Self; therefore this form is pre-eminent in waking life.

But know that this physical body wherein the whole circling life of the Spirit adheres, is but as the dwelling of the lord of the dwelling.

Birth and age and death are the fate of the physical and all the physical changes from childhood onward; of the physical body only are caste and grade with their many homes, and differences of worship and dishonor and great honor belong to it alone.

The powers of knowing--hearing, touch, sight, smell, taste--for apprehending sensuous things; the powers of doing--voice, hands, feet, the powers that put forth and generate--to effect deeds.

Then the inward activity: mind, soul, self-assertion, imagination, with their proper powers; mind, ever intending and doubting; soul, with its character of

certainty as to things; self-assertion, that falsely attributes the notion of "I"; imagination, with its power of gathering itself together, and directing itself to its object.

These also are the life-breaths: the forward-life, the downward-life, the distributing-life, the uniting-life; heir activities and forms are different, as gold and water are different.

The subtle vesture they call the eightfold inner being made up thus: voice and the other four, hearing and the other four, ether and the other four, the forward life and the other four, soul and the other inward activities, unwisdom, desire, and action.

Hear now about this subtle vesture or form vesture, born of elements not fivefolded; it is the place of gratification, the enjoyer of the fruits of deeds, the beginningless disguise of the Self, through lack of self-knowledge.

Dream-life is the mode of its expansion, where it shines with reflected light, through the traces of its own impressions; for in dream-life the knowing soul shines of itself through the many and varied mind-pictures made during waking-life.

Here the higher self shines of itself and rules, taking on the condition of doer, with pure thought as its disguise, an unaffected witness, nor is it stained by the actions, there done, as it is not attached to them, therefore it is not stained by actions, whatever they

be, done by its disguise; let this form-vesture be the minister, doing the work of the conscious self, the real man, just as the tools do the carpenter's work; thus this self remains unattached.

Blindness or slowness or skill come from the goodness or badness of the eye; deafness and dumbness are of the ear and not of the Knower, the Self.

Up-breathing, down-breathing, yawning, sneezing, the forward moving of breath, and the outward moving--these are the doings of the life-breaths, say those who know these things; of the life-breaths, also, hunger and thirst are properties.

The inner activity dwells and shines in sight and the other powers in the body, through the false attribution of selfhood, as cause.

Self-assertion is to be known as the cause of this false attribution of selfhood, as doer and enjoyer; and through substance and the other two potencies, it reaches expansion in the three modes.

When sensuous things have affinity with it, it is happy; when the contrary, unhappy. So happiness and unhappiness are properties of this, and not of the Self which is perpetual bliss.

Sensuous things are dear for the sake of the self, and not for their own sake; and therefore the Self itself is dearest of all.

Hence the Self itself is perpetual bliss--not for it are happiness and unhappiness; as in dreamless life, where are no sensuous things, the Self that is bliss--is enjoyed, so in waking-life it is enjoyed through the word, through intuition, teaching and deduction.

## **THE THREE POTENCIES**

(Verses 108--135)

The power of the supreme Master, that is called unmanifested, beginningless unwisdom whose very self is the three potencies, to be known through thought, by its workings--this is glamor (Mâyâ), whereby all this moving world is made to grow.

Neither being nor non-being nor of the self of both of these; neither divided nor undivided nor of the self of both of these; neither formed nor formless nor of the self of both of these--very wonderful and ineffable is its form.

To be destroyed by the awakening to the pure, secondless Eternal, as the serpent imagined in a rope, when the rope is seen; its potencies are called substance, force, and darkness; each of them known by their workings. The self of doing belongs to force, whose power is extension, whence the pre-existent activities issued; rage and all the changes of the mind that cause sorrow are ever its results.

Desire, wrath, greed, vanity, malice, self-assertion, jealousy, envy, are the terrible works of Force, its

activities in man; therefore this is the cause of bondage.

Then enveloping is the power of Darkness, whereby a thing appears as something else; this is the cause of the circling birth and rebirth of the spirit, and the cause whereby extension is drawn forward.

Though a man be full of knowledge, learned, skillful, very subtle-sighted, if Darkness has wrapped him round, he sees not, though he be full of manifold instruction; he calls good that which is raised by error, and leans upon its properties, unlucky man that he is; great and hard to end is the enveloping power of Darkness.

Wrong thinking, contradictory thinking, fanciful thinking, confused thinking--these are its workings; this power of extension never leaves hold of one who has come into contact with it, but perpetually sends him this way and that.

Unwisdom, sluggishness, inertness, sloth, infatuation, folly, and things like these are of the potency of Darkness. Under the yoke of these he knows nothing at all, but remains as though asleep or like a post.

But the potency of substance is pure like water, and even though mixed with the other two, it builds for the true refuge; for it is a reflected spark of the Self, and lights up the inert like the sun.

Of the potency of Substance when mixed the properties are self-respect, self-restraint, control, faith and love and the longing to be free, a godlike power and a turning back from the unreal.

Of the potency of substance altogether pure the properties are grace, direct perception of the Self, and perfect peace; exulting gladness, a resting on the Self supreme, whereby he reaches the essence of real bliss.

The unmanifest is characterized by these three potencies; it is the causal vesture of the Self; dreamless life is the mode where it lives freely, all the activities of the powers, and even of the knowing soul having sunk back into it.

Every form of outward perceiving has come to rest, the knowing soul becomes latent in the Self from which it springs; the name of this is dreamless life, wherein he says "I know nothing at all of the noise of the moving world."

The body, powers, life-breaths, mind, self-assertion, all changes, sensuous things, happiness, unhappiness, the ether and all the elements, the whole world up to the unmanifest--this is not Self.

Glamor and every work of glamor from the world-soul to the body, know this as unreal, as not the Self, built up of the mirage of the desert.

But I shall declare to you the own being of the Self supreme, knowing which a man, freed from his bonds, reaches the lonely purity.

There is a certain selfhood wherein the sense of "I" forever rests; who witnesses the three modes of being, who is other than the five veils; who is the only knower in waking, dreaming, dreamlessness; of all the activities of the knowing soul, whether good or bad--this is the "I";

Who of himself beholds all; whom none beholds; who kindles to consciousness the knowing soul and all the powers; whom none kindles to consciousness; by whom all this is filled; whom no other fills; who is the shining light within this all; after whose shining all else shines;

By whose nearness only body and powers and mind and soul do their work each in his own field, as though sent by the Self;

Because the own nature of this is eternal wakefulness, self-assertion, the body and all the powers, and happiness and unhappiness are beheld by it, just as an earthen pot is beheld. This inner Self, the ancient Spirit, is everlasting, partless, immediately experienced happiness; ever of one nature, pure waking knowledge, sent forth by whom Voice and the life-breaths move.

Here, verily, in the substantial Self, in the bidden place of the soul, this steady shining begins to shine

like the dawn; then the shining shines forth as the noonday sun, making all this world to shine by its inherent light; knower of all the changing moods of mind and inward powers; of all the acts done by body, powers, life-breaths; present in them as fire in iron, strives not nor changes at all.

This is not born nor dies nor grows, nor does it fade or change forever; even when this form has melted away, it no more melts than the air in a jar.

Alike stranger to forming and deforming; of its own being, pure wakefulness; both being and non-being is this, besides it there is nothing else; this shines unchanging, this Supreme Self gleams in waking, dream and dreamlessness as "I," present as the witness of the knowing soul.

## **BONDAGE AND FREEDOM**

(Verses 136--153)

Then, holding firmly mind, with knowing soul at rest, know your self within yourself face to face saying, "This am I" The life-ocean, whose waves are birth and dying, is shoreless; cross over it, fulfilling the end of being, resting firm in the Eternal.

Thinking things not self are "I"--this is bondage for a man; this, arising from unwisdom, is the cause of falling into the weariness of birth and dying; this is the cause that he feeds and anoints and guards this form, thinking it the Self; the unreal, real; wrapping



himself in sensuous things as a silk-worm in his own threads.

The thought that what is not That is That grows up in the fool through darkness; because no discernment is there, it wells up, as the thought that a rope is a snake; thereupon a mighty multitude of fatuities fall on him who accepts this error, for he who grasps the unreal is bound; mark this, my companion.

By the power of wakefulness, partless, external, secondless, the Self wells up with its endless lordship; but this enveloping power wraps it round, born of Darkness, as the dragon of eclipse envelops the rayed sun.

When the real Self with its stainless light recedes, a man thinking "this body is I," calls it the Self; then by lust and hate and all the potencies of bondage, the great power of Force that they call extension greatly afflicts him.

Torn by the gnawing of the toothed beast of great delusion; wandered from the Self, accepting every changing mood of mind as himself, through this potency, in the shoreless ocean of birth and death, full of the poison of sensuous things, sinking and rising, he wanders, mean-minded, despicable-minded.

As a line of clouds, born of the sun's strong shining, expands before the sun and hides it from sight, so self-assertion, that has come into being through the Self, expands before the Self and hides it from sight.

As when on an evil day the lord of day is swallowed up in thick, dark clouds, an ice-cold hurricane of wind, very terrible, afflicts the clouds in turns; so when the Self is enveloped in impenetrable Darkness, the keen power of extension drives with many afflictions the man whose soul is deluded.

From those two powers a man's bondage comes; deluded by them he errs, thinking the body is the Self.

Of the plant of birth and death, the seed is Darkness, the sprout is the thought that body is Self, the shoot is rage, the sap is deeds, the body is the stem, the life-breaths are the branches, the tops are the bodily powers, sensuous things are the flowers, sorrow is the fruit, born of varied deeds and manifold; and the Life is the bird that eats the fruit.

This bondage to what is not Self, rooted in unwisdom, innate, made manifest without beginning or end, gives life to the falling torrent of sorrow, of birth and death, of sickness and old age.

Not by weapons nor arms, not by storm nor fire nor by a myriad deeds can this be cut off, without the sword of discernment and knowledge, very sharp and bright, through the grace of the guiding power.

He who is single-minded, fixed on the word divine, his steadfast fulfilment of duty will make the knowing soul within him pure; to him whose knowing soul is pure, a knowing of the Self supreme shall come; and through this knowledge of the Self

supreme he shall destroy this circle of birth and death and its root together.

## **THE FREEING OF THE SELF**

(Verses 148--154)

The Self, wrapped up in the five vestures beginning with the vesture formed of food, which are brought into being by its own power, does not shine forth, as the water in the pond, covered by a veil of green scum.

When the green scum is taken away, immediately the water shines forth pure, taking away thirst and heat, straightway becoming a source of great joy to man.

When the five vestures have been stripped off, the Self shines forth pure, the one essence of eternal bliss, beheld within, supreme, self-luminous.

Discernment is to be made between the Self and what is not Self by the wise man seeking freedom from bondage; through this he enters into joy, knowing the Self which is being, consciousness, bliss.

As the reed from the tiger grass, so separating from the congeries of things visible the hidden Self within, which is detached, not involved in actions, and dissolving all in the Self, he who stands thus, has attained liberation.

## THE VESTURE FORMED OF FOOD

(Verses 154--164)

The food-formed vesture is this body, which comes into being through food, which lives by food, which perishes without food.

It is formed of cuticle, skin, flesh, blood, bone, water; this is not worthy to be the Self, eternally pure.

The Self was before birth or death, and now is; how can it be born for the moment, fleeting, unstable of nature, not unified, inert, beheld like a jar? For the Self is the witness of all changes of form.

The body has hands and feet, not the Self; though bodiless, yet because it is the Life, because its power is indestructible, it is controller, not controlled.

Since the Self is witness of the body, its character, its acts, its states, therefore the Self must be of other nature than the body.

A mass of wretchedness, clad in flesh, full of impurity and evil, how can this body be the knower? The Self is of other nature.

Of this compound of skin, flesh, fat, bone and water, the man of deluded mind thinks, "This is I"; but he who is possessed of judgment knows that his true Self is of other character, is nature transcendental.

The mind of the dullard thinks of the body, "This is I"; he who is more learned thinks, "This is I," of the body and the separate self; but he who has attained discernment and is wise knows the true Self saying, "I am the Eternal."

Therefore, O thou of mind deluded, put away the thought that this body is the Self, this compound of skin, flesh, fat, bone and water; discern the universal Self, the Eternal, changeless, and enjoy supreme peace.

So long as the man of learning abandons not the thought, founded on delusion, that "This is I," regarding the unenduring body and its powers, so long there is no hope for his liberation, though he possess the knowledge of the Vedânta and its sciences.

As thou hast no thought that "This is the Self," regarding the body's shadow, or the reflected form, or the body seen in dream, or the shape imagined in the mind, so let not this thought exist regarding the living body.

The thought that the body is the Self, in the minds of men who discern not the real, is the seed from which spring birth and death and sorrow; therefore slay thou this thought with strong effort, for when thou hast abandoned this thought the longing for rebirth will cease.

## THE VESTURE FORMED OF VITAL BREATH

(Verses 165--166)

The breath-formed vesture is formed by the life-breath determined by the five powers of action; through its power the food-formed vesture, guided by the Self and sustained by food, moves in all bodily acts.

Nor is this breath-formed vesture the Self, since it is formed of the vital airs, coming and going like the wind, moving within and without; since it can in no wise discern between right and wrong, between oneself and another, but is ever dependent.

## THE VESTURE FORMED OF MIND

(Verses 167--183)

The mind-formed vesture is formed of the powers of perception and the mind; it is the cause of the distinction between the notions of "mine" and "I"; it is active in making a distinction of names and numbers; as more potent, it pervades and dominates the former vesture.

The fire of the mind-formed vesture, fed by the five powers of perception, as though by five sacrificial priests, with objects of sense like streams of melted butter, blazing with the fuel of manifold sense-impressions, sets the personality aflame.

For there is no unwisdom, except in the mind, for the mind is unwisdom, the cause of the bondage to life; when this is destroyed, all is destroyed; when this dominates, the world dominates.

In dream, devoid of substance, it emanates a world of experiencer and things experienced, which is all mind; so in waking consciousness, there is no difference, it is all the domination of the mind.

During the time of dreamlessness, when mind has become latent, nothing at all of manifestation remains; therefore man's circle of birth and death is built by mind, and has no permanent reality.

By the wind a cloud is collected, by the wind it is driven away again; by mind bondage is built up, by mind is built also liberation.

Building up desire for the body and all objects, it binds the man thereby as an ox by a cord; afterwards leading him to turn from them like poison, that same mind, verily, sets him free from bondage.

Therefore mind is the cause of man's bondage, and in turn of his liberation; when darkened by the powers of passion it is the cause of bondage, and when pure of passion and darkness it is the cause of liberation.

Where discernment and dispassion are dominant, gaining purity, the mind makes for liberation; therefore let the wise man who seeks liberation strengthen these two in himself as the first step.

Mind is the name of the mighty tiger that hunts in the forest glades of sensuous things; let not the wise go thither, who seek liberation.

Mind moulds all sensuous things through the earthly body and the subtle body of him who experiences; mind ceaselessly shapes the differences of body, of color, of condition, of race, as fruits caused by the acts of the potencies.

Mind, beclouding the detached, pure consciousness, binding it with the cords of the body, the powers, the life-breaths, as "I" and "my," ceaselessly strays among the fruits of experience caused by its own activities.

Man's circle of birth and death comes through the fault of attributing reality to the unreal, but this false attribution is built up by mind; this is the effective cause of birth and death and sorrow for him who has the faults of passion and darkness and is without discernment.

Therefore the wise who know the truth have declared that mind is un wisdom, through which the whole world, verily, is swept about, as cloud belts by the wind.

Therefore purification of the mind should be undertaken with strong effort by him who seeks liberation; when the mind has been purified, liberation comes like fruit into his hand.



Through the sole power of liberation uprooting desire for sensuous things, and ridding himself of all bondage to works, he who through faith in the Real stands firm in the teaching, shakes off the very essence of passion from the understanding.

The mind-formed vesture cannot be the higher Self, since it has beginning and end, waxing and waning; by causing sensuous things, it is the very essence of pain; that which is itself seen cannot be the Seer.

### **THE VESTURE FORMED OF INTELLIGENCE**

(Verses 184--197)

The intelligence, together with the powers of intelligence, makes the intelligence-formed vesture, whose distinguishing character is actorship; it is the cause of man's circle of birth and death.

The power which is a reflected beam of pure Consciousness, called the understanding, is a mode of abstract Nature; it possesses wisdom and creative power; it thereby focuses the idea of "I" in the body and its powers.

This "I," beginningless in time, is the separate self, it is the initiator of all undertakings; this, impelled by previous imprints, works all works both holy and unholy, and forms their fruits.

Passing through varying births it gains experience, now descending, now ascending; of this intelligence-

formed vesture, waking, dream and dreamlessness are the fields where it experiences pleasure and pain.

By constantly attributing to itself the body, state, condition, duties and works, thinking, "These are mine," this intelligence-formed vesture, brightly shining because it stands closest to the higher Self, becomes the vesture of the Self, and, thinking itself to be the Self, wanders in the circle of birth and death.

This, formed of intelligence, is the light that shines in the vital breaths, in the heart; the Self who stands forever wears this vesture as actor and experiencer.

The Self, assuming the limitation of the intelligence, self-deluded by the error of the intelligence, though it is the universal Self, yet views itself as separate from the Self; as the potter views the jars as separate from the clay.

Through the force of its union with the vesture, the higher Self takes on the character of the vesture and assumes its nature, as fire, which is without form, takes on the varying forms of the iron, even though the Self is for ever by nature uniform and supreme.

### **THE DISCIPLE SPEAKS**

Whether by delusion or otherwise, the higher Self appears as the separate self; but, since the vesture is beginningless, there is no conceivable end of the beginningless.

Therefore existence as the separate self must be eternal, nor can the circle of birth and death have an end; how then can there be liberation? Master, tell me this.

### **THE MASTER ANSWERS**

Well hast thou asked, O wise one! Therefore rightly bear! A false imagination created by error is not conclusive proof.

Only through delusion can there be an association with objects, of that which is without attachment, without action, without form; it is like the association of blueness with the sky.

The appearance as the separate self, of the Self, the Seer, who is without qualities, without form; essential wisdom and bliss, arises through the delusion of the understanding; it is not real; when the delusion passes, it exists no longer, having no substantial reality.

Its existence, which is brought into being through false perception, because of delusion, lasts only so long as the error lasts; as the serpent in the rope endures only as long as the delusion; when the delusion ceases, there is no serpent.

# The Witness

## THE MANIFEST AND THE HIDDEN SELF

(Verses 198--209)

BEGINNINGLESS is unwisdom, and all its works are too; but when wisdom is arisen, what belongs to unwisdom, although beginningless--

Like a dream on waking, perishes, root and all; though beginningless, it is not endless; it is as something that was not before, *and now is*, this is manifest.

It is thus seen that, though without a beginning, *unwisdom* comes to an end, just as something, which before was not, *comes into being*. Built up in the Self by its being bound by disguise of intellect--

Is this existence as the *separate* life, for there is no other than the Self, distinguished by its own nature, but the binding of the Self by the intellect is false, coming from unknowledge.

This binding is untied by perfect knowledge, not otherwise; the discerning of the oneness of the Eternal and the Self is held by the scripture to be perfect knowledge.

And this is accomplished by perfectly discerning between Self and not-self; thereafter discernment is to be gained between individual and universal Self.

Water may be endlessly muddy, but when the mud is gone, the water is clear. As it shines, so shines the Self also, when faults are gone away, it shines forth clear.

And when unreality ceases to exist in the individual self, it is clear that it returns towards the universal; hence there is to be a rejection of the self-assertion and other characteristics of the individual self.

Hence this higher Self is not what is called the intellectual veil, because that is changeful, helpless of itself, circumscribed, objective, liable to err; the non-eternal cannot be regarded as eternal.

The bliss-formed veil is a form containing the reflection of bliss--although it is tainted with darkness; it has the quality of pleasure, the attainment of well wished-for aims; it shines forth in the enjoyment of good works by a righteous man, of its own nature bliss-formed; gaining an excellent form, he enjoys bliss without effort.

The principal sphere of the bliss-formed veil is in dreamless sleep; in dreaming and waking it is in part manifest when blissful objects are beheld.

Nor is this bliss-formed veil the higher Self, for it wears a disguise, it is a form of objective nature; it is

an effect caused by good acts, accumulated in this changeful form.

When the five veils are taken away, according to inference and scripture, what remains after they are taken away is the Witness, in a form born of awakening.

This is the Self, self-shining, distinguished from the five veils; this is the Witness in the three modes of *perceiving*, without change, without stain. The wise should know it as Being and Bliss, as his own Self.

**THE PUPIL SAID:**

(Verses 210--240)

When the five veils are thus set aside through their unreality, beyond the non-being of all I see nothing, Master; what then is to be known as anything by him who knows Self and not-self?

**THE MASTER SAID:**

Truth has been spoken by thee, wise one; thou art skilled in judgment. Self-assertion and all these changes,--in the Self they have no being. That whereby all is enjoyed, but which is itself not enjoyed, know that to be the Self, the Knower, through thy very subtle intellect.

Whatever is enjoyed by anyone, of that he is the witness; but of that which is not enjoyed by anyone, it cannot be said that anyone is the witness.

That is to be self-witness, where anything is enjoyed by itself; therefore the universal Self is witness of itself; no other lesser thing is witness of it.

In waking, dreaming, dreamlessness, that Self is clearly manifested, appearing through its universal form always as "I," as the "I" within, uniformly. This is "I" beholding intellect and the rest that partake of varied forms and changes. It is manifest through eternal blissful self-consciousness; know that as the Self here in the heart.

Looking at the reflection of the sun reflected in the water of a jar, he who is deluded thinks it is the sun, thus the reflected consciousness appearing under a disguise is thought by him who is hopelessly deluded to be "I."

Rejecting jar and water and the sun reflected there all together, the real sun is beheld. So the unchanging which is reflected in the three modes, self-shining, is perceived by the wise.

Putting away in thought body and intellect as alike reflections of consciousness, discerning the seer, hid in the secret place, the Self, the partless awakening, the universal shining, distinguished alike from what exists and what does not exist; the eternal lord, all-present, very subtle, devoid of within and without,

nothing but self; discerning this perfectly, in its own form, a man is sinless, passionless, deathless.

Sorrowless, altogether bliss, full of wisdom, fearing nothing at all from anything; there is no other path of freedom from the bondage of the world but knowledge of the reality of his Self, for him who would be free.

Knowledge that the Eternal is not divided *from him* is the cause of freedom from the world, whereby the Eternal, the secondless bliss, is gained by the awakened.

Therefore one should perfectly know that the Eternal and the Self are not divided; for the wise who has become the Eternal does not return again to birth and death.

The real, wisdom, the endless, the Eternal, pure, supreme, self-perfect, the one essence of eternal bliss, universal, undivided, unbroken--this he gains.

This is the real, supreme, secondless, for besides the Self no other is; there is nothing else at all in the condition of perfect awakening to the reality of the supreme being.

This all, that is perceived as the vari-form world, from unknowledge, this all is the Eternal, when the mind's confusion is cast away.



The pot made of clay is not separate from the clay, for all through it is in its own nature clay; the form of the pot is not separate; whence then the pot? It is mere name, built up of illusion.

By no one can the form of the pot be seen, separate from the clay; hence the pot is built of delusion, but the real thing is the clay, like the supreme Being.

All this is always an effect of the real Eternal; it is that alone, nor is there anything else but that. He who says there is, is not free from delusion, like one who talks in his sleep.

The Eternal verily is this all; thus says the excellent scripture of the *Atharva*. In accordance with it, all this is the Eternal only, nor is there any separate existence of the attribute apart from the source.

If this moving world were the real, then had the Self no freedom from limitation, divine authority no worth, the Master Self no truth; these three things the great-souled cannot allow.

The Master who knows the reality of things declared: I verily am not contained in these things, nor do these creatures stand in me. If the world be real, then it should be apprehended in dreamless sleep; it is not apprehended there, therefore it is unreal, dreamlike, false. Therefore the world is not separate from the higher Self; what is perceived as separate is false,--the natural potencies and the like; what real existence is

there in the attribute? Its support shines forth as *with attributes* illusively.

Whatever is delusively perceived by one deluded, is the Eternal; the silver shining is only the pearl shell. The Eternal is perpetually conceived as formed; but what is attributed to the Eternal is a name only.

Therefore the supreme Eternal is Being, secondless, of the form of pure knowledge, stainless, peaceful, free from beginning or ending, changeless, its own-nature is unbroken bliss.

Every difference made by world-glamor set aside, eternal, lasting, partless, measureless, formless, unmanifest, nameless, unfading, a self-shining light that illuminates all that is.

Where the difference of knower, knowing, known is gone, endless, sure; absolute, partless, pure consciousness; the wise know this as the supreme reality.

That can neither be left nor taken, is no object of mind or speech; immeasurable, beginningless, endless, the perfect Eternal, the universal "I."

## **THAT THOU ART**

(Verses 241--251)

The Eternal and the Self, indicated by the two words "that" and "thou," when clearly understood, according

to the Scripture "THAT THOU ART," are one; their oneness is again ascertained.

This identity of theirs is in their essential, not their verbal meanings, for they are *apparently* of contradictory character; like the firefly and the sun, the sovereign and the serf, the well and the great waters, the atom and Mount Meru.

The contradiction between them is built up by their disguises, but this disguise is no real thing at all; the disguise of the Master Self is the world-glamor, the cause of the Celestial and other worlds; the disguise of the *individual* life is the group of five veils--hear this now:

These are the two disguises, of the Supreme and the *individual* life; when they are set aside together, there is no longer the Supreme nor the *individual* life. The king has his kingdom, the warrior his weapons; when these are put away there is neither warrior nor king.

According to the Scripture saying, "this is the instruction, *the Self is not that, not that,*" the twofoldness that was built up sinks away of itself in the Eternal; let the truth of this scripture be grasped through awakening; the putting away of the two disguises must verily be accomplished.

It is not this, it is not this: because this is built up, it is not the real--like the serpent seen in the rope, or like a dream; thus putting away every visible thing by wise

meditation, the oneness of the two--*Self and Eternal*--is then to be known.

Therefore the two are to be well observed in their essential unity. Neither their contradictory character nor their non-contradictory character is all; but the real and essential Being is to be reached, in order to gain the essence in which they are one and undivided.

When one says: "This man is Devadatta," the oneness is here stated by rejecting contradictory qualities. With the great word "THAT THOU ART," it is the same; what is contradictory between the two is set aside.

As being essentially pure consciousness, the oneness between the Real and the Self is known by the awakened; and by hundreds of great texts the oneness, the absence of separateness, between the Eternal and the Self is declared.

That is not the physical; it is the perfect, after the unreal is put aside; like the ether, not to be handled by thought. Hence this matter that is perceived is illusive, therefore set it aside; but what is grasped by its own selfhood--"that I am the Eternal"--know that with intelligence purified; know the Self as partless awakening.

Every pot and vessel has always clay as its cause, and its material is clay; just like this, this world is engendered by the Real, and has the Real as its Self, the Real is its material altogether. That Real than

which there is none higher, THAT THOU ART, the restful, the stainless, secondless Eternal, the supreme.

## THE MANIFEST AND THE HIDDEN SELF

(Verses 252--268)

As dream-built lands and times, objects and knowers of them, are all unreal, just so here in waking is this world; its cause is ignorance of the Self; in as much as all this world, body and organs, vital breath and personality are all unreal, in so much THOU ART THAT, the restful, the stainless, secondless Eternal, the supreme.

Far away from birth and conduct, family and tribe, quite free from name and form and quality and fault; beyond space and time and objects--this is the Eternal, THAT THOU ART; become it in the Self.

The supreme, that no word can reach, but that is reached by the eye of awakening, pure of stain, the pure reality of consciousness and mind together--this is the Eternal, THAT THOU ART; become it in the Self. Untouched by the six infirmities, reached in the heart of those that seek for union, reached not by the organs, whose being neither intellect nor reason knows--this is the Eternal, THAT THOU ART; become it in the Self.

Built of error is the world; in That it rests; That rests in itself, different from the existent and the nonexistent;

partless, nor bound by causality, is the Eternal, THAT THOU ART; become it in the Self.

Birth and growth, decline and loss, sickness and death it is free from, and unfading; the cause of emanation, preservation, destruction, is the Eternal, THAT THOU ART; become it in the Self.

Where all difference is cast aside, all distinction is cast away, a waveless ocean, motionless; ever free, with undivided form--this is the Eternal, THAT THOU ART; become it in the Self.

Being one, though cause of many, the cause of others, with no cause itself; where cause and caused are merged in one, self-being, the Eternal, THAT THOU ART; become it in the Self.

Free from doubt and change, great, unchanging; where changing and unchanging are merged in one Supreme; eternal, unfading joy, unstained--this is the Eternal, THAT THOU ART; become it in the Self.

This shines forth manifold through error, through being the Self under name and form and quality and change; like gold itself unchanging ever--this is the Eternal, THAT THOU ART; become it in the Self.

This shines out unchanging, higher than the highest, the hidden one essence, whose character is selfhood, reality, consciousness, joy, endless unfading--this is the Eternal, THAT THOU ART; become it in the Self.

Let a man make it his own in the Self--like a word that is spoken, by reasoning from the known, by thought; this is as devoid of doubt as water in the hand, so certain will its reality become.

Recognizing this perfectly illumined one, whose reality is altogether pure, as *one recognizes* the leader of men in the assembled army, and resting on that always, standing firm in one's own Self, sink all this world that is born, into the Eternal.

In the soul, in the hidden place, marked neither as what is nor what is not, is the Eternal, true, supreme, secondless. He who through the Self dwells here in the secret place, for him there is no coming forth again to the world of form.

When the thing is well known even, this beginningless mode of thought, "I am the doer and the enjoyer," is very powerful; this mode of mind lasting strongly, is the cause of birth and rebirth. A looking backward toward the Self, a dwelling on it, is to be effortfully gained; freedom here on earth, say the saints, is the thinning away of that mode of thought.

That thought of 'I' and 'mine' in the flesh, the eye and the rest, that are not the Self--this transference *from the real to the unreal* is to be cast away by the wise man by steadfastness in his own Self.

# Finding the Real Self

## BONDAGE THROUGH IMAGINATION

(Verses 269--276)

RECOGNIZING as thine own the hidden Self, the witness of the soul and its activities, perceiving truly "That am I," destroy the thought of Self in all not Self.

Give up following after the world, give up following after the body, give up following after the ritual law; make an end of transferring selfhood to these.

Through a man's imagination being full of the world, through his imagination being full of the ritual law, through his imagination being full of the body, wisdom, truly, is not born in him.

For him who seeks freedom from the grasping hand of birth and death, an iron fetter binding his feet, say they who know it, is this potent triad of imaginings; he who has got free from this enters into freedom.

The scent of sandalwood that drives all evil odors away comes forth through stirring it with water and the like; all other odors are driven altogether away.

The image of the supreme Self, stained by the dust of imaginings, dwelling inwardly, endless, evil, comes forth pure, by the stirring power of enlightenment, as the scent of the sandalwood comes forth clear.



In the net of imaginings of things not Self, the image of the Self is held back; by resting on the eternal Self, their destruction comes, and the Self shines clear.

As the mind rests more and more on the Self behind it, it is more and more freed from outward imaginings; when imaginings are put away, and no residue left, he enters and becomes the Self, pure of all bonds.

### **SELFHOOD TRANSFERRED TO THINGS NOT SELF**

(Verses 277--298)

By resting ever in the Self, the restless mind of him who seeks union is stilled, and all imaginings fade away; therefore make an end of transferring Selfhood to things not Self.

Darkness is put away through force and substantial being; force, through substantial being; in the pure, substantial being is not put away; therefore, relying on substantial being, make an end of transferring Selfhood to things not Self.

The body of desire is nourished by all new works begun; steadily thinking on this, and effortfully holding desire firm, make an end of transferring selfhood to things not Self.

Thinking: "I am not this separate life but the supreme Eternal," beginning by rejecting all but this, make an

end of transferring selfhood to things not Self; it comes from the swift impetus of imaginings.

Understanding the all-selfhood of the Self, by learning, seeking union, entering the Self, make an end of transferring selfhood to things not Self; it comes from the Self's reflected light in other things.

Neither in taking nor giving does the sage act at all; therefore by ever resting on the One, make an end of transferring selfhood to things not Self.

Through sentences like "That thou art" awaking to the oneness of the Eternal and the Self, to confirm the Self in the Eternal, make an end of transferring selfhood to things not Self.

While there yet lingers a residue undissolved of the thought that this body is the Self, carefully seeking union with the Self, make an end of transferring selfhood to things not Self.

As long as the thought of separate life and the world shines, dreamlike even, so long incessantly, O wise one, make an end of transferring selfhood to things not Self.

The body of desire, born of father and mother of impure elements, made up of fleshly things impure, is to be abandoned as one abandons an impure man afar; gain thy end by becoming the Eternal.

## THE REAL IN THINGS UNREAL

As the space in a jar in universal space, so the Self is to be merged without division in the Self supreme; rest thou ever thus, O sage.

Through the separate self gaining the Self, self-shining as a resting-place, let all outward things from a world-system to a lump of clay be abandoned, like a vessel of impure water.

Raising the thought of "I" from the body to the Self that is Consciousness, Being, Bliss, and lodging it there, leave form, and become pure for ever.

Knowing that "I am that Eternal" wherein this world is reflected, like a city in a mirror, thou shalt perfectly gain thy end.

What is of real nature, self-formed, original consciousness, secondless bliss, formless, actless—entering that, let a man put off this false body of desires, worn by the Self as a player puts on a costume.

For the Self, all that is seen is but mirage; it lasts but for a moment, we see, and know it is not "I"; how could "I know all" be said of the personal self that changes every moment?

The real "I" is witness of the personal self and its powers; as its being is perceived always, even in dreamless sleep. The scripture says the Self is unborn,

everlasting; this is the hidden Self, distinguished neither as what exists nor what has no existence.

The beholder of every change in things that change, can be the unchanging alone; in the mind's desires, in dreams, in dreamless sleep the insubstantial nature of things that change is clearly perceived again and again.

Therefore put away the false selfhood of this fleshly body, for the false selfhood of the body is built up by thought; knowing the Self as thine own, unhurt by the three times, undivided illumination, enter into peace.

Put away the false selfhood of family and race and name, of form and rank, for these dwell in this body; put away the actorhood and other powers of the body of form; become the Self whose self is partless joy.

Other bonds of man are seen, causes of birth and death, but the root and first form of them is selfishness.

## **The Power of Mind- Images**

(Verses 299--378)

As long as the Self is in bondage to the false personal self of evil, so long is there not even a possibility of freedom, for these two are contraries.

But when free from the grasp of selfish personality, he reaches his real nature; Bliss and Being shine forth by their own light, like the full moon, free from blackness.

But he who in the body thinks "this am I," a delusion built up by the mind through darkness; when this delusion is destroyed for him without remainder, there arises for him the realization of Self as the Eternal, free from all bondage.

The treasure of the bliss of the Eternal is guarded by the terrible serpent of personality, very powerful, enveloping the Self, with three fierce heads--the three nature-powers; cutting off these three heads with the great sword of discernment, guided by the divine teachings, and destroying the serpent, the wise man may enter into that joy-bringing treasure.

So long as there is even a trace of the taint of poison in the body, how can there be freedom from sickness? In just the same way, there is no freedom for him who seeks union, while selfishness endures.

When the false self ceases utterly, and the motions of the mind caused by it come to an end, then, by discerning the hidden Self, the real truth that "I am that" is found.

Give up at once the thought of "I" in the action of the selfish personality, in the changeful self, which is but a reflection of the real Self, destroying rest in the Self; from falsely attributing reality to which are incurred

birth and death and old age, fruitful in sorrow, the pilgrimage of the soul; but reality belongs to the bidden Self, whose form is consciousness, whose body is bliss; whose nature is ever one, the conscious Self, the Master, whose form is Bliss, whose glory is unspeakable; there is no cause of the soul's pilgrimage but the attribution of the reality of this to the selfish personality.

Therefore this selfish personality, the enemy of the Self, like a thorn in the throat of the eater, being cut away by the great sword of knowledge, thou shalt enjoy the bliss of the Self's sovereignty, according to thy desire.

Therefore bringing to an end the activity of the selfish personality, all passion being laid aside when the supreme object is gained, rest silent, enjoying the bliss of the Self, in the Eternal, through the perfect Self, from all doubt free.

Mighty selfishness, even though cut down root and all, if brought to life again even for a moment, in thought, causes a hundred dissipations of energy, as a cloud shaken by the wind in the rainy seasons, pours forth its floods.

After seizing the enemy, selfishness, no respite at all is to be given to it, by thoughts of sensual objects. Just this is the cause of its coming to life again, as water is of the lime tree that had withered away.

The desirer is constituted by the bodily self; how can the cause of desire be different? Hence the motion of enticement to sensual objects is the cause of world-bondage, through attachment to what is other than Self.

From increase of action, it is seen that the seed of bondage is energized; when action is destroyed, the seed is destroyed. Hence let him check sensual action.

From the growth of mind-images comes the action, from action the mind-image grows; hence the man's pilgrimage ceases not.

To cut the bonds of the world's pilgrimage, both must be burned away by the ascetic. And the growth of mind-images comes from these two--imagining and external action.

Growing from these two, it brings forth the pilgrimage of the soul. The way of destroying these three in every mode of consciousness, should be constantly sought.

By looking on all as the Eternal, everywhere, in every way, and by strengthening the mind-image of real being, this triad comes to melt away.

In the destruction of actions will arise the destruction of imaginings, and from this the dispersal of mind-images. The thorough dispersal of mind-images is freedom; this is called freedom even in life.

When the mind-image of the real grows up, in the dispersal of the mind's alarms, and the mind-image of the selfish personality melts away, as even thick darkness is quickly melted away before the light of the sun.

The action of the greatest darkness, the snare of unreality, is no longer seen when the lord of day is arisen; so in the shining of the essence of secondless bliss, no bond exists nor scent of sorrow.

Transcending every visible object of sense, fixing the mind on pure being, the totality of bliss, with right intentness within and without, pass the time while the bonds of action last.

Wavering in reliance on the Eternal must never be allowed; wavering is death--thus said the sop. of the Evolver.

There is no other danger for him who knows, but this wavering as to the Self's real nature. Thence arises delusion, and thence selfish personality; thence comes bondage, and therefrom sorrow.

Through beholding sensual objects, forgetfulness bewilders a wise man even, as a woman her favorite lover.

As sedge pushed back does not remain even for a moment, just in the same way does the world-glamor close over a wise man, who looks away from the Real.



If the imagination falling even a little from its aim, towards outward objects, it falls on and on, through unsteadiness, like a player's fallen on a row of steps.

If the thought enters into sensual objects, it becomes intent on their qualities; from this intentness immediately arises desire, and, from desire, every action of man.

Hence than this wavering there is no worse death for one who has gained discernment, who has beheld the Eternal in spiritual concentration. By right intentness he at once gains success; be thou intent on the Self, with all carefulness.

Then comes loss of knowledge of one's real being, and he who has lost it falls; and destruction of him who thus falls is seen, but not restoration.

Let him put away the wilful motions of the mind, the cause of every evil act; he who has unity in life, has unity after his body is gone. The scripture of sentences says that he who beholds difference has fear.

Whenever even a wise man beholds difference in the endless Eternal, though only as much as an atom, what he beholds through wavering becomes a fear to him through its difference.

All scripture, tradition and logic disregarding, whoever makes the thought of self in visible things,

falls upon sorrow after sorrow; thus disregarding, he is like a thief in darkness.

He whose delight is attachment to the real, freed, he gains the greatness of the Self, eternal; but he who delights in attachment to the false, perishes; this is seen in the case of the thief and him who is no thief.

The ascetic, who has put away the cause of bondage--attachment to the unreal--stands in the vision of the Self, saying, "this Self am I"; this resting in the Eternal, brings joy by experiencing it, and takes away the supreme sorrow that we feel, whose cause is un wisdom.

Attachment to the outward brings as its fruit the perpetual increase of evil mind-images. Knowing this and putting away outward things by discernment, let him place his attachment in the Self forever.

When the outward is checked, there is restfulness from emotion; when emotion is at rest, there is vision of the supreme Self. When the Self is seen, the bondage of the world is destroyed; the checking of the outward is the path of freedom.

Who, being learned, discerning between real and unreal, knowing the teaching of the scripture, and beholding the supreme object with understanding, would place his reliance on the unreal, even though longing to be free--like a child, compassing his own destruction.

There is no freedom for him who is full of attachment to the body and its like; for him who is free, there is no wish for the body and its like; the dreamer is not awake, he who is awake dreams not; for these things are the opposites of each other.

Knowing the Self as within and without, in things stable and moving--discerning this through the Self, through its comprehending all things--putting off every disguise, and recognizing no division, standing firm through the perfect Self--such a one is free.

Through the All-self comes the cause of freedom from bondage; than the being of the All-self there is no other cause; and this arises when there is no grasping after the outer; he gains the being of the All-self by perpetually resting on the Self.

How should cessation of grasping after the outer not fail for him who, through the bodily self remains with mind attached to enjoyment of outward objects, and thus engages in action. It can only be effortfully accomplished by those who have renounced the sensual aims of all acts and rites, who are perfected in resting on the eternal Self, who know reality, who long for reality and bliss in the Self.

The scripture that speaks of "him who is at peace, controlled," teaches the ecstasy of the ascetic, whose work is the study of wisdom, to the end of gaining the All-self.

The destruction of personality which has risen up in power cannot be done at once, even by the learned, except those who are immovably fixed in the ecstasy which no doubt can assail, for the mind-images are of endless rebirth.

Binding a man with the delusion of belief in his personality, through the power that veils, the power that propels casts him forth, through its potencies.

The victory over this compelling power cannot be accomplished, until the power that veils has come to cessation with residue. The power that veils is, through the force of its own nature, destroyed, when the seer is discerned from what is seen, as milk is distinguished from water.

Perfect discernment, born of clear awakening, arises free from doubt, and pure of all bondage, where there is no propelling power towards delusive objects, once the division is made between the real natures of the seer and what is seen; he cuts the bonds of delusion that glamor makes, and, after that, there is no more pilgrimage for the free.

The flame of discernment of the oneness of the higher and the lower, burns up the forest of unwisdom utterly. What seed of the soul's pilgrimage can there be for him who has gained being in which there is no duality?

And the cessation of the veiling power arises from perfect knowledge; the destruction of false knowledge

is the cessation of the pain engendered by the propelling power.

The triple error is understood by knowing the real nature of the rope; therefore the reality of things is to be known by the wise to the end of freedom from bondage.

As iron from union with fire, so, from union with the real, thought expands as material things; hence the triple effect of this, seen in delusion, dream, desire, is but a mirage.

Thence come all changing forms in nature beginning with personality and ending with the body, and all sensual objects; these are unreal, because subject to change every moment; but the Self never changes.

Consciousness, eternal, non-dual, partless, uniform, witness of intellect and the rest, different from existent and non-existent; its real meaning is the idea of "I"; a union of being and bliss--this is the higher Self.

He who thus understands, discerning the real from the unreal, ascertaining reality by his own awakened vision, knowing his own Self as partless awakening, freed from these things reaches peace in the Self.

Then melts the heart's knot of unwisdom without residue, when, through the ecstasy in which there is no doubt, arises the vision of the non-dual Self.

Through the mind's fault are built the thoughts of thou and I and this, in the supreme Self which is non-dual, and beyond which there is nothing; but when ecstasy is reached, all his doubts melt away through apprehension of the real.

Peaceful, controlled, possessing the supreme cessation, perfect in endurance, entering into lasting ecstasy, the ascetic makes the being of the All-self his own; thereby burning up perfectly the doubts that are born of the darkness of unwisdom, he dwells in bliss in the form of the Eternal, without deed or doubt.

They who rest on the Self that is consciousness, who have put away the outward, the imaginations of the ear and senses, and selfish personality, they, verily, are free from the bonds and snares of the world, but not they who only meditate on what others have seen.

The Self is divided by the division of its disguises; when the disguises are removed, the Self is lonely and pure; hence let the wise man work for the removal of the disguises by resting in the ecstasy that is free from doubt.

Attracted by the Self the man goes to the being of the Self by resting on it alone; the grub, thinking on the bee, builds up the nature of the bee.

The grub, throwing off attachment to other forms, and thinking intently on the bee, takes on the nature of the bee; even thus he who seeks for union, thinking

intently on the reality of the supreme Self, perfectly enters that Self, resting on it alone.

Very subtle, as it were, is the reality of the supreme Self, nor can it be reached by gross vision; by the exceedingly subtle state of ecstasy it is to be known by those who are worthy, whose minds are altogether pure.

As gold purified in the furnace, rids itself of dross and reaches the quality of its own self, so the mind ridding itself of the dross of substance, force and darkness, through meditation, enters into reality.

When purified by the power of uninterrupted intentness, the mind is thus melted in the Eternal, then ecstasy is purified of all doubt, and of itself enjoys the essence of secondless bliss.

Through this ecstasy comes destruction of the knot of accumulated mind-images, destruction of all works; within and without, for ever and altogether, the form of the Self becomes manifest, without any effort at all.

Let him know that thinking is a hundred times better than scripture; that concentration, thinking the matter out, is a hundred thousand times better than thinking; that ecstasy free from doubt is endlessly better than concentration.

Through unwavering ecstasy is clearly understood the reality of the Eternal, fixed and sure. This cannot

be when other thoughts are confused with it, by the motions of the mind.

Therefore with powers of sense controlled enter in ecstasy into the hidden Self, with mind at peace perpetually; destroy the darkness made by beginningless unwisdom, through the clear view of the oneness of the real.

The first door of union is the checking of voice, the cessation of grasping, freedom from expectation and longing, the character bent ever on the one end.

A centering of the mind on the one end, is the cause of the cessation of sensuality; control is the cause that puts an end to imaginings; by peace, the mind-image of the personality is melted away; from this arises unshaken enjoyment of the essence of bliss in the Eternal for ever, for him who seeks union; therefore the checking of the imagination is ever to be practiced effortfully, O ascetic!

Hold voice in the self, hold the self in intellect, hold intellect in the witness of intellect, and, merging the witness in the perfect Self, enjoy supreme peace.

The seeker for union shares the nature of each disguise--body, vital breath, sense, mind, intellect--when his thoughts are fixed on that disguise.

When he ceases from this sharing, the ascetic reaches perfect cessation and happiness, and is plunged in the essence of Being and Bliss.



Renouncing inwardly, renouncing outwardly--this is possible only for him who is free from passion; and he who is free from passion renounces all attachment within and without, through the longing for freedom.

Outward attachment arises through sensual objects; inward attachment, through personality. Only he who, resting in the Eternal, is free from passion, is able to give them up. Freedom from passion and awakening are the wings of the spirit. O wise man, understand these two wings! For without them you cannot rise to the crown of the tree of life.

Soul-vision belongs to him who is free from passion; steady inspiration belongs to the soul-seer. Freedom from bondage belongs to the reality of inspiration; enjoyment of perpetual bliss belongs to the Self that is free.

I see no engenderer of happiness greater than freedom from passion for him who is self-controlled; if very pure inspiration of the Self be joined to it, he enters into the sovereignty of self-dominion. This is the door of young freedom everlasting. There do thou ever fix thy consciousness on the real self, in all ways free from attachment to what is other than this, for the sake of the better way.

Cut off all hope in sensual objects which are like poison, the cause of death; abandon all fancies of birth and family and social state; put all ritual actions far away; renounce the illusion of self-dwelling in the body, center the consciousness on the Self. Thou art

the seer, thou art the stainless, thou art in truth the supreme, secondless Eternal.

Firmly fixing the mind on the goal, the Eternal, keeping the outward senses in their own place, with form unmoved, heedless of the body's state, entering into the oneness of Self and Eternal by assimilating the Self and rising above all differences, forever drink the essence of the bliss of the Eternal in the Self. What profit is there in other things that give no joy?

## The Three Kinds of Works

(Verses 439--468)

HE who through wisdom discerns that there is no division between the Eternal and the manifested world, bears the mark of one who is free even in life.

Whose mind is even, when honored by the good, or persecuted by the wicked, bears the mark of one who is free even in life.

In whom all sensuous objects, put forth by the supreme, melt together like the rivers and streams that enter the ocean's treasure house, making no change at all, since he and they are but the one Being, this sage self-conquered is set free.

For him who has understood the nature of the Eternal, there is no return to birth and death as of old; if such return there be, then the nature of the Eternal was not known.

If they say he returns to birth and death through the rush of old imaginings, this is not true; for, from the knowledge of oneness, imaginings lose all their power.

As the most lustful man ceases from desire before his mother; so, when the Eternal is known, the wise cease from desire, through fullness of bliss.

The scripture says that, even for him who profoundly meditates, there is a going after outward things of sense, on account of Works already entered on.

As long as there is the taste of pain and pleasure, so long are there Works already entered on; the fruits come from the acts that went before; without these acts where would the fruits be?

From the knowledge that I am the Eternal, the accumulated Works, heaped up even through hundreds of myriads of ages, melt away like the work of dream, on awaking.

Whatever one does while dreaming, however good or bad it seems, what effect has it on him, on awaking to send him either to hell or heaven?

On knowing the Self, unattached, enthroned like the dome of heaven, the man is no longer stained at all by Works to come.

As the ether enclosed in the jar is not stained by the smell of the wine, so the Self encompassed by its vestures, is not stained by any quality of theirs.

Works that have been entered on, before wisdom's sunrise, are not destroyed by wisdom, until they have reached their fruition; like an arrow aimed and sent forth at the mark.

The arrow discharged by the thought that there was a tiger, does not stop when it is seen to be a cow, but pierces the mark through its exceeding swiftness.

Verily, Works entered on are the most formidable to the wise, they disappear only through being experienced. But Works accumulated and Works to come both melt away in the fire of perfect wisdom.

When they have beheld the oneness of the Self and the Eternal, and stand ever firm in the power of that knowledge, for them those three kinds of Works exist no longer; for them there is only the Eternal, free from every change.

When the saint rests in the Self, through understanding that the Self is other than its vestures, that the Self is the pure Eternal; then the myth of the reality of Works entered on no longer holds him, just

as the myth of union with things of dream no longer holds him who has awakened.

For he who is awake no longer keeps the sense of "I and mine and that," for his looking-glass body and the world that belongs to it; but comes to himself merely through waking.

Neither a desire for pursuing mythical objects, nor any grasping after even a world full of them, is seen in him who has awakened. But if the pursuit of mirages goes on, then it is seen for certain that the man has not wakened from sleep.

Thus dwelling in the supreme Eternal, through the real Self, he stands and beholds naught else. Like the memory of an object looked on in dream, so is it, for the wise, with eating or the other acts of life.

The body is built up through Works; the Works entered upon make for the building up of various forms; but the Self is not built up through works.

"Unborn, eternal, immemorial," says the Scripture, whose words are not in vain; of him who rests in that Self, what building up of Works entered on can there be?

Works entered upon flourish then, when the Self is identified with the body; but the identifying of Self with body brings no joy, therefore let Works entered upon be renounced.

Even the building up of a body through Works entered on is a mirage; whence can come the reality of a mere reflected image? whence can come the birth of an unreality?

Whence can come the death of what has not even been born? Whence can come the entering on of what does not even exist?--if there be a melting away of the effects of unwisdom, root and all, through the power of wisdom.

How does this body stand? In the case of him who takes inert things to be real, Works entered on are supported by the sight of outward things--thus says the scripture; yet it does not teach the reality of the body and the like, to the wise.

One, verily, is the Eternal, without a second. There is no difference at all. Altogether perfect, without beginning or end, measureless and without change.

The home of Being, the home of Consciousness, the home of Bliss enduring, changeless; one, verily, without a second, is the Eternal. There is no difference at all.

Full of the pure essence of the unmanifested, endless, at the crown of all; one, verily, without a second, is the Eternal; there is no difference at all.

That can neither be put away, nor sought after; that can neither be taken nor approached--one, verily,

without a second, is the Eternal; there is no difference at all.

Without qualities, without parts, subtle, without wavering, without stain; one, verily, without a second, is the Eternal; there is no difference at all.

# Karma-Yoga

By Swami Vivekananda

[1921]

## CHAPTER VII.

### FREEDOM.

In addition to meaning work, we have stated that psychologically the word *Karma* also implies causation. Any work, any action, any thought that produces an effect is called a *Karma*. Thus the law of *Karma* means the law of causation, of inevitable cause and sequence. Wheresoever there is a cause, there an effect must be produced; this necessity cannot be resisted, and this law of *Karma*, according to our philosophy, is true throughout the whole universe. Whatever we see, or feel, or do, whatever action there is anywhere in the universe, while being the effect of past work on the one hand, becomes, on the other, a cause in its turn, and produces its own effect. It is necessary, together with this, to consider what is meant by the word 'law.' By law is meant the tendency of a series to repeat itself. When we see one event followed by another, or sometimes happening simultaneously with another, we expect this sequence or co-existence to recur. Our old logicians and philosophers of the *Nyâya* school call this law by the name of *Vyâpti*. According to them all our ideas of law are due to association. A series of phenomena



becomes associated with things in our mind in a sort of invariable order, so that whatever we perceive at any time is immediately referred to other facts in the mind. Any one idea or, according to our psychology, any one wave that is produced in the mind-stuff, *chitta*, must always give rise to many similar waves. This is the psychological idea of association, and causation is only an aspect of this grand pervasive principle of association. This pervasiveness of association is what is, in Sanskrit, called *Vyâpti*. In the external world the idea of law is the same as in the internal,—the expectation that a particular phenomenon will be followed by another, and that the series will repeat itself. Really speaking, therefore, law does not exist in nature. Practically it is an error to say that gravitation exists in the earth, or that there is any law existing objectively anywhere in nature. Law is the method, the manner in which our mind grasps a series of phenomena; it is all in the mind. Certain phenomena, happening one after another or together, and followed by the conviction of the regularity of their recurrence, thus enabling our minds to grasp the method of the whole series, constitute what we call law.

The next question for consideration is what we mean by law being universal. Our universe is that portion of existence which is characterised by what the Sanskrit psychologists call *desa-kâla-nimitta*, or what is known to European psychology as *space, time* and *causation*. This universe is only a part of infinite existence, thrown into a peculiar mould, composed of

space, time and causation. It necessarily follows that law is possible only within this conditioned universe; beyond it there cannot be any law. When we speak of the universe we only mean that portion of existence which is limited by our mind; the universe of the senses, which we can see, feel, touch, hear, think of, imagine; this alone is under law; but beyond it existence cannot be subject to law, because causation does not extend beyond the world of our minds. Anything beyond the range of our mind and our senses is not bound by the law of causation, as there is no mental association of things in the region beyond the senses, and no causation without association of ideas. It is only when 'being' or existence gets moulded into name and form that it obeys the law of causation, and is said to be under law; because all law has its essence in causation. Therefore, we see at once that there cannot be any such thing as free will; the very words are a contradiction, because will is what we know, and everything that we know is within our universe, and everything within our universe is moulded by the conditions of space, time and causation. Everything that we know, or can possibly know, must be subject to causation, and that which obeys the law of causation cannot be free. It is acted upon by other agents, and becomes a cause in its turn. But that which has become converted into the will, which was not the will before, but which, when it fell into this mould of space, time and causation, became converted into the human will, is free; and when this will gets out of this mould of space, time and causation, it will be free again. From freedom it

comes, and becomes moulded into this bondage, and it gets out and goes back to freedom again.

The question has been raised as to from whom this universe comes, in whom it rests, and to whom it goes; and the answer has been given that from freedom it comes, in bondage it rests, and goes back into that freedom again. So, when we speak of man as no other than that infinite being which is manifesting itself, we mean that only one very small part thereof is man; this body and this mind which we see are only one part of the whole, only one spot of the infinite being. This whole universe is only one speck of the infinite being; and all our laws, our bondages, our joys and our sorrows, our happinesses and our expectations, are only within this small universe; all our progression and digression are within its small compass. So you see how childish it is to expect a continuation of this universe—the creation of our minds—and to expect to go to heaven, which after all must mean only a repetition of this world that we know. You see at once that it is an impossible and childish desire to make the whole of infinite existence conform to the limited and conditioned existence which we know. When a man says that he will have again and again this same thing which he is having now, or, as I sometimes put it, when he asks for a *comfortable* religion, you may know that he has become so degenerate that he cannot think of anything higher than what he is now; he is just his little present surroundings and nothing more. He has forgotten his infinite nature, and his whole idea is

confined to these little joys, and sorrows, and heart-jealousies of the moment. He thinks that this finite thing is the infinite; and not only so, he will not let this foolishness go. He clings on desperately unto *Trishnâ*, the thirst after life, what the Buddhists call *Tanha* and *Trissâ*. There may be millions of kinds of happiness, and beings, and laws, and progress, and causation, all acting outside the little universe that we know, and after all the whole of this comprises but one section of our infinite nature.

To acquire freedom we have to get beyond the limitations of this universe; it cannot be found here. Perfect equilibrium, or what the Christians call the peace that passeth all understanding, cannot be had in this universe, nor in heaven, nor in any place where our mind and thoughts can go, where the senses can feel, or which the imagination can conceive. No such place can give us that freedom, because all such places would be within our universe, and it is limited by space, time and causation. There may be places that are more ethereal than this earth of ours, where enjoyments may be keener, but even those places must be in the universe, and therefore in bondage to law; so we have to go beyond, and real religion begins where this little universe ends. These little joys, and sorrows, and knowledge of things end there, and the reality begins. Until we give up the thirst after life, the strong attachment to this our transient conditioned existence, we have no hope of catching even a glimpse of that infinite freedom beyond. It stands to reason then that there is only one

way to attain to that freedom which is the goal of all the noblest aspirations of mankind, and that is by giving up this little life, giving up this little universe, giving up this earth, giving up heaven, giving up the body, giving up the mind, giving up everything that is limited and conditioned. If we give up our attachment to this little universe of the senses, or of the mind, we shall be free immediately. The only way to come out of bondage is to go beyond the limitations of law, to go beyond causation.

But it is a most difficult thing to give up the clinging to this universe; few ever attain to that. There are two ways to do that, mentioned in our books. One is called the '*neti, neti*' (not this, not this), the other is called the '*iti*' (this); the former is the negative, and the latter is the positive way. The negative way is the most difficult. It is only possible to the men of the very highest, exceptional minds and gigantic wills who simply stand up and say, "No, I will not have this," and the mind and body obey their will, and they come out successful. But such people are very rare. The vast majority of mankind choose the positive way, the way through the world, making use of all the bondages themselves to break those very bondages. This is also a kind of giving up; only it is done slowly and gradually, by knowing things, enjoying things and thus obtaining experience, and knowing the nature of things until the mind lets them all go at last and becomes unattached. The former way of obtaining non-attachment is by reasoning, and the latter way is through work and experience. The

first is the path of *Jnana-Yoga*, and is characterised by the refusal to do any work; the second is that of *Karma-Yoga*, in which there is no cessation from work. Every one must work in the universe. Only those who are perfectly satisfied with the Self, whose desires do not go beyond the Self, whose mind never strays out of the Self, to whom the Self is all in all, only those do not work. The rest must work. A current rushing down of its own nature falls into a hollow and makes a whirlpool, and, after running a little in that whirlpool, it emerges again in the form of the free current to go on unchecked. Each human life is like that current. It gets into the whirl, gets involved in this world of space, time and causation, whirls round a little, crying out 'my father, my brother, my name, my fame,' and so on, and at last emerges out of it and regains its original freedom. The whole universe is doing that. Whether we know it or not, whether we are conscious or unconscious of it, we are all working to get out of the dream of the world. Man's experience in the world is to enable him to get out of its whirlpool.

What is *Karma-Yoga*? The knowledge of the secret of work. We see that the whole universe is working. For what? For salvation, for liberty; from the atom to the highest being working for the one end, liberty for the mind, for the body, for the spirit. All things are always trying to get freedom, flying away from bondage. The sun, the moon, the earth, the planets, all are trying to fly away from bondage. The centrifugal and the centripetal forces of nature are indeed typical

of our universe. Instead of being knocked about in this universe, and after long delay and thrashing, getting to know things as they are, we learn from *Karma-Yoga* the secret of work, the method of work, the organising power of work. A vast mass of energy may be spent in vain, if we do not know how to utilise it. *Karma-Yoga* makes a science of work, you learn by it how best to utilise all the working of this world. Work is inevitable, it must be so; but we should work to the highest purpose. *Karma-Yoga* makes us admit that this world is a world of five minutes; that it is a something we have to pass through; and that freedom is not here, but is only to be found beyond. To find the way out of the bondages of the world we have to go through it slowly and surely. There may be those exceptional persons about whom I just spoke, those who can stand aside and give up the world, as a snake casts off its skin and stands aside and looks at it. There are no doubt these exceptional beings; but the rest of mankind have to go slowly through the world of work; *Karma-Yoga* shows the process, the secret and the method of doing it to the best advantage.

What does it say? "Work incessantly, but give up all attachment to work." Do not identify yourself with anything. Hold your mind free. All this that you see, the pains and the miseries are but the necessary conditions of this world; poverty and wealth and happiness are but momentary; they do not belong to our real nature at all. Our nature is far beyond misery and happiness, beyond every object of the senses,

beyond the imagination; and yet we must go on working all the time. "Misery comes through attachment, not through work." As soon as we identify ourselves with the work we do, we feel miserable; but if we do not identify ourselves with it we do not feel that misery. If a beautiful picture belonging to another is burnt, a man does not generally become miserable; but when his own picture is burnt how miserable he feels Why? Both were beautiful pictures, perhaps copies of the same original; but in one case very much more misery is felt than in the other. It is because in one case he identifies himself with the picture, and not in the other. This 'I and mine' causes the whole misery. With the sense of possession comes selfishness, and selfishness brings on misery. Every act of selfishness or thought of selfishness makes us attached to something, and immediately we are made slaves. Each wave in the *chitta* that says 'I and mine,' immediately puts a chain round us and makes us slaves; and the more we say 'I and mine' the more slavery grows, the more misery increases. Therefore, *Karma-Yoga* tells us to enjoy the beauty of all the pictures in the world, but not to identify ourselves with any of them. Never say 'mine.' Whenever we say a thing is mine, misery will immediately come. Do not even say 'my child' in your mind. Possess the child, but do not say 'mine.' If you do, then will come the misery. Do not say 'my house,' do not say 'my body.' The whole difficulty is there. The body is neither yours, nor mine, nor anybody's. These bodies are coming and going by the laws of nature but we are free, standing as witness. This body



is no more free than a picture, or a wall. Why should we be attached so much to a body? If somebody paints a picture, he does it and passes on. Do not project that tentacle of selfishness, "I must possess it." As soon as that is projected, misery will begin.

So *Karma-Yoga* says, first destroy the tendency to project this tentacle of selfishness, and when you have the power of checking it, hold it in and do not allow the mind to get into the wave of selfishness. Then you may go out into the world and work as much as you can. Mix everywhere; go where you please; you will never be contaminated with evil. There is the lotus leaf in the water; the water cannot touch and adhere to it; so will you be in the world. This is called '*Vairâgya*,' dispassion or non-attachment. I believe I have told you that without non-attachment there cannot be any kind of *Yoga*. Non-attachment is the basis of all the *Yogas*. The man who gives up living in houses, wearing fine clothes, and eating good food, and goes into the desert, may be a most attached person. His only possession, his own body, may become everything to him; and as he lives he will be simply struggling for the sake of his body. Non-attachment does not mean anything that we may do in relation to our external body, it is all in the mind. The binding link of 'I and mine' is in the mind. If we have not this link with the body and with the things of the senses, we are nonattached, wherever and whatever we may be. A man may be on a throne and perfectly non-attached; another man may be in rags and still very much attached. First, we have to attain

this state of non-attachment, and then to work incessantly. *Karma-Yoga* gives us the method that will help us in giving up all attachment, though it is indeed very hard.

Here are the two ways of giving up all attachment. The one is for those who do not believe in God, or in any outside help. They are left to their own devices; they have simply to work with their own will, with the powers of their mind and discrimination, saying, "I must be nonattached." For those who believe in God there is another way, which is much less difficult. They give up the fruits of work unto the Lord, they work and are never attached to the results. Whatever they see, feel, hear, or do, is for Him. For whatever good work we may do, let us not claim any praise or benefit. It is the Lord's; give up the fruits unto Him. Let us stand aside and think that we are only servants obeying the Lord, our Master, and that every impulse for action comes from Him every moment. Whatever thou worshippest, whatever thou perceivest, whatever thou doest, give up all unto Him and be at rest. Let us be at peace, perfect peace, with ourselves, and give up our whole body and mind and everything as an eternal sacrifice unto the Lord. Instead of the sacrifice of pouring oblations into the fire, perform this one great sacrifice day and night—the sacrifice of your little self. "In search of wealth in this world, Thou art the only wealth I have found; I sacrifice myself unto Thee. In search of someone to be loved, Thou art the only one beloved I have found; I sacrifice myself unto Thee." Let us repeat this day and

night, and say, "Nothing for me; no matter whether the thing is good, bad, or indifferent; I do not care for it; I sacrifice all unto Thee." Day and night let us renounce our seeming self until it becomes a habit with us to do so, until it gets into the blood, the nerves and the brain, and the whole body is every moment obedient to this idea of self-renunciation. Go then into the midst of the battlefield, with the roaring cannon and the din of war, and you will find yourself to be free and at peace.

*Karma-Yoga* teaches us that the ordinary idea of duty is on the lower plane; nevertheless, all of us have to do our duty. Yet we may see that this peculiar sense of duty is very often a great cause of misery. Duty becomes a disease with us; it drags us ever forward. It catches hold of us and makes our whole life miserable. It is the bane of human life. This duty, this idea of duty is the midday summer sun which scorches the innermost soul of mankind. Look at those poor slaves to duty! Duty leaves them no time to say prayers, no time to bathe. Duty is ever on them. They go out and work. Duty is on them! They come home and think of the work for the next day. Duty is on them! It is living a slave's life, at last dropping down in the street and dying in harness, like a horse. This is duty as it is understood. The only true duty is to be unattached and to work as free beings, to give up all work unto God. All our duties are His. Blessed are we that we are ordered out here. We serve our time; whether we do it ill or well, who knows? If we do it well, we do not get the fruits. If we do it ill,

neither do we get the care. Be at rest, be free, and work. This kind of freedom is a very hard thing to attain. How easy it is to interpret slavery as duty – the morbid attachment of flesh for flesh as duty! Men go out into the world and struggle and fight for money or for any other thing to which they get attached. Ask them why they do it. They say, "It is a duty." It is the absurd greed for gold and gain, and they try to cover it with a few flowers.

What is duty after all? It is really the impulsion of the flesh, of our attachment; and when an attachment has become established, we call it duty. For instance, in countries where there is no marriage, there is no duty between husband and wife; when marriage comes, husband and wife live together on account of attachment; and that kind of living together becomes settled after generations; and when it becomes so settled, it becomes a duty. It is, so to say, a sort of chronic disease. 'When it is acute we call it disease, when it is chronic we call it nature. It is a disease. So when attachment becomes chronic, we baptise it with the high-sounding name of duty. We strew flowers upon it, trumpets sound for it, sacred texts are said over it, and then the whole world fights, and men earnestly rob each other for this duty's sake. Duty is good to the extent that it checks brutality. To the lowest kinds of men, who cannot have any other ideal, it is of some good; but those who want to be Karma-Yogis must throw this idea of duty overboard. There is no duty for you and me. Whatever you have to give to the world, do give by all means, but not as a

duty. Do not take any thought of that. Be not compelled. Why should you be compelled? *Everything that you do under compulsion goes to build up attachment.* Why should you have any duty? Resign everything unto God. In this tremendous fiery furnace where the fire of duty scorches everybody, drink this cup of nectar and be happy. We are all simply working out His will, and have nothing to do with rewards and punishments. If you want the reward you must also have the punishment; the only way to get out of the punishment is to give up the reward. The only way of getting out of misery is by giving up the idea of happiness, because these two are linked to each other. On one side there is happiness, on the other there is misery. On one side there is life, on the other there is death. The only way to get beyond death is to give up the love of life. Life and death are the same thing, looked at from different points. So the idea of happiness without misery, or of life without death, is very good for school-boys and children; but the thinker sees that it is all a contradiction in terms and gives up both. Seek no praise, no reward, for anything you do. No sooner do we perform a good action than we begin to desire credit for it. No sooner do we give money to some charity than we want to see our names blazoned in the papers. Misery must come as the result of such desires. The greatest men in the world have passed away unknown. The Buddhas and the Christs that we know are but second rate heroes in comparison with the greatest men of whom the world knows nothing. Hundreds of these unknown heroes have lived in every country working silently.

Silently they live and silently they pass away; and in time their thoughts find expression in Buddhas or Christs, and it is these latter that become known to us. The highest men do not seek to get any name or fame from their knowledge. They leave their ideas to the world; they put forth no claims for themselves and establish no schools or systems in their name. Their whole nature shrinks from such a thing. They are the pure *Sâttvikas*, who can never make any stir, but only melt down in love. I have seen one such *Yogi* who lives in a cave in India. He is one of the most wonderful men I have ever seen. He has so completely lost the sense of his own individuality that we may say that the man in him is completely gone, leaving behind only the all-comprehending sense of the divine. If an animal bites one of his arms, he is ready to give it his other arm also, and say that it is the Lord's will. Everything that comes to him is from the Lord. He does not show himself to men, and yet he is a magazine of love and of true and sweet ideas.

Next in order come the men with more *Rajas*, or activity, combative natures, who take up the ideas of the perfect ones and preach them to the world. The highest kind of men silently collect true and noble ideas, and others—the Buddhas and Christs—go from place to place preaching them and working for them. In the life of Gautama Buddha we notice him constantly saying that he is the twenty-fifth Buddha. The twenty-four before him are unknown to history, although the Buddha known to history must have built upon foundations laid by them. The highest men

are calm, silent and unknown. They are the men who really know the power of thought; they are sure that, even if they go into a cave and close the door and simply think five true thoughts and then pass away, these five thoughts of their will live through eternity. Indeed such thoughts will penetrate through the mountains, cross the oceans, and travel through the world. They will enter deep into human hearts and brains and raise up men and women who will give them practical expression in the workings of human life. These *Sâttoika* men are too near the Lord to be active and to fight, to be working, struggling, preaching and doing good, as they say, here on earth to humanity. The active workers, however good, have still a little remnant of ignorance left in them. When our nature has yet some impurities left in it, then alone can we work. It is in the nature of work to be impelled ordinarily by motive and by attachment. In the presence of an ever active Providence who notes even the sparrows fall, how can man attach any importance to his own work? Will it not be a blasphemy to do so when we know that He is taking care of the minutest things in the world? We have only to stand in awe and reverence before Him saying, "Thy will be done." The highest men cannot work, for in them there is no attachment. Those whose whole soul is gone into the Self, those whose desires are confined in the Self, who have become ever associated with the Self, for them there is no work. Such are indeed the highest of mankind; but apart from them every one else has to work. In so working we should never think that we can help on

even the least thing in this universe. We cannot. We only help ourselves in this gymnasium of the world. This is the proper attitude of work. If we work in this way, if we always remember that our present opportunity to work thus is a privilege which has been given to us, we shall never be attached to anything. Millions like you and me think that we are great people in the world; but we all die, and in five minutes the world will have forgotten us. But the life of God is infinite. "Who can live a moment, breathe a moment, if this all-powerful One does not will it?" He is the ever active Providence. All power is His and within His command. Through His command the winds blow, the sun shines, the earth lives, and death stalks upon the earth. He is the all in all; He is all and in all. We can only worship Him. Give up all fruits of work; do good for its own sake; then alone will come perfect non-attachment. The bonds of the heart will thus break, and we shall reap perfect freedom. This freedom is indeed the goal of *Karma-Yoga*.



# Judaism

## The Talmud: Selections

By H. Polano

[1876]

Rabbi Ishmael, the High Priest.

Rabbi Ishmael was one of the most prominent and excellent among the fathers of the Talmudical literature. His doctrines are pure, his ideas sublime, and his explanations clear and concise. He died a martyr to Roman persecution, and this end has set the seal of truth and conviction on all the actions and sayings of his life.

There is an historical immortality, as well as a spiritual immortality; Rabbi Ishmael has attained the former, and he was a firm believer in the latter. They who imagine the doctrine of immortality to be an outgrowth of man's vanity, claiming for himself an imaginary preference above other creatures; they who believe it an ancient fiction, without which no courts of law would be able to check the natural proneness of man towards evil doing, could never rise to the courage and sublimity of martyrdom. To Ishmael, common observation as well as innate principles proved the truth of his belief.

First, no atom of matter, in the whole vastness of the universe, is lost; how, then, can man's soul, which comprises the whole world in one idea, be lost?

Secondly, in all nature death is but a transformation; with the soul it is the portal to a new and higher realm.

Thirdly, our thoughts and feelings, emanating from the soul, are not of an earthly nature.

Rabbi Ishmael also advocated with energy the doctrine of man's free agency.

"When a man enters upon the path of truth and justice," said he, "God helps him forward, but when he chooses the way of sin, God says, 'I gave thee reason and free will, go thy way,' even as the trader will wait upon the customer who purchases a good and pleasant article, while to one who desires pitch or sulphur he says, 'Go, wait upon thyself.'"

Many ask, "Why does God permit so much corruption and evil?" Rabbi Ishmael answers, "Not God, but ye, yourselves, are the creators and supporters of moral evils. When a field is covered by weeds, shall a farmer complain to God? No; let him blame himself for his carelessness and neglect. Noble, indeed, is the feeling of the man who reflects that his virtue is his own work, and truly woful is the profligate who cannot but know that his guilt is his alone. 'To the pure help cometh from on high,' was the sentence which

cheered our pious forefathers, and which should encourage us."

His definition of sin, too, is far beyond and above the confused ideas of many theologians.

"Sin is an obstruction in the heart; an inability to feel and comprehend all that is noble, true, and great, and to take part in the good." If man is to be freed from sin, his mind and heart must be opened to the influence of enlightenment. The power of the passions must be subdued, and all prejudice, selfishness, and self complacency be removed.

For those who entertain the erroneous opinion that Judaism proclaims God as unforgiving and rancorous, nothing further should be necessary than to enumerate the Rabbi's classification of the effects of the Day of Atonement.

"He who violates an affirmative commandment, and repents, is forgiven immediately.

"He who does that thing which is forbidden, and repents, is forgiven on the Day of Atonement.

"He who commits a sin punishable by extirpation, or the death penalty, may be forgiven through suffering, but nothing save death may atone for the one who profanes the name of God."

What is a profanation of the name of God? According to Rab, he who borrows and does not repay commits

that sin. Rabbi Abaya says, "A man who acts so that God's name is not honoured in his mouth."

And Rabbi Jochanan says, "The man who has abased his character."

Why should a violation of the affirmative commandments be so easily expiated, as is generally believed, since they are so important? The Rabbi says that sin committed against man is more grievous in the eyes of God than that committed against Himself.

# Jewish Fairy Tales and Legends

By "Aunt Naomi" (Gertrude Landa)

[1919]

## The Outcast Prince

There lived a king who had an only son, on whom he doted. No one, not even his oldest tutor, was permitted to utter a word of correction to the prince whenever he did anything wrong, and so he grew up completely spoiled. He had many faults, but the worst features of his character were that he was proud, arrogant and cruel. Naturally, too, he was selfish and disobedient. When he was called to his lessons, he refused, saying, "I am a prince. Before many years I shall be your king. I have no need to learn what common people must know. Enough for me that I shall occupy the throne and shall rule. My will alone shall prevail. Says not the law of the land, 'The king can do no wrong'?"

Handsome and haughty, even as a youth, he made the king's subjects fear him by his imperious manner. His appearance in the streets was the signal for everyone to run into his house, bar the doors, and peer nervously through the casements. He was a reckless rider, and woe betide the unfortunate persons who happened to be in his way. Sparing

neither man, woman, nor child, he callously rode over them, or lashed out vindictively with the long whip he always carried, laughing when anyone screamed with pain.

So outrageous did his public conduct become that the people determined to suffer in silence no longer. They denounced the prince in public, they petitioned the king himself to restrain his son, and his majesty could not disregard the complaints. At first he was merely annoyed, then he was indignant, but when he saw that the people were thoroughly aroused and threatened revolt, he deemed it wise to inquire into the charges against his son.

A commission of three judges was appointed to investigate. They made fullest inquiry and finally laid a document before the king summarizing what they did not hesitate to declare the "infamous actions of His Royal Highness, the Crown Prince."

The king's sense of justice and righteousness at once overcame his foolish pride.

"My people stand justified in their attitude which at first I thought only disrespectful to my royal person," he said. "I owe them an apology and recompense. I shall atone. And my son shall atone, too. He shall not escape punishment."

He summoned his son to appear before him, and the prince entered the royal justice chamber with the air of a braggart, smiling contemptuously at the learned

judges who were seated to right and left of his majesty, and defiantly cracking his whip.

"Knowest thou why thou hast been bidden to stand before the judges of the land?" asked the king.

"I know not and I care not," was the haughty answer. "The foolish chatter of the mob interests me not."

The king frowned. He had not seen the prince behave in this fashion before. In the presence of his father, he had always been respectful.

"Thou hast disgraced thy honored name and thy mother's sacred memory, foolish prince," exclaimed the monarch angrily. "Thou hast humiliated thyself and me before the people."

Still the prince tried to laugh off the matter as a joke, but he quickly discovered that the king was in no mood for trifling. Standing grave and erect, his majesty pronounced sentence in a loud and firm voice.

"Know all men," he said, while all the judges, counselors, officers of state and representatives of the people stood awed to silence, "that it having been proved on indisputable evidence that the prince, my son, hath grievously transgressed against the righteous laws of this land and against the people, my subjects, on whom he hath heaped insult, I have taken counsel with my advisers, the ministers of state, and it is my royal will and pleasure to pronounce

sentence. Wherefore, I declare that my son, the prince, shall be cast forth into the world, penniless, and shall not return until he shall have learned how to Count Five. And be it further known that none may minister unto his wants should he crave assistance by declaring he is my son, the prince."

The prince stood astounded. What did the mysterious sentence mean? None could tell him. The only answer to his inquiries was a shrug of the shoulders, for nobody would speak to him.

In the dead of night, with only the stars gazing down on the strange scene, the prince, clad in the cast-off garments of a common laborer, with his golden curls cut off and not a solitary coin in his pocket, was conducted outside the palace grounds and left alone in the road.

He was too much dazed to weep. He told himself this was some horrible dream from which he would waken in the morning, to find himself in his own beautiful room, lying on his gilded bed under the richly embroidered silken coverlet.

When dawn broke, however, he found himself hungry, tired, and his body painfully stiff, under a hedge. He knew now it was no dream but a reality. He was alone and friendless, with no means of earning his food. He understood then what hardships the poor were compelled to undergo, and he began to realize how he had made them suffer, and how, in



turn, he was now to pay a heavy price for his brutal treatment of the people.

All that day he wandered aimlessly, until, footsore and exhausted, he sank down at the door of a wayside cottage and begged for food and shelter. These were given to him, and next day he was set to work in the fields. But his hands were not used to labor, and he was sent adrift, his fellow workers jeering at him. With a heavy heart, and his pride humbled, he set forth again to learn the mystery of how to Count Five.

Long days and endless nights, through the heat of the summer, through the snows of winter, the autumnal rains and cold blasts of early spring, he wandered.

A whole year passed away, and he had learned nothing. In truth, he had almost forgotten why he was aimlessly drifting from place to place, farther and farther from his home.

Hunger and thirst were more often than not his daily portion, and the cold earth by night was frequently his couch. Time seemed to drag along without meaning, and oft-times for a week he heard not the sound of a human voice.

He was a beggar, generally accepting gratefully what was given to him, sometimes with harsh words, often with kindly expressions. When he could, he worked, doing anything for small coins, for a rabbi, who had taken compassion on him, had said, "Do any honest

work, however repugnant it may at first seem, rather than say haughtily, 'I am the son of a rich father.'"

For a moment he wondered whether the rabbi had guessed his secret, but the learned man said to him he was but repeating a maxim from the Talmud.

Exactly a year from the date of his sentence, as well as he could keep count, the prince found himself in a strange land on the outskirts of a great city. There he fell in with a beggar who hailed him as a brother.

"Come with me," said the beggar. "I know the lore of our fraternity as few do. I know where to obtain the best food and shelter for naught. Here, in this city, a beautiful and noble princess has established a place where all wayfarers may rest and refresh. None are turned away. I will take you thither."

The beggar was as good as his word, and the prince enjoyed the best meal and the most comfortable shelter since he had been an outcast. Overcome with emotion at the thoughts which were conjured up, he retired into a corner and wept. Suddenly he heard a voice of entrancing sweetness say, "Why do you weep?"

He looked up and beheld the most beautiful woman his eyes had ever seen. Instinctively, he rose and bowed low, but made no answer.

"The princess speaks. It is your duty to answer," said another voice, that of an attendant.

A princess! Of course, none but a princess could be so fair. And what a sympathetic voice she possessed. As a prince, he remembered, he had spoken harshly as a rule, and had never visited any of the charitable institutions.

"You must have a history," said the princess, kindly. "Tell it to me. If it is to be kept a secret, you may place confidence in me. I shall not betray you."

The prince was on the point of telling her everything but he hesitated and said:

"Alas! I am an unhappy, wandering beggar, as you see, O most gracious princess. But pity me not. I am not worthy of your kind thoughts. A year ago I dwelt in a--a beautiful house. I was the only son of a--rich merchant, and my father lavished all his love and wealth on me. But I was wicked. I was unkind to people, and I was cast forth and ordered not to return until I had learned to Count Five. I have not yet learned. I am doomed to a wretched life. That is the whole of my history."

"Strange," murmured the princess. "I will help thee if I can."

Next day she came again to the shelter, and with her was the rabbi who had given the prince good counsel. The rabbi made no sign that he had seen the stranger before.

"This sage of the Jews is a wise man and will teach thee," said the princess, and, at her bidding, the prince repeated what he had said the previous night.

"It is a simple lesson," said the rabbi, "so absurdly simple, unfortunately, that proud people overlook it. Tell me, my son," he added. "Hast thou experienced hunger?"

"That I have," returned the prince, sadly.

"Then canst thou count One. Dost thou know what it is to feel cold?"

"I do."

"Two canst thou count. Tell me, further, dost thou know what kindness of heart is?"

"That have I received from the poorest and also from the gracious princess."

"Thou hast proceeded far in thy lesson," said the rabbi. "Thou canst now count Three. Hast thou ever felt gratitude?"

"Indeed I have, often during this past year, and now most particularly."

"Four is now the toll of thy count," said the rabbi. "Tell me, my son, hast thou learned the greatest lesson of all? Dost thou feel humble in spirit?"

With tears in his eyes, the prince answered, "I do, most sincerely."

"Then hast thou truly learned to Count Five. Return to thy father. He must be a wise and just man to impose on thee this lesson. He will assuredly forgive thee. Go, with my blessing," and the rabbi raised his hands above the young man's head and uttered a benediction.

"Take also my good wishes," said the princess, and she offered him her hand to kiss.

"Gracious princess," he said, "it is not meet that a beggar in rags should speak what is in his heart. But I shall return, and if thou deemest me worthy, perchance thou wilt grant a request that I shall make."

"Perchance," replied the princess, with a laugh.

The prince made haste to return to his father's palace and related all his adventures. The old man listened quietly, then he clasped his son in his arms, forgave him, and proudly proclaimed him prince before all the people again. He was a changed man, and nevermore guilty of a cruel action.

Before many months had passed, he returned to the city where he had seen the princess, with a long retinue of attendants, all bearing presents.

"Gracious princess," he said, when he had been granted an audience. "I said I would return."

"Indeed! I know thee not."

The prince told her of their former meeting and she seemed highly pleased.

"Now," he said, "put the crown on thy work which restored to me the manhood I had foolishly cast away by my conduct. I would make thee my bride, and with thee ever my guide and counselor, I shall be the most faithful of kings, and thou a queen of goodness and beauty and wisdom such as the world has not yet seen."

The princess did not give her answer immediately, but in due course she did; and once again, the prince returned home, this time happier than ever. Sitting by his side in the chariot of state, was the princess, radiant in smiles, for the people welcomed her heartily, strewing flowers in her path. And ever afterward there was happiness throughout the land.

# Buddhism

## Sermons of a Buddhist Abbot

[Zen For Americans]

By Soyen Shaku

Translated by Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki

[1906]

### IGNORANCE AND ENLIGHTENMENT.

THE fundamental idea of Buddhism is "to disperse the clouds of ignorance in order to make the moon of enlightenment shine out in her glory."

By ignorance Buddhism understands the assertion of self-will, which is the root of all evil and misery in this world. Self-will is ignorance, because it is blind to the truth that the world is a relative existence, that the self separated from other fellow-selves is non-entity, and that individuals acquire their reality in proportion as they penetrate the foundation of existence. This truth is ignored by the principle of self-assertion. A man who is self-assertive pushes himself forward without any regard to the welfare of his brother creatures; he hails himself when he

reaches the heights of self-aggrandizement; but unfortunately he fails to perceive that his success is but the road to his final destruction. For self-assertion really means self-annihilation. We live in fact in the oneness of things and die in isolation and singleness.

In Christian terminology, selfhood is the "flesh," or "the old man"; such is the meaning when Jesus exclaims that "the spirit is truly ready, but the flesh is weak" (Mark xiv, 38), or when Paul speaks of "the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Eph. iv, 22), or when the flesh is spoken of as profiting nothing (John vi, 63), or allusion is made to its infirmity (Rom. vi, 19), or to its not pleasing God (Rom. viii, 8), or to its lusting against the spirit (Gal. v, 17). Christians are not so intellectual as Buddhists, and therefore, philosophically considered, the terminology of the former is not so definite and to the point as is that of the latter. Besides, the adoption of popular terms often suggests a wrong conception which is not intended; for instance, the distinction between the flesh and the spirit has a tendency to a dualistic interpretation of life. To conceive the nature of the flesh to be diametrically and radically opposed to that of the spirit is not in accord with the essentially monistic teaching of Buddhism. Those who are prone to asceticism and self-mortification are as much condemned by Buddha as the followers of hedonism for being ignorant and far from attaining the path of enlightenment.



When the ignorance of self-assertion is removed, Buddhism teaches, the enlightenment of universal lovingkindness takes its place; and the arrogance, tenacity, indefatigability, and impertinence which characterize egotistic impulses are all converted to do service for the general welfare of humanity, and they will then assume different names as most desirable virtues. As soon as the veil of ignorance is raised, the glory of enlightenment which is love is revealed, and we do no more hanker after self-gratification. Why? Because the Buddha-intelligence is universal and works in every one of us to bring out the consciousness of oneness underlying all individual phenomena. We as individuals are all different; mine is not thine and vice versa; and in this sense egoism is true, and the assertion of self-will is permissible to that extent. But we must never lose sight of "the same God that worketh all in all," and "in which we move and live and have our being," for he is the source of eternal life and the fountain of love. "Not what I will, but what thou wilt," is the most fundamental religious truth, not only in Christianity, but in Buddhism. Not the assertion of self-will, but the execution of the will of that being in which we are all one, constitutes the condition of enlightenment.

We must not, however, suppose that the divine will becomes manifest only when all the lust and passions of the flesh are destroyed. This is the teaching of anchorites and not of Buddhists. What the latter teach is to make the inclinations of the flesh those of the spirit, so that there will be left no hiatus between the

two. What one wills, the other wills, and no discord or mutual exclusion is then allowed. To express this more Buddhistically, ignorance does not depart when enlightenment comes in, but ignorance itself becomes enlightenment; self-will is not annihilated in order to make room for the divine will, but self-will itself assumes divinity.

In the beginning of this discourse, I said that the fundamental idea of Buddhism is to disperse the clouds of ignorance in order to see the moon of enlightenment in her glory. This may suggest the thought that ignorance and enlightenment are fundamentally different and mutually contradicting, and that one thing called ignorance goes out and another thing called enlightenment comes in to take its place, as these two do not agree. But in truth I have there followed the popular dualistic conception of the matter; and therefore let me repeat that in Nirvâna, according to Buddhism, there is not such distinction as light and shade, ignorance and enlightenment, coming and going. If there is anything in Nirvâna, it is all enlightenment, all purity, and an unconditioned freedom from selfishness. Accordingly, when one attains Nirvâna, which is the realization of the Buddhist life, ignorance itself becomes enlightenment and self-will the divine will. What we thought ignorance is now enlightenment; where we located the final abode of the ego-soul, we have now the fount of divine will. This may sound somewhat sacrilegious, but the Buddhists are such consistent and never-yielding monists that they do not shrink

from carrying out their logic to the end; they are not at all afraid of the charge of blasphemy or irreligiosity likely to be preferred by some pious Christians.

This purification or illumination of self-will, however, must not be confused with antinomianism or libertinism. The latter is given up to the wantonness of self-will and not to the free activity of the divine will. What the pure-hearted do is always pure, while whatever comes from a heart defiled with egoism is defiled and irrational. There are many points in the religious life which make it very difficult to distinguish the latter from the ethical life, for both are so closely related. But we could consider the subjectivity of religion as most characteristically contrasted to the objectivity of ethics. The distinction between the self-will and the divine will must be personally felt and individually experienced. This may sound vague and be considered as taking refuge in the maze of subjectivism; but the fact is that religion has its foundation in our subjective life, and anything that relates to it lacks in definition and exactitude so typical of things objective and intellectual. Religion, when devoid of this mystical element, loses its irresistible fascination. Of course, we must not make it abide always in the camera obscura of imagination and mysticism. We must take it out in the broad daylight of science and subject it to an intellectual scrutiny. But we cannot for all that ignore the fact that there is something in religion which defies or escapes the most penetrating searchlight of intellectual analysis. And in this

something there lies its charm, its *raison d'être*, and its power to remove vexation of spirit.

Whatever this be, Nirvâna, in which the spirituality of a human being is fully realized, can be attained only after most strenuous moral efforts on the part of the aspirant. Intellectual knowledge can be acquired through an outside agency; we of latter days may be far wiser in this particular respect than all our venerable moral and religious teachers of bygone ages, such as Socrates, Plato, Buddha, and Christ. But the spiritual region lies within, and each of us must strive, through our own inner and individual efforts and not through any outside agency, to unfold ourselves and bring about enlightenment. We may have high ideals, but let us remember that they can be realized only after long discipline and untiring exertion. Let those therefore forever strive--those that wish to follow the fundamental idea of Buddhism.

"When the scholar driveth away sloth by earnestness,  
He attaineth to the palace of wisdom,  
Sorrowless in the sorrowing world,  
And the wise one, he, looks upon the ignorant,  
Even as one on the mountain-peak looks upon one on  
the ground,"

--*Dharmapada*, 28.

# Buddha, The Gospel

By Paul Carus

Chicago, The Open Court Publishing Company,

[1894]

## The Sermong at Rajagaha

THE Blessed One having dwelt some time in Uruvela went to Rajagaha, accompanied by a number of bhikkhus, many of whom had been Jatilas before. The great Kassapa, chief of the Jatilas and formerly a fire worshiper, went with him.

When the Magadha king, Seniya Bimbisara, heard of the arrival of Gotama Sakyamuni, of whom the people said, "He is the Holy One, the blessed Buddha, guiding men as a driver curbs bullocks, the teacher of high and low," he went out surrounded with his counselors and generals and came to the grove where the Blessed One was. There they saw the Blessed One in the company of Kassapa, the great religious teacher of the Jatilas, and they were astonished and thought: "Has the great Sakyamuni placed himself under the spiritual direction of Kassapa, or has Kassapa become a disciple of Gotama?"

The Tathagata, reading the thoughts of the people, said to Kassapa: "What knowledge hast thou gained, O Kassapa, and what has induced thee to renounce the sacred fire and give up thine austere penances?"

Kassapa said: "The profit I derived from adoring the fire was continuance in the wheel of individuality with all its sorrows and vanities. This service I have cast away, and instead of continuing penances and sacrifices I have gone in quest of the highest Nirvana. Since I have seen the light of truth, I have abandoned worshiping the fire."

The Buddha, perceiving that the whole assembly was ready as a vessel to receive the doctrine, spoke thus to Bimbisara the king: "He who knows the nature of self and understands how the senses act, finds no room for selfishness, and thus he will attain peace unending. The world holds the thought of self, and from this arises false apprehension. Some say that the self endures after death, some say it perishes. Both are wrong and their error is most grievous. For if they say the self is perishable, the fruit they strive for will perish too, and at some time there will be no hereafter. Good and evil would be indifferent. This salvation from selfishness is without merit.

"When some, on the other hand, say the self will not perish, then in the midst of all life and death there is but one identity unborn and undying. If such is their self, then it is perfect and cannot be perfected by deeds. The lasting, imperishable self could never be changed. self would be lord and master, and there would be no use in perfecting the perfect; moral aims and salvation would be unnecessary.

"But now we see the marks of joy and sorrow. Where is any constancy? If there is no permanent self that

does our deeds, then there is no self; there is no actor behind our actions, no perceiver behind our perception, no lord behind our deeds.

"Now attend and listen: The senses meet the object and from their contact sensation is born. Thence results recollection. Thus, as the sun's power through a burning-glass causes fire to appear, so through the cognizance born of sense and object, the mind originates and with it the ego, the thought of self, whom some Brahman teachers call the lord. The shoot springs from the seed; the seed is not the shoot; both are not one and the same, but successive phases in a continuous growth. Such is the birth of animated life.

"Ye that are slaves of the self and toil in its service from morn until night, ye that live in constant fear of birth, old age, sickness, and death, receive the good tidings that your cruel master exists not. Self is an error, an illusion, a dream. Open your eyes and awaken. See things as they are and ye will be comforted. He who is awake will no longer be afraid of nightmares. He who has recognized the nature of the rope that seemed to be a serpent will cease to tremble.

"He who has found there is no self will let go all the lusts and desires of egotism. The cleaving to things, covetousness, and sensuality inherited from former existences, are the causes of the misery and vanity in the world. Surrender the grasping disposition of selfishness, and you will attain to that calm state of

mind which conveys perfect peace, goodness, and wisdom."

And the Buddha breathed forth this solemn utterance:

"Do not deceive, do not despise  
 Each other, anywhere.  
 Do not be angry, and do not  
 Secret resentment bear;  
 For as a mother risks her life  
 And watches over her child,  
 So boundless be your love to all,  
 So tender, kind and mild.  
 "Yea cherish good-will right and left,  
 For all, both soon and late,  
 And with no hindrance, with no stint,  
 From envy free and hate;  
 While standing, walking, sitting down,  
 Forever keep in mind:  
 The rule of life that's always best  
 Is to be loving-kind.

"Gifts are great, the founding of viharas is meritorious, meditations and religious exercises pacify the heart, comprehension of the truth leads to Nirvana, but greater than all is loving-kindness. As the light of the moon is sixteen times stronger than the light of all the stars, so loving-kindness is sixteen times more efficacious in liberating the heart than all other religious accomplishments taken together. This state of heart is the best in the world. Let a man remain steadfast in it while he is awake, whether he is standing, walking, sitting, or lying down."



When the Enlightened One had finished his sermon, the Magadha king said to the Blessed One: "In former days, Lord, when I was a prince, I cherished five wishes. I wished: O, that I might be inaugurated as a king. This was my first wish, and it has been fulfilled. Further, I wished: Might the Holy Buddha, the Perfect One, appear on earth while I rule and might he come to my kingdom. This was my second wish and it is fulfilled now. Further I wished: Might I pay my respects to him. This was my third wish and it is fulfilled now. The fourth wish was: Might the Blessed One preach the doctrine to me, and this is fulfilled now.

"The greatest wish, however, was the fifth wish: Might I understand the doctrine of the Blessed One. And this wish is fulfilled too.

"Glorious Lord! Most glorious is the truth preached by the Tathagata! Our Lord, the Buddha, sets up what has been overturned; he reveals what has been hidden; he points out the way to the wanderer who has gone astray; he lights a lamp in the darkness so that those who have eyes to see may see. I take my refuge in the Buddha. I take my refuge in the Dharma. I take my refuge in the Sangha."

The Tathagata, by the exercise of his virtue and by wisdom, showed his unlimited spiritual power. He subdued and harmonized all minds. He made them see and accept the truth, and throughout the kingdom the seeds of virtue were sown.

## ENLIGHTENMENT

THE Bodhisattva, having put Mara to flight, gave himself up to meditation. All the miseries of the world, the evils produced by evil deeds and the sufferings arising therefrom, passed before his mental eye, and he thought:

"Surely if living creatures saw the results of all their evil deeds, they would turn away from them in disgust. But selfhood blinds them, and they cling to their obnoxious desires. They crave pleasure for themselves and they cause pain to others; when death destroys their individuality, they find no peace; their thirst for existence abides and their selfhood reappears in new births. Thus they continue to move in the coil and can find no escape from the hell of their own making. And how empty are their pleasures, how vain are their endeavors! Hollow like the plantain-tree and without contents like the bubble. The world is full of evil and sorrow, because it is full of lust. Men go astray because they think that delusion is better than truth. Rather than truth they follow error, which is pleasant to look at in the beginning but in the end causes anxiety, tribulation, and misery."

And the Bodhisattva began to expound the Dharma. The Dharma is the truth. The Dharma is the sacred law. The Dharma is religion. The Dharma alone can deliver us from error, from wrong and from sorrow.

Pondering on the origin of birth and death, the Enlightened One recognized that ignorance was the root of all evil; and these are the links in the development of life, called the twelve nidanas: In the beginning there is existence blind and without knowledge; and in this sea of ignorance there are stirrings formative and organizing. From stirrings, formative and organizing, rises awareness or feelings. Feelings beget organisms that live as individual beings. These organisms develop the six fields, that is, the five senses and the mind. The six fields come in contact with things. Contact begets sensation. Sensation creates the thirst of individualized being. The thirst of being creates a cleaving to things. The cleaving produces the growth and continuation of selfhood. Selfhood continues in renewed birth. The renewed births of selfhood are the causes of sufferings, old age, sickness, and death. They produce lamentation, anxiety, and despair.

The cause of all sorrow lies at the very beginning; it is hidden in the ignorance from which life grows. Remove ignorance and you will destroy the wrong desires that rise from ignorance; destroy these desires and you will wipe out the wrong perception that rises from them. Destroy wrong perception and there is an end of errors in individualized beings. Destroy the errors in individualized beings and the illusions of the six fields will disappear. Destroy illusions and the contact with things will cease to beget misconception. Destroy misconception and you do away with thirst. Destroy thirst and you will be free of all morbid

cleaving. Remove the cleaving and you destroy the selfishness of selfhood. If the selfishness of selfhood is destroyed you will be above birth, old age, disease, and death, and you will escape all suffering.

The Enlightened One saw the four noble truths which point out the path that leads to Nirvana or the extinction of self: The first noble truth is the existence of sorrow. The second noble truth is the cause of suffering. The third noble truth is the cessation of sorrow. The fourth noble truth is the eightfold path that leads to the cessation of sorrow.

This is the Dharma. This is the truth. This is religion. And the Enlightened One uttered this stanza:

"Through many births I sought in vain  
The Builder of this House of Pain.  
Now, Builder, You are plain to see,  
And from this House at last I'm free;  
I burst the rafters, roof and wall,  
And dwell in the Peace beyond them  
all."

There is self and there is truth. Where self is, truth is not. Where truth is, self is not. Self is the fleeting error of samsara; it is individual separateness and that egotism which begets envy and hatred. Self is the yearning for pleasure and the lust after vanity. Truth is the correct comprehension of things; it is the permanent and everlasting, the real in all existence, the bliss of righteousness.

The existence of self is an illusion, and here is no wrong in this world, no vice, no evil, except what flows from the assertion of self. The attainment of truth is possible only when self is recognized as an illusion. Righteousness can be practiced only when we have freed our mind from passions of egotism. Perfect peace can dwell only where all vanity has disappeared.

Blessed is he who has understood the Dharma. Blessed is he who does no harm to his fellow-beings. Blessed is he who overcomes wrong and is free from passion. To the highest bliss has he attained who has conquered all selfishness and vanity. He has become the Buddha, the Perfect One.

### **THE SERMON ON CHARITY**

ANATHAPINDIKA rejoiced at the words of the Blessed One and said: I dwell at Savatthi, the capital of Kosala, a land rich in produce and enjoying peace. Pasenadi is the king of the country, and his name is renowned among our own people and our neighbors. Now I wish to found there a vihara which shall be a place of religious devotion for your brotherhood, and I pray you kindly to accept it."

The Buddha saw into the heart of the supporter of orphans; and knowing that unselfish charity was the moving cause of his offer, in acceptance of the gift, the Blessed One said: "The charitable man is loved by all; his friendship is prized highly; in death his heart is at rest and full of joy, for he suffers not from repentance;

he receives the opening flower of his reward and the fruit that ripens from it. Hard it is to understand: By giving away our food, we get more strength, by bestowing clothing on others, we gain more beauty; by donating abodes of purity and truth, we acquire great treasures.

"There is a proper time and a proper mode in charity; just as the vigorous warrior goes to battle, so is the man who is able to give. He is like an able warrior a champion strong and wise in action. Loving and compassionate he gives with reverence and banishes all hatred, envy, and anger.

"The charitable man has found the path of salvation. He is like the man who plants a sapling, securing thereby the shade, the flowers, and the fruit in future years. Even so is the result of charity, even so is the joy of him who helps those that are in need of assistance; even so is the great Nirvana. We reach the immortal path only by continuous acts of kindness and we perfect our souls by compassion and charity."

Anathapindika invited Sariputta to accompany him on his return to Kosala and help him in selecting a pleasant site for the vihara.

## **THE VANITY OF WORLDLINESS**

THERE was a poet who had acquired the spotless eye of truth, and he believed in the Buddha, whose doctrine gave him peace of mind and comfort in the hour of affliction. It happened that an epidemic swept

over the country in which he lived, so that many died, and the people were terrified. Some of them trembled with fright, and in anticipation of their fate were smitten with all the horrors of death before they died, while others began to be merry, shouting loudly, "Let us enjoy ourselves today, for we know not whether tomorrow we shall live"; yet was their laughter no genuine gladness, but a mere pretense and affectation.

Among all these worldly men and women trembling with anxiety, the Buddhist poet lived in the time of the pestilence, as usual, calm and undisturbed, helping wherever he could and ministering unto the sick, soothing their pains by medicine and religious consolation. And a man came to him and said:

"My heart is nervous and excited, for I see people die. I am not anxious about others, but I tremble because of myself. Help me; cure me of my fear."

The poet replied: "There is help for him who has compassion on others, but there is no help for thee so long as thou clingest to thine own self alone. Hard times try the souls of men and teach them righteousness and charity. Canst thou witness these sad sights around thee and still be filled with selfishness? Canst thou see thy brothers, sisters, and friends suffer, yet not forget the petty cravings and lust of thine own heart? Noticing the desolation in the mind of the pleasure-seeking man, the Buddhist poet composed this song and taught it to the brethren in the vihara:

"Unless you take refuge in the Buddha  
 and find rest in Nirvana,  
 Your life is but vanity-empty and  
 desolate vanity.  
 To see the world is idle, and to enjoy life  
 is empty.  
 The world, including man, is but like a  
 phantom, and the hope of heaven is as a  
 mirage.  
 "The worldling seeks pleasures,  
 fattening himself like a caged fowl,  
 But the Buddhist saint flies up to the sun  
 like the wild crane.  
 The fowl in the coop has food but will  
 soon be boiled in the pot;  
 No provisions are given to the wild  
 crane, but the heavens and the earth are  
 his.

The poet said: "The times are hard and teach the people a lesson; yet do they not heed it." And he composed another poem on the vanity of worldliness:

"It is good to reform, and it is good to  
 exhort people to reform.  
 The things of the world will all be swept  
 away.  
 Let others be busy and buried with care.  
 My mind all unvexed shall be pure.  
 "After pleasures they hanker and find  
 no satisfaction;  
 Riches they covet and can never have



enough.  
 They are like unto puppets held up by a  
 string.  
 When the string breaks they come down  
 with a shock.  
 "In the domain of death there are neither  
 great nor small;  
 Neither gold nor silver is used, nor  
 precious jewels.  
 No distinction is made between the high  
 and the low.  
 And daily the dead are buried beneath  
 the fragrant sod.  
 "Look at the sun setting behind the  
 western hills.  
 You lie down to rest, but soon the cock  
 will announce morn.  
 Reform today and do not wait until it be  
 too late  
 Do not say it is early, for the time  
 quickly passes by.  
 "It is good to reform and it is good to  
 exhort people to reform.  
 It is good to lead a righteous life and  
 take refuge in the Buddha's name.  
 Your talents may reach to the skies,  
 your wealth may be untold-  
 But all is in vain unless you attain the  
 peace of Nirvana."

**ALL EXISTENCE IS SPIRITUAL**

THERE was an officer among the retinue of Simha who had heard of the discourses of the Blessed One, and there was some doubt left in his heart. This man came to the Blessed One and said: "It is said, O Lord, that the samana Gotama denies the existence of the soul. Do they who say so speak the truth, or do they bear false witness against the Blessed One

And the Blessed One said: "There is a way in which those who say so are speaking truly of me; on the other hand, there is a way in which those who say so do not speak truly of me. The Tathagata teaches that there is no self. He who says that the soul is his self and that the self is the thinker of our thoughts and the actor of our deeds, teaches a wrong doctrine which leads to confusion and darkness. On the other hand, the Tathagata teaches that there is mind. He who understands by soul mind, and says that mind exists, teaches the truth which leads to clearness and enlightenment."

The officer said: "Does, then, the Tathagata maintain that two things exist? that which we perceive with our senses and that which is mental?"

Said the Blessed One: "I say to thee, thy mind is spiritual, but neither is the sense-perceived void of spirituality. The bodhi is eternal and it dominates all existence as the good law guiding all beings in their search for truth. It changes brute nature into mind, and there is no being that cannot be transformed into a vessel of truth."

## IDENTITY AND NON-IDENTITY

KUTADANTA, the head of the Brahmans in the village of Danamati, having approached the Blessed One respectfully, greeted him and said: "I am told, O samana, that thou art the Buddha, the Holy One, the All-knowing, the Lord of the world. But if thou wert the Buddha, wouldst thou not come like a king in all thy glory and power?" Said the Blessed One: "Thine eyes are holden. If the eye of thy mind were undimmed thou couldst see the glory and the power of truth."

Said Kutadanta: "Show me the truth and I shall see it. But thy doctrine is without consistency. If it were consistent, it would stand; but as it is not, it will pass away." The Blessed One replied: "The truth will never pass away."

Kutadanta said: "I am told that thou teachest the law, yet thou tearest down religion. Thy disciples despise rites and abandon immolation, but reverence for the gods can be shown only by sacrifices. The very nature of religion consists in worship and sacrifice." Said the Buddha: "Greater than the immolation of bullocks is the sacrifice of self. He who offers to the gods his evil desires will see the uselessness of slaughtering animals at the altar. Blood has no cleansing power, but the eradication of lust will make the heart pure. Better than worshiping gods is obedience to the laws of righteousness."

Kutadanta, being of a religious disposition and anxious about his fate after death, had sacrificed countless victims. Now he saw the folly of atonement by blood. Not yet satisfied, however, with the teachings of the Tathagata, Kutadanta continued: "Thou believest, O Master, that beings are reborn; that they migrate in the evolution of life; and that subject to the law of karma we must reap what we sow. Yet thou teachest the non-existence of the soul! Thy disciples praise utter self-extinction as the highest bliss of Nirvana. If I am merely a combination of the sankharas, my existence will cease when I die. If I am merely a compound of sensations and ideas and desires, whither can I go at the dissolution of the body?"

Said the Blessed One: "O Brahman, thou art religious and earnest. Thou art seriously concerned about thy soul. Yet is thy work in vain because thou art lacking in the one thing that is needful. There is rebirth of character, but no transmigration of a self. Thy thought-forms reappear, but there is no ego-entity transferred. The stanza uttered by a teacher is reborn in the scholar who repeats the words.

"Only through ignorance and delusion do men indulge in the dream that their souls are separate and self-existent entities. Thy heart, O Brahman, is cleaving still to self; thou art anxious about heaven but thou seekest the pleasures of self in heaven, and thus thou canst not see the bliss of truth and the immortality of truth.

"I say to thee: The Blessed One has not come to teach death, but to teach life, and thou discernest not the nature of living and dying. This body will be dissolved and no amount of sacrifice will save it. Therefore, seek thou the life that is of the mind. Where self is, truth cannot be; yet when truth comes, self will disappear. Therefore, let thy mind rest in the truth; propagate the truth, put thy whole will in it, and let it spread. In the truth thou shalt live forever. Self is death and truth is life. The cleaving to self is a perpetual dying, while moving in the truth is partaking of Nirvana which is life everlasting."

Then Kutadanta said: "Where, O venerable Master, is Nirvana?" "Nirvana is wherever the precepts are obeyed" replied the Blessed One.

"Do I understand thee aright," rejoined the Brahman, "That Nirvana is not a place, and being nowhere it is without reality?" "Thou dost not understand me aright," said the Blessed One, "Now listen and answer these questions: Where does the wind dwell

"Nowhere," was the reply.

Buddha retorted: "Then, sir, there is no such thing as wind." Kutadanta made no reply; and the Blessed One asked again: "Answer me, O Brahman, where does wisdom dwell? Is wisdom a locality?"

"Wisdom has no allotted dwelling-place" replied Kutadanta. Said the Blessed One: "Meanest thou that there is no wisdom, no enlightenment, no

righteousness, and no salvation, because Nirvana is not a locality? As a great and mighty wind which passeth over the world in the heat of the day, so the Tathagata comes to blow over the minds of mankind with the breath of his love, so cool, so sweet, so calm, so delicate; and those tormented by fever assuage their suffering and rejoice at the refreshing breeze."

Said Kutadanta: "I feel, O Lord, that thou proclaimest a great doctrine, but I cannot grasp it. Forbear with me that I ask again: Tell me, O Lord, if there be no atman [soul], how can there be immortality? The activity of the mind passeth, and our thoughts are gone when we have done thinking."

Buddha replied: "Our thinking is gone, but our thoughts continue. Reasoning ceases, but knowledge remains." Said Kutadanta: "How is that? Are not reasoning and knowledge the same?"

The Blessed One explained the distinction by an illustration: "It is as when a man wants, during the night, to send a letter, and, after having his clerk called, has a lamp lit, and gets the letter written. Then, when that has been done, he extinguishes the lamp. But though the writing has been finished and the light has been put out the letter is still there. Thus does reasoning cease and knowledge remain; and in the same way mental activity ceases, but experience, wisdom, and all the fruits of our acts endure."

Kutadanta continued: "Tell me, O Lord, pray tell me, where, if the sankharas are dissolved, is the identity

of my self. If my thoughts are propagated, and if my soul migrates, my thoughts cease to be my thoughts and my soul ceases to be my soul. Give me an illustration, but pray, O Lord, tell me, where is the identity of my self?"

Said the Blessed One: "Suppose a man were to light a lamp; would it burn the night through?" "Yes, it might do so," was the reply.

"Now, is it the same flame that burns in the first watch of the night as in the second?" Kutadanta hesitated. He thought it is the same flame, but fearing the complications of a hidden meaning, and trying to be exact, he said: "No, it is not."

"Then," continued the Blessed One, "there are two flames, one in the first watch and the other in the second watch." "No, sir," said Kutadanta. "In one sense it is not the same flame, but in another sense it is the same flame. It burns the same kind of oil, it emits the same kind of light, and it serves the same purpose."

"Very well said the Buddha and would you call those flames the same that have burned yesterday and are burning now in the same lamp, filled with the same kind of oil, illuminating the same room?" "They may have been extinguished during the day," suggested Kutadanta.

Said the Blessed One: "Suppose the flame of the first watch had been extinguished during the second

watch, would you call it the same if it burns again in the third watch?" Replied Kutadanta: "In one sense it is a different flame, in another it is not."

The Tathagata asked again: "Has the time that elapsed during the extinction of the flame anything to do with its identity or non-identity?" "No, sir," said the Brahman, "it has not. There is a difference and an identity, whether many years elapsed or only one second, and also whether the lamp has been extinguished in the meantime or not."

"Well, then, we agree that the flame of today is in a certain sense the same as the flame of yesterday, and in another sense it is different at every moment. Moreover, the flames of the same kind, illuminating with equal power the same kind of rooms, are in a certain sense the same." "Yes, sir," replied Kutadanta.

The Blessed One continued: "Now, suppose there is a man who feels like thyself, thinks like thyself, and acts like thyself, is he not the same man as thou?" "No, sir," interrupted Kutadanta.

Said the Buddha: "Dost thou deny that the same logic holds good for thyself that holds good for the things of the world?" Kutadanta bethought himself and rejoined slowly: "No, I do not. The same logic holds good universally; but there is a peculiarity about my self which renders it altogether different from everything else and also from other selves. There may be another man who feels exactly like me, thinks like me, and acts like me; suppose even he had the same



name and the same kind of possessions, he would not be myself."

"True, Kutadanta, answered Buddha, he would not be thyself. Now, tell me, is the person who goes to school one, and that same person when he has finished his schooling another? Is it one who commits a crime, another who is punished by having his hands and feet cut off?" "They are the same, was the reply.

"Then sameness is constituted by continuity only?" asked the Tathagata. "Not only by continuity," said Kutadanta, but also and mainly by identity of character."

"Very well, concluded the Buddha, then thou agreeest that persons can be the same, in the same sense as two flames of the same kind are called the same; and thou must recognize that in this sense another man of the same character and product of the same karma is the same as thou." "Well, I do," said the Brahman.

The Buddha continued: "And in this same sense alone art thou the same today as yesterday. Thy nature is not constituted by the matter of which thy body consists, but by thy sankharas, the forms of the body, of sensations, of thoughts. The person is the combination of the sankharas. Wherever they are, thou art. Whithersoever they go, thou goest. Thus thou wilt recognize in a certain sense an identity of thy self, and in another sense a difference. But he who does not recognize the identity should deny all identity, and should say that the questioner is no

longer the same person as he who a minute after receives the answer. Now consider the continuation of thy personality, which is preserved in thy karma. Dost thou call it death and annihilation, or life and continued life?"

"I call it life and continued life," rejoined Kutadanta, "for it is the continuation of my existence, but I do not care for that kind of continuation. All I care for is the continuation of self in the other sense, which makes of every man, whether identical with me or not, an altogether different person."

"Very well," said Buddha. "This is what thou desirest and this is the cleaving to self. This is thy error. All compound things are transitory: they grow and they decay. All compound things are subject to pain: they will be separated from what they love and be joined to what they abhor. All compound things lack a self, an atman, an ego."

"How is that?" asked Kutadanta. "Where is thy self?" asked the Buddha. And when Kutadanta made no reply, he continued: "Thy self to which thou cleavest is a constant change. Years ago thou wast a small babe; then, thou wast a boy; then a youth, and now, thou art a man. Is there any identity of the babe and the man? There is an identity in a certain sense only. Indeed there is more identity between the flames of the first and the third watch, even though the lamp might have been extinguished during the second watch. Now which is thy true self, that of yesterday, that of today, or that of tomorrow, for the

preservation of which thou clamorest?" Kutadanta was bewildered. "Lord of the world," he said, "I see my error, but I am still confused."

The Tathagata continued: "It is by a process of evolution that sankharas come to be. There is no sankhara which has sprung into being without a gradual becoming. Thy sankharas are the product of thy deeds in former existences. The combination of thy sankharas is thy self. Wheresoever they are impressed thither thy self migrates. In thy sankharas thou wilt continue to live and thou wilt reap in future existences the harvest sown now and in the past."

"Verily, O Lord," rejoined Kutadanta, "this is not a fair retribution. I cannot recognize the justice that others after me will reap what I am sowing now."

The Blessed One waited a moment and then replied: "Is all teaching in vain? Dost thou not understand that those others are thou thyself. Thou thyself wilt reap what thou sowest, not others. Think of a man who is ill-bred and destitute, suffering from the wretchedness of his condition. As a boy he was slothful and indolent, and when he grew up he had not learned a craft to earn a living. Wouldst thou say his misery is not the product of his own action, because the adult is no longer the same person as was the boy?"

"I say to thee: Not in the heavens, not in the midst of the sea, not if thou hidest thyself away in the clefts of the mountains, wilt thou find a place where thou

canst escape the fruit of thine evil actions. At the same time thou art sure to receive the blessings of thy good actions. To the man who has long been traveling and who returns home in safety, the welcome of kinfolk, friends, and acquaintances awaits. So, the fruits of his good works bid him welcome who has walked in the path of righteousness, when he passes over from the present life into the hereafter."

Kutadanta said: "I have faith in the glory and excellency of thy doctrines. My eye cannot as yet endure the light; but I now understand that there is no self, and the truth dawns upon me. Sacrifices cannot save, and invocations are idle talk. But how shall I find the path to life everlasting? I know all the Vedas by heart and have not found the truth."

Said the Buddha: "Learning is a good thing; but it availeth not. True wisdom can be acquired by practice only. Practice the truth that thy brother is the same as thou. Walk in the noble path of righteousness and thou wilt understand that while there is death in self, there is immortality in truth."

Said Kutadanta: "Let me take my refuge in the Blessed One, in the Dharma, and in the brotherhood. Accept me as thy disciple and let me partake of the bliss of immortality."

## **THE MIRROR OF TRUTH**

THE Blessed One proceeded to the village Nadika with a great company of brethren and there he stayed

at the Brick Hall. And the venerable Ananda went to the Blessed One and mentioning to him the names of the brethren and sisters that had died, anxiously inquired about their fate after death, whether they had been reborn in animals or in hell, or as ghosts, or in any place of woe.

The Blessed One replied to Ananda and said: "Those who have died after the complete destruction of the three bonds of lust, of covetousness and of the egotistical cleaving to existence, need not fear the state after death. They will not be reborn in a state of suffering; their minds will not continue as a karma of evil deeds or sin, but are assured of final salvation.

"When they die, nothing will remain of them but their good thoughts, their righteous acts, and the bliss that proceeds from truth and righteousness. As rivers must at last reach the distant main, so their minds will be reborn in higher states of existence and continue to be pressing on to their ultimate goal which is the ocean of truth, the eternal peace of Nirvana. Men are anxious about death and their fate after death; but consider, it is not at all strange, Ananda, that a human being should die. However, that thou shouldst inquire about them, and having heard the truth still be anxious about the dead, this is wearisome to the Blessed One. I will, therefore, teach thee the mirror of truth and let the faithful disciple repeat it:

"Hell is destroyed for me, and rebirth as an animal, or a ghost, or in any place of woe. I am converted; I am

no longer liable to be reborn in a state of suffering, and am assured of final salvation.'

"What, then, Ananda, is this mirror of truth? It is the consciousness that the elect disciple is in this world possessed of faith in the Buddha, believing the Blessed One to be the Holy One, the Fully-enlightened One, wise, upright, happy, world-knowing, supreme, the Bridler of men's wayward hearts, the Teacher of gods and men, the blessed Buddha. It is further the consciousness that the disciple is possessed of faith in the truth believing the truth to have been proclaimed by the Blessed One, for the benefit of the world, passing not away, welcoming all, leading to salvation, to which through truth the wise will attain, each one by his own efforts.

"And, finally, it is the consciousness that the disciple is possessed of faith in the order, believing in the efficacy of a union among those men and women who are anxious to walk in the noble eightfold path; believing this church of the Buddha, of the righteous, the upright, the just, the law abiding, to be worthy of honor, of hospitality, of gifts, and of reverence; to be the supreme sowing-ground of merit for the world; to be possessed of the virtues beloved by the good, virtues unbroken, intact, unspotted, unblemished, virtues which make men truly free, virtues which are praised by the wise, are untarnished by the desire of selfish aims, either now or in a future life, or by the belief in the efficacy of outward acts, and are conducive to high and holy thought. This is the

mirror of truth which teaches the straightest way to enlightenment which is the common goal of all living creatures. He who possesses the mirror of truth is free from fear; he will find comfort in the tribulations of life, and his life will be a blessing to all his fellow-creatures."

### **Samsara and Nirvana**

LOOK about and contemplate life! Everything is transient and nothing endures. There is birth and death, growth and decay; there is combination and separation. The glory of the world is like a flower: it stands in full bloom in the morning and fades in the heat of the day.

Wherever you look, there is a rushing and a struggling, and an eager pursuit of pleasure. There is a panic flight from pain and death, and hot are the flames of burning desires. The world is Vanity Fair, full of changes and transformations. All is Samsara, the turning Wheel of Existence.

Is there nothing permanent in the world? Is there in the universal turmoil no resting-place where our troubled heart can find peace? Is there nothing everlasting? Oh, that we could have cessation of anxiety, that our burning desires would be extinguished! When shall the mind become tranquil and composed?

The Buddha, our Lord, was grieved at the ills of life. He saw the vanity of worldly happiness and sought

salvation in the one thing that will not fade or perish, but will abide for ever and ever.

You who long for life, learn that immortality is hidden in transiency. You who wish for happiness without the sting of regret, lead a life of righteousness. You who yearn for riches, receive treasures that are eternal. Truth is wealth, and a life of truth is happiness.

All compounds will be dissolved again, but the verities which determine all combinations and separations as laws of nature endure for ever and aye. Bodies fall to dust, but the truths of the mind will not be destroyed.

Truth knows neither birth nor death; it has no beginning and no end. Welcome the truth. The truth is the immortal part of mind. Establish the truth in your mind, for the truth is the image of the eternal; it portrays the immutable; it reveals the everlasting; the truth gives unto mortals the boon of immortality.

The Buddha has proclaimed the truth; let the truth of the Buddha dwell in your hearts. Extinguish in yourselves every desire that antagonizes the Buddha, and in the perfection of your spiritual growth you will become like unto him. That of your heart which cannot or will not develop into Buddha must perish, for it is mere illusion and unreal; it is the source of your error; it is the cause of your misery.



You attain to immortality by filling your minds with truth. Therefore, become like unto vessels fit to receive the Master's words. Cleanse yourselves of evil and sanctify your lives. There is no other way of reaching truth.

Learn to distinguish between Self and Truth. Self is the cause of selfishness and the source of evil; truth cleaves to no self; it is universal and leads to justice and righteousness. Self, that which seems to those who love their self as their being, is not the eternal, the everlasting, the imperishable. Seek not self, but seek the truth.

If we liberate our souls from our petty selves, wish no ill to others, and become clear as a crystal diamond reflecting the light of truth, what a radiant picture will appear in us mirroring things as they are, without the admixture of burning desires, without the distortion of erroneous illusion, without the agitation of clinging and unrest.

Yet you love self and will not abandon self-love. So be it, but then, verily, you should learn to distinguish between the false self and the true self. The ego with all its egotism is the false self. It is an unreal illusion and a perishable combination. He only who identifies his self with the truth will attain Nirvana; and he who has entered Nirvana has attained Buddhahood; he has acquired the highest good; he has become eternal and immortal.

All compound things shall be dissolved again, worlds will break to pieces and our individualities will be scattered; but the words of Buddha will remain for ever.

The extinction of self is salvation; the annihilation of self is the condition of enlightenment; the blotting out of self is Nirvana.

Happy is he who has ceased to live for pleasure and rests in the truth. Verily his composure and tranquility of mind are the highest bliss.

Let us take our refuge in the Buddha, for he has found the everlasting in the transient. Let us take our refuge in that which is the immutable in the changes of existence. Let us take our refuge in the truth that is established through the enlightenment of the Buddha. Let us take our refuge in the community of those who seek the truth and endeavor to live in the truth.

# Tilak of Tibet Reveals Life's Purpose

By Ann Hackett

[1944]

## IX

### THE ETERNAL SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

Tilak meditated: An earthly life is but an episode in the endless existence of the individual. As many physical bodies as the individual may animate, so many physical bodies pass into oblivion. Earthly life is incessant repetition. This repetition ceases for the individual only when the individual's faculties expand and the individual needs the repetition no longer. Repetition is a reminder; every earthly life is a reminder for the individual. Thinking is difficult. Thinking does not permit thoughts to wander indifferently. Many thoughts pass without self-conscious notice. This is not thinking. Thinking is directing thoughts self-consciously. Directed thoughts form the nucleus of a retentive memory. Faulty memory results from faulty thinking. Memory is the most misunderstood of all the faculties. How can the memory be strengthened?

Most experiences of earth life seem to fade out of memory and become nonexistent to the individual. These experiences can be recovered by the individual,

for memory is a very active and very perfect recording faculty. Memory records accurately everything that passes through the self-consciousness of the individual. It is the use of individual memory that is imperfect. This imperfect use of individual memory has a correspondence to the imperfect use of other faculties. When any faculty is strengthened memory gains in power. This gain in power ultimately permits the individual a greater use of memory, so that it will ultimately be possible to recollect conditions experienced before physical birth.

Interest expands memory. Whatever self-consciousness was interested in at a given period can readily be drawn from memory. These interests may have been debasing or elevating. If these interests were debasing, the memory often haunts the individual and brings to pass a state of fear; if these interests were elevating, the memory then acts as a guide and points the way to greater elevation.

The individual during earthly life stands between the past and the future. The individual's self-conscious perception of anything in earthly life is the present. The instant anything is perceived self-consciously it belongs to the past; before the self-conscious perception it belonged to the future.

During earthly life, can a self-conscious choice change the physical future that lies before the individual? The individual's self-conscious choice cannot change the physical future that lies before him. The individual's choice can, however, prepare the individual to so

receive the future event or condition that it will instruct him, and then he will not consider the event or condition a punishment.

## **ORDER**

Without order no life can be complete. The root of accidents is selfishness. No selfish life can contain order. A life that contains order is constructive. What is order? Order is so arranging earthly life that thoughts and actions bring not sorrow and hardship to others. Order ever strives to bring about a right relationship of one thing with another; a right relationship between one individual and another individual.

When an individual attempts to draw to himself more than the individual needs, the individual is planting a seed of disorder.

The individual should self-consciously study all his actions and reactions, and the motives that promulgated the actions. Such study ultimately brings order into the life. Whatever contributes to the discomfort of any individual contains not order.

Use alone strengthens any faculty. Every definite act in the life should bring into play the major faculties—thinking, feeling, motive, and reason. If in any act one or more of these faculties remain quiescent, the act is incomplete and the result is often confusing, and is without order. Faculty training is one of the first essentials toward a balanced earthly life.

When only the emotional faculty directs an act, the act is unstable; when only the mental faculty directs an act, the act is cold, often cruel. The effects of earthly acts do not often appear quickly; months, even years, may intervene before the effects are physically manifest. Inwardly the effects immediately follow the act. These inner effects may not be perceived by the self-consciousness. It is the inner effects that bring a feeling of elation or a feeling of depression to the individual.

A daily review of the individual's acts assists faculty development. This review is retrospection; it is the weeding of the self-conscious garden.

The individual should love and protect his inner life, for it is eternally with the individual. The outer life is ever passing away. That which is ever passing away is but the mirror wherein is reflected everything that is transitory. While living in the physical body the individual should use every effort to balance his outer life with his inner life; then the outer life will reflect the inner.

## **UNDERSTANDING**

What brings to pass understanding? – Co-ordination of faculties. When the faculties co-operate understanding appears. Understanding places little dependence upon sense life. The more developed a faculty, the more independent a faculty. A definite interest is of the greatest value to the understanding. Interests ultimately become varied; these varied

interests are subjectively related. A universal interest brings a universal understanding.

What should be a definite interest of any individual who wishes to have a wider understanding? The individual should be definitely interested in his position in the universe; interested in what he can contribute to his well-being, and interested in what he can contribute to the well-being of others. The individual must realize that a single physical life is but a step; that the individual must press many such steps to ascend. The individual ascends to a greater understanding only on the steps of ever-widening interests.

Since everything found in earthly life has a definite purpose, the individual should be interested in such purpose. Nothing should be considered too small or too great for the individual's comprehension. Lack of interest in that which elevates is self-limitation.

Many individuals assume a responsibility for certain events—events that are only with the Supreme Law. There is, however, an individual responsibility attached to all action. The control and direction of all individual faculties is the full responsibility of every individual. This is a great responsibility, and one that is not readily assumed. It often appears easier to assume responsibility for that which belongs not to the individual.

## **ALL IS RECORDED**

Every thought, feeling and motive is recorded in every physical particle. If thought, feeling or motive has been unjust, cruel or selfish, should the individual expect the physical particles to be healthy? What is done in the secret of the heart is not unknown to physical particles, for physical particles register everything. An evil man never has face of saint.

In a single manifested physical particle can be seen the complete earthly life of an individual; therein can be read the individual's thoughts, feelings and motives; everything that was apparently hidden stands revealed. Neglect and abuse of physical particles ultimately brings unbalance and illness to them.

The physical plane is ever changing. Some of the changes can be seen. All changes follow definite physical laws. When an individual covers himself with physical particles, these particles are composed of materials drawn entirely from the physical plane; the particles are drawn from various aggregations of particles. Some particle aggregations slow up the revolution of the particles, while other aggregations accelerate the particle movement. As physical particles are drawn to the presented individual form, they become an aggregate of particles, and therefore are visible to the physical eye. If no individual form was presented for particles to cover, the particles would manifest as particle energy. The aggregate



particles covering the individual form are varying degrees of particle energy.

When an individual commits a vicious physical act the physical particles record the act. The individual to whom the act was directed also records the act on his physical particles. This establishes a connection between the two individuals. If years later, or lives later, these two individuals were to again meet, the previous recordings would mirror forth that which had taken place. Thus all individual acts are recorded as they manifest. It is this recording of all actions that attracts or repels individuals. In earthly life the individual who has been subjected to the effects of a vicious act will often retaliate in degree and kind. Such may come to pass though the two individuals do not contact one another for hundreds of physical, lives.

An individual, wherever manifesting, is only related to another individual by the similarities they both contain. The more the similarity between one individual and another, the closer the relationship.

The individual that dwells often in his inner state readily grants freedom to all; the individual grants freedom to all because the individual is enjoying freedom. An individual dwelling almost entirely in the outer state grants freedom to no one, because the individual enjoys no freedom. Whatever an individual enjoys the individual grants to others. Is not a bitter individual bitter at everything? If nothing

sings in the inner life, nothing will sing in the outer life.

Whatever the individual sees in the outer life, wherever the individual sees it in the outer life, in whatever the individual sees it in the outer life; it but records his inner state of being. If this inner state of being is without kindness, is morose and demanding, the individual will only find, in the outer physical life, unkindness, moroseness and demands.

## **THE RETURN**

Tilak left the Chamber of the Great Potential and moved swiftly, in his finer body, to the Lane of Return.

In a large field, near the Lane of Return, many had gathered. The many were waiting a call from the earth below.

A man approached Tilak, and said: "Casi is calling."

"Yes, friend—in two hours Casi will leave her physical body. The physical body has served her well."

"I have prepared a home for Casi; a home near a running stream. I have planted around the home the flowers that Casi loves," said Tilak's companion.

"Casi was your wife, friend?"

"Yes, my wife. We lived together for thirty-one years in earthly life."

"A happy companionship, friend, tempers many adversaries – Come, friend."

Tilak and his companion moved through space and then descended into a village near central India, stopping before a modest dwelling. Entering the dwelling, Tilak and his companion moved to a chamber at the rear of the dwelling.

A woman was lying on a bed in the room – her eyes were closed. Around the bed were standing her relatives and friends.

Tilak's companion stood at the foot of the bed. c

Tilak said to the waiting man: "The aura of the woman's finer body is brightening – she will soon be by your side."

As Tilak was speaking, the woman's finer body separated slowly from the physical counterpart lying on the bed. From her physical lips came the words: "Nion – Nion."

In the finer body the woman had seen her husband at the foot of the bed. As the woman was still partly joined to the physical garment, her physical lips shaped the name that had issued from the lips of the finer garment.

As her relatives were saying, "she has passed," Casi was standing in her finer body beside Nion. Tenderly Nion embraced his wife.

The woman walked over and kissed each of her relatives, saying softly: "I will be near and watch over you." The relatives felt not the woman's touch, nor heard the woman's words.

"Come," said Tilak.

Casi and Nion moved away with Tilak and soon entered the Lane of Return.

"Again, Casi, you have returned from earthly life; again are you reunited with Nion."

"Again?" questioned Casi. "Have I been in earthly life before?"

"Often," smiled Tilak.

"I do not remember that I ever lived in earthly life before—And Nion, was he with me in earthly life—before?"

"Many times, friend."

"Why have I forgotten my past association with Nion?"

"Such forgetfulness, friend, is but temporary. It is better so—for to carry much of the past in earthly life would prove too great a burden."

"Will I sometime remember?"

"Yes, friend, you will remember when the past has lost its pull. Many try to live in the past, and yet it is the future that holds the greater beauty."

Nion asked: "We will return again to earth life?"

"At a distant period, friend—and in another nation—a nation being prepared."

"With Casi?"

"Casi will be with you, friend."

"Then all will be well."

"Live toward the future; treat the past as a teacher—and then all will be well."

Tilak watched Nion and Casi move off toward their little home by a running stream; a home surrounded by the flowers that Casi loved.

Tilak wrote on parchment leaf: All individuals leaving earthly bodies are met by those that have associated closely with them. This relationship may have been that of father, mother, sister, brother, husband, wife, son, daughter, or friend. Whatever the

relationship may have been, it is only the good of such association that will bless a future relationship. All associations serve a purpose. If one association in earthly life does not bring out that needed, other associations will follow.

Many in earthly life deny an existence before physical birth, and question the condition after physical death. These individuals move in a small orbit, and often make of earthly life a personal affair and remain for long periods satisfied with the trinkets presented in physical conditions. It is not until the individual seeks life's purpose that life reveals her greater treasures. A personal life is a selfish life, and demands much for the little that is given. If an individual does not feel another's suffering, another's trials, such an individual knows not life's purpose. Destiny prevents any individual from heaping upon another a load that the individual alone has been sent to carry.

# Christian

## In Tune With the Infinite

By Ralph Waldo Trine

[1910]

### LOVE.

This is the Spirit of Infinite Love. The moment we recognize ourselves as one with it we become so filled with love that we see only the good in all. And when we realize that we are all one with this Infinite Spirit, then we realize that in a sense we are all one with each other. When we come into a recognition of this fact, we can then do no harm to any one, to any thing. We find that we are all members of the one great body, and that no portion of the body can be harmed without all the other portions suffering thereby.

When we fully realize the great fact of the oneness of all life, — that all are partakers from this one Infinite Source, and so that the same life is the life in each individual, then prejudices go and hatreds cease. Love grows and reigns supreme. Then, wherever we go, whenever we come in contact with the fellowman, we are able to recognize the God within. We thus look only for the good, and we find it. It always pays.

There is a deep scientific fact underlying the great truth, "He that takes the sword shall perish by the sword." The moment we come into a realization of the subtle powers of the thought forces, we can quickly see that the moment we entertain any thoughts of hatred toward another, he gets the effects of these diabolical forces that go out from us, and has the same thoughts of hatred aroused in him, which in turn return to the sender. Then when we understand the effects of the passion, hatred or anger, even upon the physical body, we can see how detrimental, how expensive this is. The same is true in regard to all kindred thoughts or passions, envy, criticism, jealousy, scorn. In the ultimate we shall find that in entertaining feelings of this nature toward another, we always suffer far more than the one toward whom we entertain them.

And then when we fully realize the fact that selfishness is at the root of all error, sin, and crime, and that ignorance is the basis of all selfishness, with what charity we come to look upon the acts of all. It is the ignorant man who seeks his own ends at the expense of the greater whole. It is the ignorant man, therefore, who is the selfish man. The truly wise man is never selfish. He is a seer, and recognizes the fact that he, a single member of the one great body, is benefited in just the degree that the entire body is benefited, and so he seeks nothing for himself that he would not equally seek for all mankind.



If selfishness is at the bottom of all error, sin, and crime, and ignorance is the basis of all selfishness, then when we see a manifestation of either of these qualities, if we are true to the highest within us, we will look for and will seek to call forth the good in each individual with whom we come in contact. When God speaks to God, then God responds, and shows forth as God. But when devil speaks to devil, then devil responds, and the devil is always to pay.

I sometimes hear a person say, "I don't see any good in him." No? Then you are no seer. Look deeper and you will find the very God in every human soul. But remember it takes a God to recognize a God. Christ always spoke to the highest, the truest, and the best in men. He knew and he recognized the God in each because he had first realized it in himself. He ate with publicans and sinners. Abominable, the Scribes and Pharisees said. They were so wrapped up in their own conceits, their own self-centredness, hence their own ignorance, that they had never found the God in themselves, and so they never dreamed that it was the real life of even publicans and sinners.

In the degree that we hold a person in the thought of evil or of error, do we suggest evil and error to him. In the degree that he is sensitively organized, or not well individualized, and so, subject to the suggestions of the thought forces from others, will he be influenced; and so in this way we may be sharers in the very evildoing in which we hold another in thought. In the same way when we hold a person in

the thought of the right, the good, and the true, righteousness, goodness, and truth are suggested to him, and thus we have a most beneficent influence on his life and conduct. If our hearts go out in love to all with whom we come in contact, we inspire love, and the same ennobling and warming influences of love always return to us from those in whom we inspire them. There is a deep scientific principle underlying the precept—If you would have all the world love you, you must first love all the world.

In the degree that we love will we be loved. Thoughts are forces. Each creates of its kind. Each comes back laden with the effect that corresponds to itself and of which it is the cause.

"Then let your secret thoughts be fair —  
They have a vital part, and share  
In shaping words and moulding fate;  
God's system is so intricate."

I know of no better practice than that of a friend who continually holds himself in an attitude of mind that he continually sends out his love in the form of the thought,— "Dear everybody, I love you." And when we realize the fact that a thought invariably produces its effect before it returns, or before it ceases, we can see how he is continually breathing out a blessing not only upon all with whom he comes in contact, but upon all the world. These same thoughts of love, moreover, tokened in various ways, are continually coming to him from all quarters.

Even animals feel the effects of these forces. Some animals are much more sensitively organized than many people are, and consequently they get the effects of our thoughts, our mental states, and emotions much more readily than many people do. Therefore whenever we meet an animal we can do it good by sending out to it these thoughts of love. It will feel the effects whether we simply entertain or whether we voice them. And it is often interesting to note how quickly it responds, and how readily it gives evidence of its appreciation of this love and consideration on our part.

What a privilege and how enjoyable it would be to live and walk in a world where we meet only Gods. In such a world you can live. In such a world I can live. For in the degree that we come into this higher realization do we see only the God in each human soul; and when we are thus able to see Him in every one we meet, we then live in such a world.

And when we thus recognize the God in every one, we by this recognition help to call it forth ever more and more. What a privilege, — this privilege of yours, this privilege of mine! That hypocritical judging of another is something then with which we can have nothing to do; for we have the power of looking beyond the evolving, changing, error-making self, and seeing the real, the changeless, the eternal self which by and by will show forth in the full beauty of holiness. We are then large enough also to realize the

fact that when we condemn another, by that very act we condemn ourselves.

This realization so fills us with love that we continually overflow it, and all with whom we come in contact feel its warming and life-giving power. These in turn send back the same feelings of love to us, and so we continually attract love from all quarters. Tell me how much one loves and I will tell you how much he has seen of God. Tell me how much he loves and I will tell you how much he lives with God. Tell me how much he loves and I will tell you how far into the Kingdom of Heaven,—the kingdom of harmony, he has entered, for "love is the fulfilling of the law."

And in a sense love is everything. It is the key to life, and its influences are those that move the world. Live only in the thought of love for all and you will draw love to you from all. Live in the thought of malice or hatred, and malice and hatred will come back to you.

"For evil poisons; malice shafts  
Like boomerangs return,  
Inflicting wounds that will not heal  
While rage and anger burn."

Every thought you entertain is a force that goes out, and every thought comes back laden with its kind. This is an immutable law. Every thought you entertain has moreover a direct effect upon your body. Love and its kindred emotions are the normal and the natural, those in accordance with the eternal

order of the universe, for "God is love." These have a life-giving, health-engendering influence upon your body, besides beautifying your countenance, enriching your voice, and making you ever more attractive in every way. And as it is true that in the degree that you hold thoughts of love for all, you call the same from them in return, and as these have a direct effect upon your mind, and through your mind upon your body, it is as so much life force added to your own from without. You are then continually building this into both your mental and your physical life, and so your life is enriched by its influence.

Hatred and all its kindred emotions are the unnatural, the abnormal, the perversions, and so, out of harmony with the eternal order of the universe. For if love is the fulfilling of the law, then these, its opposites, are direct violations of law, and there can never be a violation of law without its attendant pain and suffering in one form or another. There is no escape from this. And what is the result of this particular form of violation? When you allow thoughts of anger, hatred, malice, jealousy, envy, criticism, or scorn to exercise sway, they have a corroding and poisoning effect upon the organism; they pull it down, and if allowed to continue will eventually tear it to pieces by externalizing themselves in the particular forms of disease they give rise to. And then in addition to the destructive influences from your own mind you are continually calling the same influences from other minds, and

these come as destructive forces augmenting your own, thus aiding in the tearing down process.

And so love inspires love; hatred breeds hatred. Love and good will stimulate and build up the body; hatred and malice corrode and tear it down. Love is a savor of life unto life; hatred is a savor of death unto death.

"There are loyal hearts, there are spirits brave,  
 There are souls that are pure and true;  
 Then give to the world the best you have,  
 And the best will come back to you.

"Give love, and love to *your* heart will flow,  
 A strength in your utmost need;  
 Have faith, and a score of hearts will show  
 Their faith in *your* word and deed."

I hear it said, —How in regard to one who bears me hatred, towards whom I have entertained no such thoughts and feelings, and so have not been the cause of his becoming my enemy? This may be true, but the chances are that you will have but few enemies if there is nothing of an antagonistic nature in your own mind and heart. Be sure there is nothing of this nature. But if hatred should come from another without apparent cause on your part, then meet it from first to last with thoughts of love and good-will. In this way you can, so to speak, so neutralize its effects that it cannot reach you and so cannot harm you. Love is positive, and stronger than hatred. Hatred can always be conquered by love.

On the other hand, if you meet hatred with hatred, you simply intensify it. You add fuel to the flame already kindled, upon which it will feed and grow, and so you increase and intensify the evil conditions. Nothing is to be gained by it, everything is to be lost. By sending love for hatred you will be able so to neutralize it that it will not only have no effect upon you, but will not be able even to reach you. But more than this, you will by this course sooner or later be able literally to transmute the enemy into the friend. Meet hatred with hatred and you degrade yourself. Meet hatred with love and you elevate not only yourself but also the one who bears you hatred.

The Persian sage has said, "Always meet petulance with gentleness, and perverseness with kindness. A gentle hand can lead even an elephant by a hair. Reply to thine enemy with gentleness. Opposition to peace is sin." The Buddhist says, "If a man foolishly does me wrong I will return him the protection of my ungrudging love. The more evil comes from him, the more good shall go from me." "The wise man avenges injuries by benefits," says the Chinese. "Return good for evil, overcome anger by love; hatred never ceases by hatred, but by love," says the Hindu.

The truly wise man or woman will recognize no one as an enemy. Occasionally we hear the expression, "Never mind; I'll get even with him." Will you? And how will you do it? You can do it in one of two ways. You can, as you have in mind, deal with him as he deals, or apparently deals, with you, — pay him, as we

say, in his own coin. If you do this you will get even with him by sinking yourself to his level, and both of you will suffer by it. Or, you can show yourself the larger, you can send him love for hatred, kindness for ill-treatment, and so get even with him by raising him to the higher level. But remember that you can never help another without by that very act helping yourself; and if forgetful of self, then in most all cases the value to you is greater than the service you render another. If you are ready to treat him as he treats you, then you show clearly that there is in you that which draws the hatred and ill-treatment to you; you deserve what you are getting and should not complain, nor would you complain if you were wise. By following the other course you most effectually accomplish your purpose,—you gain a victory for yourself, and at the same time you do a great service for him, for which it is evident he stands greatly in need.

Thus you may become his saviour. He in turn may become the saviour of other error-making, and consequently care-encumbered men and women. Many times the struggles are greater than we can ever know. We need more gentleness and sympathy and compassion in our common human life. Then we will neither blame nor condemn. Instead of blaming or condemning we will sympathize, and all the more we will

"Comfort one another,  
For the way is often dreary,



And the feet are often weary,  
 And the heart is very sad.  
 There is a heavy burden bearing,  
 When it seems that none are caring,  
 And we half forget that ever we were glad.

"Comfort one another  
 With the hand-clasp close and tender,  
 With the sweetness love can render,  
 And the looks of friendly eyes.  
 Do not wait with grace unspoken,  
 While life's daily bread is broken  
 Gentle speech is oft like manna from the skies."

When we come fully to realize the great fact that all evil and error and sin with all their consequent sufferings come through ignorance, then wherever we see a manifestation of these in whatever form, if our hearts are right, we will have compassion, sympathy and compassion for the one in whom we see them. Compassion will then change itself into love, and love will manifest itself in kindly service. Such is the divine method. And so instead of aiding in trampling and keeping a weaker one down, we will hold him up until he can stand alone and become the master. But all life-growth is from within out, and one becomes a true master in the degree that the knowledge of the divinity of his own nature dawns upon his inner consciousness and so brings him to a knowledge of the higher laws; and in no way can we so effectually hasten this dawning in the inner consciousness of

another, as by showing forth the divinity within ourselves simply by the way we live.

By example and not by precept. By living, not by preaching. By doing, not by professing. By living the life, not by dogmatizing as to how it should be lived. There is no contagion equal to the contagion of life. Whatever we sow, that shall we also reap, and each thing sown produces of its kind. We can kill not only by doing another bodily injury directly, but we can and we do kill by every antagonistic thought. Not only do we thus kill, but while we kill we suicide. Many a man has been made sick by having the ill thoughts of a number of people centred upon him; some have been actually killed. Put hatred into the world and we make it a literal hell. Put love into the world and heaven with all its beauties and glories becomes a reality.

Not to love is not to live, or it is to live a living death. The life that goes out in love to all is the life that is full, and rich, and continually expanding in beauty and in power. Such is the life that becomes ever more inclusive, and hence larger in its scope and influence. The larger the man and the woman, the more inclusive they are in their love and their friendships. The smaller the man and the woman, the more dwarfed and dwindling their natures, the more they pride themselves upon their "exclusiveness." Any one—a fool or an idiot—can be exclusive. It comes easy. It takes and it signifies a large nature to be universal, to be inclusive. Only the man or the woman

of a small, personal, self-centred, self-seeking nature is exclusive. The man or the woman of a large, royal, unself-centred nature never is. The small nature is the one that continually strives for effect. The larger nature never does. The one goes here and there in order to gain recognition, in order to attach himself to the world. The other stays at home and draws the world *to him*. The one loves merely himself. The other loves all the world; but in his larger love for all the world he finds himself included.

Verily, then, the more one loves the nearer he approaches to God, for God is the spirit of infinite love. And when we come into the realization of our oneness with this Infinite Spirit, then divine love so fills us that, enriching and enrapturing our own lives, from them it flows out to enrich the life of all the world.

In coming into the realization of our oneness with the Infinite Life, we are brought at once into right relations with our fellowmen. We are brought into harmony with the great law, that we find our own lives in losing them in the service of others. We are brought to a knowledge of the fact that all life is one, and so that we are all parts of the one great whole. We then realize that we can't do for another without at the same time doing for ourselves. We also realize that we cannot do harm to another without by that very act doing harm to ourselves. We realize that the man who lives to himself alone lives a little, dwarfed, and stunted life, because he has no part in this larger

life of humanity. But the one who in service loses his own life in this larger life, has his own life increased and enriched a thousand or a million fold, and every joy, every happiness, everything of value coming to each member of this greater whole comes as such to him, for he has a part in the life of each and all.

And here let a word be said in regard to true service. Peter and John were one day going up to the temple, and as they were entering the gate they were met by a poor cripple who asked them for alms. Instead of giving him something to supply the day's needs and then leaving him in the same dependent condition for the morrow and the morrow, Peter did him a real service, and a real service for all mankind by saying, Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have I give unto thee. *And then he made him whole.* He thus brought him into the condition where he could help himself. In other words, the greatest service we can do for another is to help him to help himself. To help him directly might be weakening, though not necessarily. It depends entirely upon circumstances. But to help one to help himself is never weakening, but always encouraging and strengthening, because it leads him to a larger and stronger life.

There is no better way to help one to help himself than to bring him to a knowledge of himself. There is no better way to bring one to a knowledge of himself than to lead him to a knowledge of the powers that are lying dormant within his own soul. There is nothing that will enable him to come more readily or

more completely into an awakened knowledge of the powers that are lying dormant within his own soul, than to bring him into the conscious, vital realization of his oneness with the Infinite Life and Power, so that he may open himself to it in order that it may work and manifest through him.

We will find that these same great truths lie at the very bottom of the solution of our social situation; and we will also find that we will never have a full and permanent solution of it until they are fully recognized and built upon.

Excerpts From:  
**The Life and Doctrines of  
Jacob Boehme**

By Franz Hartmann

[1891]

This light and this power of Christ arises in His children within their interior foundation, and illumines the whole of their life. Within that foundation is the kingdom of God in man." (*Communion*, v. 18.)

But what is it that prevents man from recognising God within his own self? What hinders him from seeing the light of the truth, and hearing the voice of the Divinity? To this Jacob Boehme answers, "Thy own hearing, willing, and seeing prevents thee from seeing and hearing God. By the exercise of your own will you separate yourself from the will of God, and by the exercise of your own seeing you see only within your own desires, while your desiring obstructs your sense of hearing by closing your ears with that which belongs to terrestrial and material things. It overshadows you so that you cannot see that which is beyond your own human nature and supersensual. But if you keep quiet, and desist from thinking and feeling with your own personal selfhood, then will the eternal hearing, seeing, and

speaking become revealed to you, and God will see and hear and perceive through you."—(*Supersensual Life*, 1-5.)

Here it may be asked by some, "Is it then necessary for us, if we want to attain divine wisdom, that we should sit down, and think, and feel, and do nothing at all?" Those who ask such a question do not realise that, as there is a region below all feeling and thought, in which man resembles an animal, if not a corpse, there is also another state, beyond all speculative thought, a state of divine being. Not a state in which man imagines himself to be divine, but a condition in which the will of man, having stripped off all that is earthly, becomes divine and absorbed in the self-consciousness of divinity.

"The only true way by which God may be perceived in His word, His essence, and His will, is that man arrives at the state of unity with himself, and that—not merely in his imagination, but in his *will*—he should leave everything that is his personal self, or that belongs to that self, money and goods, father and mother, brother and sister, wife and child, body and life, and that his own self should become as nothing to him. He must surrender everything and become poorer than a bird in the air that owns a nest. Man must have no nest for his heart in this world. ' Not that a person should run away from his home, and desert his wife, child, or relatives, commit suicide, or throw away his property, so that he may not be therein corporeally; but he should kill and annihilate

his self-will, the will that claims all these things as its possessions. He should surrender all this to his Creator, and say with the full consent of his heart, Lord, all is Thine! I am unworthy to govern it, but as You have placed me therein, I shall do my duty by surrendering my will wholly and entirely to You. Act through me in what manner You will, so that Thy will shall be done in all things, and that all that I am called upon to do may be done for the benefit of my brothers, to whom I am serving according to Thy command. He who enters into such a state of supreme resignation enters into divine union with Christ, so that he sees God Himself. He speaks with God and God speaks with him, and he thus knows what is the Word, the Essence, and the Will of God." (*Mysterium*, xli. 54-63.)

"Follow my advice, and leave off your difficult seeking for the knowledge of God by means of your selfish will and reasoning; throw away that imaginary reason, which your mortal self thinks to possess, and your will shall then be the will of God. If He finds His will to be your will in His, then will His will become manifest in your will as in His own property. He is All, and whatever you wish to know in the All is in Him. There is nothing hidden before Him, and you will see in His own light." (*Forty Questions*, i. 36.)

All of one's own seeking and investigating of divine mysteries in a spirit of selfishness is useless and vain. The self-will cannot comprehend anything of God, because that will is not in God but external to Him.



The will in a state of divine tranquillity comprehends the divine, because it is an instrument of the Spirit, and it is the spirit wherein the will is tranquil that has the faculty of such a comprehension. There are many things, undoubtedly, that may be investigated and learned and comprehended in a spirit of selfishness, but the conception thus formed by the mind is merely an external appearance, and there is no understanding of the essential foundation." (*Signature* 15, 33.)

To express the above in other words, we might say that the selfish will of man, being limited, cannot conceive the universal will of God; it must give up its selfishness and limitation, to become one in the Spirit of God and understand its own self. Neither can the self-will know even a part of God, because God is one and a Unity, and cannot be conceived in parts.

"The will should strive after or desire nothing but the mercy of God in the Christ; it should continually enter into the love of God, and not permit anything whatever to turn it away from that object. If external reason triumphs and says, 'I have the true knowledge,' then should the will make that carnal reason bow down to the earth, and cause it to enter into the highest state of humility, and always repeat to it the words, 'You are foolish. You have nothing whatever except the mercy of God.' Into that mercy you must seek to penetrate and to become entirely nothing within yourself, and step out of all of your own selfish knowing and desiring, regarding it as an

entirely impotent thing. Then will the natural self-will enter into a state of helplessness, and the Holy Spirit of God will take a living form within yourself and ignite the soul with its flame of divine love. Thus the high knowledge and the science of the Centre of all being will arise and appear. The human selfhood will then follow in its perceptions the Spirit of God, tremblingly and in the joy of humility, and become able to see what is contained in time and in eternity. Everything is near to a soul in that state, for the soul is then no longer her own property, but an instrument of God. In such a state of calmness and humility should the soul then remain, like a fountain remains at its own origin, and she should without ceasing draw and drink from that well, and nevermore desire to leave the way of God." (*Calmness*, i. 24.)

As the worm, crawling in the dust of the earth, cannot rise like the eagle above the clouds, so the self-willing thought of man, wandering in the labyrinth of conflicting opinions, does not enter the realm of eternal truth. But when man attains freedom by giving up self-will and selfish desires—or, to express it in other words, when by means of the Christ (eternal Light and Truth) he arrives at that state of oneness (at-one-ment) with God, which renders his soul godlike and divine, he then also receives in the Christ a true and essential knowledge of God and of Nature.

"As soon as the newly-regenerated man becomes manifest, will he attain real knowledge. As the

external man sees the external world, likewise the regenerated man sees the divine world wherein he dwells." (*Letters*, xxvii. 3.)

This spiritual world, wherein the regenerated ones consciously live, is not an imaginary or illusive world, but perfectly real; neither has it anything in common with the vulgar conceptions of heaven, which are merely the products of fancy.

"It is to be regretted that men are led so blindly by those that are blind, and that the truth is stopped from manifesting itself to us in its glory and purity by our conceptions of external pictures and forms; for when the divine power in all its splendour becomes manifest and active within the interior foundation of the soul to such a degree that man earnestly desires to depart from his godless ways and to sacrifice his whole being to God, then will the whole of the triune Deity be present within the life and the will of the soul, and the heaven, wherein God resides, will be open to her." (*Mystery*, lx. 43.)

This is the only way in which a knowledge of God can be attained, and there is no other way.

During our terrestrial life it is not possible for us to become entirely rid of the old sinful Adam, but we should continually try to live above his plane; that means to say, we should maintain our point of gravitation in God.

"Man's life during his present existence is like a turning wheel, which suddenly turns uppermost what was below. It kindleth itself in every substance and defileth itself thereby; but it is purified in the water of meekness, wherein moves the heart of God, and out of that its fire-life may evolve celestial substance." (*Six Mysterious Points*, ii. 13.)

"Our whole life ought to be a continual repentance, because it is also a continual chain of sin. Truly the noble lily-branch, newly born in Christ, does not sin; nevertheless the terrestrial man sins in body and soul, and seeks to spoil the noble flower." [1](#) (*Stiefel*, xi. 537.)

"A true Christian hates the will of the flesh and rejects it. He is continually his own accuser, and considers himself unworthy, and with his whole heart will he wish to enter into the mercy of God. He will never boast and say, 'I am a Christian;' but he will strive to enter into the mercy of God and desire His grace, so that he may become a true Christian. His whole life is a continual repentance, and he continually desires to grasp divine grace as that grace grasps him." (*Communion*, iv. 27.)

No Christian should contemplate his own holiness, or fancy himself to be better than others; but he should rather realise his own unworthiness, and regret the perverted state of himself and of humanity as a whole.

"No one should want to know his state of holiness while he lives in this world, but he should keep on

drawing the sap of Christ from his own tree, and leave it to that tree to bring forth from him whatever branch or bough it may choose." (*Stiefel*, cxi. 345.)

"An earnest Christian does not wish to know his own sanctity; he sees only his imperfections, in which the devil battles against him. His imperfections are always before him, but his sanctity he does not know while he lives in this world. That sanctity is hidden by Christ at the foot of His Cross, so that the devil may not perceive it." (*Threefold Life*, xv.)

"A real Christian loves truth and justice, and hates hypocrisy." (*Communion*, iv. 228.)

The new-born internal and spiritual life is benefited by trouble and suffering.

"To the pious, light arises out of darkness and day out of night. For them fortune results from misfortune, and out of the curse and malice of this world there grows for them a paradise. Paul says, To those who love God, all things are for the best." (*Mysterium*, lxvi.)

"Whenever God leads His children into trouble and anguish, they are then every time to produce a new branch on the tree of faith. Whenever the Spirit of God appears it always presents a new out-growth, of which the noble image is exceedingly glad." (*Menschwerdung*, cxi. 8.)

The conditions by which man is surrounded during his terrestrial life may not permit the effect of his spiritual unfoldment to become fully manifest during that time, but at the time of the death of the physical body, when the obstacles presented by the flesh disappear, then will the inner man enjoy his perfections.

"The celestial kingdom in the saints is active and conscious within their faith, whereby their will surrenders itself to God; but the natural life is surrounded by flesh and blood, and is related to the contrarium in the wrath of God. Thus the soul is often in anguish when hell rushes upon her, and desires to manifest itself in her; but she sinks within the hope of divine grace, and stands like a beautiful rose among the thorns, until at the death of the body the kingdom of this world drops away from her. Only then, when there is nothing more to hinder it, will she become truly manifest in the love of God." (*Supersensual Life*, xxxix.)

The object of our life should be to die continually in regard to our human selfhood, and to live only in the love of God, labouring in His service. Thereby our activity will become blessed.

"I am not rejoicing because I am living within my own sense of self, but because in my selfhood I am in the death of Christ and am dying perpetually, and I wish to die entirely in regard to my selfhood, and to leave it entirely in God, so as to be nothing whatever except

an instrument of God, and know nothing any more about my (separate) self." (*Stiefel*, xi. 527.)

"Wherever self dwelleth not, there love has her dwelling. In the tranquillity at the bottom of the soul, where she dies as to her own selfhood, and where she does not will anything except what God wills (in her), there love resides. To the extent in which the self-will is dead within itself, to the same extent is the place occupied by love. In the place which formerly was the seat of self-will there is now nothing, and wherever there is nothing there the love of God is solely active." (*Supernatural Life*, xxviii.)

"A true Christian knows himself to be a servant of God, whose duty it is to attend to the works of God properly. He is not his own property, and the terrestrial body which he inhabits is not his true home. He may seek and plant, cultivate, strive and act as he pleases, but he is always aware that he is doing it for God, and that he will have to render account for it. He should always remember that among these works he is a stranger, a guest, and a servant." (*Signature*, xv. 44.)

"He who hopes to perform something perfect and good, wherein he may rejoice eternally and enjoy it, let him come out of his egoism and self-will and enter into submission within the will of God. Even if the terrestrial desire for selfhood clings to him in his flesh and blood, if only the soul-will is not infected by that desire for self, then will that self not be able to produce anything; for the (inner) will of the soul,

resting in submission to God, continually destroys the essence of the self-assertion, and thus the wrath of God cannot reach her. If the wrath should reach that essence, then the submitted will rises up in its power therein, and stands there in shape before God as a production of victory that will inherit the in fancy." (*Calmness*, xi. 1.)

It is self-evident that no terrestrial possessions of any kind will benefit the spirit, but the acquisition of such possessions will not be an obstacle for us, provided that we possess them, and do not permit ourselves to be possessed by them.

"Dear soul, if you desire the light of God, and also the light of this world, if you desire to feed your body (and mind), and (at the same time) to seek for the mysteries of God, do as God Himself does. One of the eyes of your soul looks into eternity, the other one into nature. The latter goes on continually seeking in desiring and creating one mirror after another. Let that be so. It must be so, for God wills it. But the eye for eternity must not be turned (away from God) into desire; but by means of that eye you should seek to turn the other one towards you, and not let it turn away from you; *i.e.*, not let it turn away from the eye that looks into freedom. Put one will into that which you are doing, thinking that you are a servant in the vineyard of God; *i.e.*, into the Eternal. Sink your will every hour into humility before God; then will your image walk in humility with your will in the majesty



of God, and be illumined perpetually by the triumphant light of God." (*Forty Questions*, xii. 28.)

All terrestrial fortunes or misfortunes with which we may possibly meet do not concern our real divine self, but merely the personality with which we are connected during our earthly life. This personality is given us for the purpose of gaining experience, be it good or evil, and therefore we should always be satisfied and remain contented in God.

"Ultimately all things must be one and the same to man. He is to become one with fortune and misfortune, with poverty and riches, joy and sorrow, light and darkness, life and death. Man is then to himself nothing, for he is dead relatively to all things in his will. God is in all and through all, and nevertheless He is nothing in regard to all, and nothing can comprehend Him. Everything becomes manifest through Him, and He Himself is everything. Nevertheless he has nothing (objectively), because that which is before Him is nothing in His comprehension, for it does not comprehend Him. Likewise will this be the state of a person according to his submitted will if he entirely surrenders himself to God. Then will his will drop back into the unfathomable will of God, wherefrom it came in the beginning, and it will then be in the form of the unfathomable will, wherein God resides and wills." (*Mysterium*, lxvi.)

"The will, surrendered to God, says, 'Lord, if Thou wishest me to be imprisoned or in misery, I shall

willingly be so. If Thou takest me to hell I will go with Thee, for Thou art in heaven. If I have only Thee, what should I care for either heaven or hell? Even if my body and soul were to perish, I shall remain in Thee and Thou in me. In possessing Thee, I have all that I want. Use me as Thou wilt." (*Mysterium*, lxvi.)

By conquering the terrestrial desire and entering into submission to Christ, we shall attain the internal power over external nature, first over our own and afterwards over "outside" nature, the latter being, after all, also within God, our own divine self.

"If you rule merely externally (by external means) over all creatures, you are then with your will in an animal quality, and your rule is of an external kind, dealing only with forms. Your desire will then be carried into the animal essence, which will infect and capture you, and you will receive animal qualities. But if you leave that which merely relates to forms, you will become superior to it, and able to rule over all creatures within the foundation wherefrom they have been created." (*Supersensual Life*, viii.)

"If you allow nothing to enter your desire, you will then be free from all things and possess power over all. You have then nothing within your receptivity, and are as nothing to all things, and all things will be nothing to you, in the same sense as God rules over all things and sees them all; but there is nothing that comprehends Him." (*Supersensual Life*, ix.)

"By your own power you cannot attain such a tranquillity that no creature can touch you. You must give yourself completely into the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, and surrender to Him all your own willing and desiring, so that you desire nothing without Him. Then will you be in this world and in its qualities, as far as your body is concerned. With your will you will be at the foot of the Cross of Christ, and with your will you will walk in heaven, at the goal from whence all creatures come, and to which they all return." (*Supersensual Life*, ix.)

In consequence of this sacrifice of the whole of His will, the human soul-life of the Redeemer did not become annihilated, but it entered thereby entirely into the divine will.

"The humanity of Christ gave itself up as a sacrifice to the wrath of the Father, entering entirely into His fire-essence; but the love-spirit of God defeated the wrathful essence of the fire, so that it could not consume humanity (the human quality). It merely took away from humanity its self-will, and brought it again into the first universal will, wherefrom the will was (originally) given to man. Thus that same will came again into the will of the Father as into its first root (fountain or origin)." (*Mysterium*, xxxix. 24.)

"The doctrine that Christ died a natural death in His human quality must not be understood as if meaning that His created soul had died, and still less that He had perished in His aspect as a divine being, or relatively to His celestial essentiality and celestial

tincture. He only died relatively to His selfhood, *i.e.*, relatively to the will and regimen of the external world which ruled in man. He died relatively to the self-will and to the self-powers of the created selfhood. All this He gave up entirely into the Father's hands as being the end of nature, the great mystery of the Father; but not so that it should be dead, but so that the Spirit of God should be therein all its life, and the divine regimen exist in the personality of Christ." (*Signature*, xii. 1.)

Neither did the external being of the Redeemer become lost by His corporeal death, but it entered thereby into its true and exalted substantiality.

"When Christ died He did not throw away the body which had been in His possession while upon the earth, or left it to be consumed by the four elements, thus keeping (or taking up) a body entirely foreign (to the terrestrial form); but He merely laid aside the suffering (the external consciousness) of this world, and clothed Himself in immortality, so that His body might live in divine power, and not in the spirit of this world." (*Three Principles*, xxv. 53.)

"Christ assumed indeed earthly substance, but in His death—that is to say, as He overcame death—the divine being caused the earthly state to disappear and took away from it its supremacy. Not that Christ had laid aside something (which He did not), but so that the external being was conquered and, so to speak, consumed." (*Menschwerdung*, i. 8, 11.)

"The true essentiality in Christ did not take away the earthly consciousness, but entered into the latter as its lord and conqueror. The true life was to be led first into death and the wrath of God. This took place on the Cross, on which occasion death became destroyed and the wrath imprisoned and extinguished by love, and thus conquered." (*Menschwerdung*, ix. 16.)

"When Jesus broke up death in (His) humanity and took away the sense of self, He did then not throw away the human quality wherein dwelt death and the wrath of God, but He now accepted them to the fullest extent; that is to say, He only now took the external realm within the interior one." (*Signature*, xi. 41.)

"The external active and feeling life, wherein the wrath of God was burning, died, but not in such a way that it would have become a nothing, but it descended into nothing; that is to say, in this case, into the will of God, into His acting and feeling. Thereby it became free of the will of the external world, which will is evil and good, and it lived no longer within the world and the constellations with the four elements, but after the nature of the Father and within the pure and divine element. Thus the true human life came to occupy again the position which had been lost by Adam, and entered again into Paradise." (*Signature*, xii. 5.)

"If the inner will daily and every hour battles against the evil qualities with which it is afflicted, if it quenches them and does not permit them to take

substance in it, while at the same time those evil qualities hinder the person, so that he cannot act always according to his good will, such a man may believe and know for certain that the fire of God is glowing in him and seeking to become light; and whenever the evil body with its evil conditions is broken up, so that it can no longer hinder the glowing spark from burning, then will the divine fire in its essence burst into a flame, and the divine image will be reconstituted according to the strongest quality which that person has introduced into his desire." (*Six Theosophical Points*, vii. 41.)

"If a person has a constant desire for God, and if his desire is so powerful as to enable him to break up and turn into mildness the evil essences whenever they begin to burn in him; if he can resign everything that in this world glitters and allures; if he can do good for evil; if he is powerful enough to give to the needy all that belongs to his externals, be it money or goods; and if he is ready willingly to desert everything for the sake of God, and to enter into a state of misery with the certain hope for the eternal; if in him arises divine power, so that he may awaken therein the kingdom of joy and taste God; such a person carries within himself the divine image with the celestial essence even during his terrestrial life, the image wherein Jesus is born of the virgin. He will not die eternally, but merely let the terrestrial kingdom pass away from him, it having been in this life to him an opposition and hindrance, wherewith God has (not

filled but) merely covered him." (*Six Theosophical Points*, vii. 44.)

Such souls are during this terrestrial life, and still more after the death of the body, filled with the light and the power of God. This light moderates the action of the fiery will still active in them, the blessings of their good deeds surround them, the hope for still greater glorification is their life, and from the trouble and persecution which they have suffered there arises for them pure joy.

"The principle of the father wherein the soul has her basis is a burning fire, giving light, and in this light rests the noble image of God. This light moderates the burning fire by means of the substantiality of love, so as to render it beneficent for nature and life." (*Letters*, viii. 78.)

"Those earnest souls that have worked the wonders of God in His will at the foot of the Cross, having received the body of God, *i.e.*, of Christ, and who have walked therein in justice and truth, *all their doings also follow them* in their strong will and desire, and they experience inexpressible joy in the love and mercy of God, by which they are continually surrounded. The wonders of God are their nutriment; they are living in glory, power, strength, and majesty such as is beyond all description." (*Threefold Life*, xviii. 12.)

"The blessed souls are rendered happy by the works which they have performed while here, and those who have suffered much persecution for the sake of

the truth will behold the wreath of victory which is to crown their new body on the judgment day. There takes place in them a continual uprising of joy whenever they contemplate the future. As their deeds have been varied, so is their hope. A day-labourer having gained much is glad of the reward. Thus it is there. A joyful consciousness abides in them. All the scorn to which they were submitted and all the accusations that have been falsely brought forward against them are to them a great honour of victory. Their frequent prayers, good thoughts, and good works in behalf of their neighbours are the nutriment which they take until the time when their (celestial) body will eat of the fruits of Paradise." (*Forty Questions*, xxii. 4.)

"He who aids the degraded blesses himself, for he wishes him everything good, and prays to God to bless him in body and soul. Thus his desire and blessing returns to the giver in the *Mysterium* and surrounds him, and follows him as a good work born in God. This is the treasure which man takes with him; his earthly treasures he will have to leave behind." (*Menschwerdung*, cxi. 4.)

There is no man without sin, and as he is followed to the other side of the grave by all of his works, his sins go with him, but if he has known how to obtain forgiveness for his sins, then his happiness will not be infringed upon by them.

"Man is followed by all of his works, and he has them eternally before his eyes and lives therein, unless he



has out of his malice and falsehood been newly born by the blood of Jesus Christ. If so, he will then break through the earthly and hellish image and enter into an angelic one, and come into another kingdom, to which his imperfections cannot follow him, and thus will the image of God be restored out of the terrestrial and hellish form." (*Three Principles*, xvi. 47.)

The departed blessed souls trouble themselves neither about that which belongs to hell nor about terrestrial matters of any kind. Their existence resembles that of a man enjoying a happy dream.

"The rest of the soul is like that of one who rests in a sweet sleep." (*Forty Questions*, xxix. 1.)

Every being is free and responsible only according to the degree of its knowledge; not its intellectual knowledge, but according to that which is the result of the experiences of its spirit – its "conscience."

"In the principle of fire is the turning-point. There the will may move in whatever direction he chooses. If it desires the "Nothing," *i.e.*, freedom, it must sacrifice itself to the fire, and sink in the death of that principle. Then the Father, the eternal Will to nature, will put it into the will of the Son; where for the great deal which that being has given, it will receive all; but not to its own honour, but for the glorification and power of God. When this is accomplished, God in such a man is his will and his doing, and his fire becomes a light and a clear mirror; but if he does not will to do so, but wishes to be himself a master, and to

possess multiplicity for his own self; then must he enter into the severe astringency, into the world of darkness, and cannot conduct himself in his principles higher than up to the fire, or rather only up to the lightning flash. He remains in darkness, because only freedom outside of nature can supply the light and the clearness." (*Theosophical Points*, vii. 6).

The fourth form is the object of division after the death of the body, and the centre of consciousness will be either with the higher part or the lower, according to the preponderance of either good or evil. The higher consciousness enters the light; the lower consciousness continues to exist in its own hell-fire and self-created suffering. God "redeems" man by redeeming Himself from man's animal elements, to which he is tied during the terrestrial life of the personality.

During his terrestrial existence man can remain consciously in the three worlds, and by the power of the will with which he is endowed penetrate into either one or the other; but after the separation of the soul from the body has taken place, he can continue to exist as an individuality only in one of these worlds, either within the realm of divine light or within the power of the fire; because together with his physical body he loses the power of self-government. He can then no longer follow his own will, but has to go where he gravitates.

"There are three principles in the constitution of man, either of which he may unfold during his terrestrial existence; but after the body is disorganised, he then lives only in one principle and cannot evolve the other. In eternity he must remain in that state of consciousness which he has acquired here." (*Three Principles, Supplement, x.*)

"There are not three separate souls in man, but only one. This soul stands in three principles; namely, the realm of the wrath, the realm of the love of God and the kingdom of this world. When the air of the external kingdom of this world deserts the soul, then will she become manifest in either the dark realm of fire or in the holy kingdom of light, which is the kingdom of the love-fire, the power of God. To whatever plane she has surrendered herself during her earthly existence, therein she remains after the external kingdom has departed from her." (*Mysterium, xv. 24.*)

"We are always exposed to temptations, but we can be victorious in Christ who has conquered, for His soul is our soul and His flesh is our flesh, provided that we trust in Him and surrender ourselves to Him entirely, as Christ surrendered Himself to His Father." **1** (*Forty Questions, i. 10.*)

Far easier is it to overcome the desire for evil than to destroy it after it has become embodied by being enacted.

"Desire is the introducing (of the will) into a thing, and from the desire results the formation of a corporeal being (in the astral plane). Therein is hidden the source of sin. It is far easier to ward off the desire than to destroy the body (formed by the act). The latter is far more difficult. Therefore it is advisable to turn away one's eyes from evil desire, so that the tincture (the life-principle) may not enter the essence and the mind be filled with that whereby the desire becomes substantial and which will require a (forcible) breaking up." (*Three Principles*, xx. 28.)

"It is far better to demolish the desire than to demolish afterwards the substance with great pains. If the free will already in the beginning (of a desire) destroys the desire, so that it does not become substantial, then is the physician (for the cure of that disease) already born, and there will not be needed such great earnestness as will be required by him who wants to come out of the company of the monsters which he has created, and who will have to destroy the being which he has brought into shape within his own soul." (*Mysterium*, xxiv. 25.)

If men were realising their true nature as vehicles of the divine spirit, they would see the utter folly of their craving for that which is agreeable or useful for the material self alone, without benefiting the spirit. From a spiritual point of view, external pleasures which are not instructive are not merely worthless, but actually an impediment to the attainment of our permanent treasure; because in strengthening the ties which bind

us to matter they loosen the link that connects us with heaven.

"It is the greatest folly for man to crave for things which are not his own (but which are merely attractive to the being with which he is connected during his earthly career), and to introduce into his desire that which infects him with disease, and which even ultimately drives him away from God, excluding him in body and soul from his celestial state." (*Mysterium*, xxiv. 16.)

Excerpts From:

# Divine Providence

By Emanuel Swedenborg

[1764]

*Translated by William Frederic Wunsch*

[1851]

That the universe, with each and all things in it, was created from divine love by divine wisdom may also be established from objects to be seen in the world. Take a particular object, examine it with some wisdom, and you will be convinced. Take the seed, fruit, flower or leaf of a tree, muster your wisdom, examine the object with a strong microscope, and you will see marvels. Even more wonderful are the more interior things which you do not see. Note the unfolding order in the growth of a tree from seed to new seed; reflect on the continuous effort in all stages after self-propagation--the end to which it moves is seed in which its reproductive power arises anew. If then you will think spiritually, as you can if you will, will you not see wisdom in all this? Furthermore, if you can think spiritually enough, you will see that this energy does not come from the seed, nor from the sun of the world, which is only fire, but is in the seed from God the Creator whose wisdom is infinite, and is from Him not only at the moment of creation but ever after, too. For maintenance is perpetual creation, as continuance is perpetual coming to be. Else it is

quite as work ceases when you withdraw will from action, or as utterance fails when you remove thought from speech, or as motion ceases when you remove impetus; in a word, as an effect perishes when you remove the cause.

Every created thing is endowed with energy, indeed, but this does nothing of itself but from Him who implanted it. Examine any other earthly object, like a silkworm, bee or other small creature. View it first naturally, then rationally, and at length spiritually, and if you can think deeply, you will be astounded at all you see. Let wisdom speak in you, and you will exclaim in astonishment, "Who does not see the divine in such things? They are all of divine wisdom." Still more will you exclaim, if you note the uses of all created things, how they mount in regular order even to the human being, and from man to the Creator whence they are, and that the connection, and if you will acknowledge it, the preservation also of them all, depend on the conjunction of the Creator with man. That divine love created all things, but nothing apart from the divine wisdom, will be seen in what follows.

(ii) *Divine love and wisdom proceed as one from the Lord.* This, too, is plain from what was shown in the work *Divine Love and Wisdom*, especially in the propositions: "Esse and existere are distinguishably one in the Lord" (nn. 14-17); "Infinite things are distinguishably one in Him" (nn. 17-22); "Divine love is of divine wisdom, and divine wisdom of divine love" (nn. 34-39); "Love not married to wisdom cannot

effect anything" (nn. 401-403); "Love does nothing except in union with wisdom" (nn. 409, 410); "Spiritual heat and light, proceeding from the Lord as a sun, make one as divine love and wisdom make one in Him" (nn. 99-102). The truth of the present proposition is plain from these propositions, demonstrated in that treatise. But as it is not known how two distinct things can act as one, I wish now to show that there is no "one" apart from form, and that the form itself makes it a unit; then, that a form makes a "one" the more perfectly as the elements entering into it are distinctly different and yet united.

Of those in natural good by inheritance, but in no spiritual good, nearly the same is true as of those described above. The internal of every good or truth is spiritual. The spiritual dispels falsities and evils, but the natural left to itself favors them. To favor evil and falsity does not accord with doing good.

Good can be separated from truth, and truth from good, and then still appear as good or truth, for the reason that the human being has a capacity to act which is called liberty, and a capacity of understanding called rationality. By abuse of these powers a man can appear in externals other than he is in internals; an evil man can do good and speak truth, and a devil feign himself an angel of light. But on this see the following propositions in the treatise *Divine Love and Wisdom*: "The origin of evil is in the abuse of faculties proper to man, called liberty and rationality" (nn. 246-270); "These two faculties are to



be found with the evil as well as with the good" (n. 425); "Love not married to wisdom, and good not married to truth, can effect nothing" (n. 401); "Love does nothing except in conjunction with wisdom or understanding, and it brings wisdom or the understanding reciprocally into conjunction with itself" (nn. 410-412); "From power given it by love, wisdom or understanding can be elevated and can perceive and receive the things of light from heaven" (n. 413); "Love can be raised similarly to receive the things of heat from heaven if it loves its mate, wisdom, in that degree" (nn. 414, 415); "Else love pulls wisdom or the understanding down from its elevation to act at one with itself" (nn. 416-418); "If the two are elevated, love is purified in the understanding" (nn. 419-421); "Purified by wisdom in the understanding, love becomes spiritual and celestial, but defiled in the understanding it become sensuous and corporeal" (nn. 422-424); "What is true of love and wisdom and their union is true of charity and faith and their conjunction" (nn. 427-430). What charity in heaven is, see n. 431.

(vii) \_The Lord does not suffer anything to be divided; it must be either in good and at the same time in truth, or in evil and at the same time in falsity.\_ The Lord's divine providence has for its goal, and to this end it labors, that man shall be in good and at the same time in truth. For then he is his own good and love and his own truth and wisdom; thereby the human being is human, for he is then an image of the Lord. But while he lives in the world he

can be in good and at the same time in falsity, likewise in evil and at the same time in truth, indeed in evil and at the same time in good, and thus be double. As the cleavage destroys the Lord's image in him and thus the man, the Lord's divine providence takes care in every least act that this division shall not be. And as it is better for man to be in evil and at the same time in falsity than to be in good and at the same time in evil, the Lord permits it, not as one willing it, but as one unable to resist because of the end sought, which is salvation.

[2] A man can be simultaneously in evil and in truth and the Lord be unable to prevent it in view of the end, which is salvation, for the reason that man's understanding can be raised into the light of wisdom and see truths, or acknowledge them when he hears them, while his love remains below. Thus a man can be in heaven as to understanding, while as to his love he is in hell. This is not denied him, because the two faculties of liberty and rationality, by virtue of which he is a human being and distinguished from beasts and by which alone he can be regenerated and thus saved, cannot be taken away. By means of them, he can act according to wisdom and at the same time according to an unwise love. From wisdom above he can view the love below and also the thoughts, intentions and affections, therefore the evils and falsities as well as the goods and truths of his life and doctrine, without a knowledge and recognition of which he cannot be reformed. We spoke of the two faculties before and shall say more in what follows.

What has been said explains how man can be simultaneously in good and truth, or in evil and falsity, or in mixtures of them.

In this world a man can hardly come into one or the other conjunction or union, that is, of good and truth or of evil and falsity, for during his life in the world he is kept in a state of reformation or regeneration. After death, however, every man comes into the one union or the other, because he can then no longer be reformed or regenerated. He remains such as his life was in the world, that is, such as his reigning love was. If therefore his was a life of an evil love, all the truth acquired by him in the world from teacher, pulpit or Word is taken away. On the removal of it, he absorbs the falsity agreeing with his evil as a sponge does water. On the other hand, if his was the life of a good love, all the falsity is removed which he may have picked up in the world by hearing or from reading but did not confirm in himself, and in its place truth congruous with his good is given him. This is meant by the Lord's words:

Take . . . the talent from him, and give it to him that has ten talents. For to everyone who has, shall be given until he abounds but from him who has not, even what he has shall be taken away (Mt 25:28, 29; 13:12; Mk 4:25; Lu 8:18; 19:24-26).

After death everyone must be either in good and at the same time in truth or in evil and at the same time in falsity, for the reason that good and evil cannot be united, nor can good and the falsity of evil, nor evil

and the truth of good. For these are opposites, and opposites contend until one destroys the other. Those who are at the same time in evil and in good are meant in the Apocalypse in these words of the Lord to the church of the Laodiceans:

I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot; would that you were cold or hot; but because you are lukewarm, I will spue you out of my mouth (3:15, 16):

also in these words of the Lord:

No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or cleave to the one and not heed the other (Mt 6:24).

( viii) \_That which is in good and at the same time in truth is something; that which is in evil and at the same time in falsity is not anything.\_ See above (n. 11) that what is in good and at the same time in truth is something. It follows that what is at once evil and false is not anything. By not being anything is meant that it is without power and without spiritual life. Those at once in evil and in falsity (all of whom are in hell) have power indeed among themselves, for an evil man can do evil and does so in a thousand ways. Yet he can do evil to the evil only by reason of their evil; he cannot harm the good at all; if, as sometimes happens, he does, it is by conjunction with their evil.

[2] In this way temptations arise; they are infestations by evil spirits who are with a man; so combats ensue by which the good are freed from their evils. Since the

wicked have no power, all hell in the Lord's sight is not only nothing, but nothing at all in point of power, as I have seen proved by much experience. But it is remarkable that the evil all deem themselves powerful, and the good all think themselves powerless. This is because the evil ascribe everything to their own power or shrewdness and malice, and nothing to the Lord; whereas the good ascribe nothing to their own prudence, but all to the Lord who is almighty. Evil and falsity together are not anything for the further reason that they have no spiritual life. The life of the infernals is therefore called death, not life. Since life holds everything, death has nothing.

Men in evil and at the same time in truths may be likened to eagles flying aloft which, deprived of their wings, fall. For after death, on becoming spirits, men do the like who have understood and spoken and taught truths and yet have not looked to God in their lives. By means of things of the understanding they raise themselves aloft and even enter heaven at times and feign themselves angels of light. But when they are deprived of truths and are cast out, they fall down to hell. Eagles also signify rapacious men with intellectual acumen, and wings signify spiritual truths. Such, we said, are those who have not looked to God in their lives. To look to God in life means simply to think that a given evil is a sin against God, and for that reason not to commit it.

(ix) \_The Lord's divine providence causes evil and its falsity to serve for equilibrium, contrast, and purification, and so for the conjunction of good and truth in others.\_ It is obvious from the preceding that the Lord's divine providence continually operates in order that truth may be united in man with good and good with truth, because that union is the church and heaven. For that union is in the Lord and in all that proceeds from Him. From that union, heaven and the church are called a marriage, and the kingdom of God is likened in the Word to a marriage. Again, the Sabbath signified that union and was the holiest observance in the worship of the Israelitish Church. From that union also there is a marriage of good and truth in the Word and in each and all things of it (on this see \_Doctrine of the New Jerusalem about Sacred Scripture,\_ nn. 80-90). The marriage of good and truth is from the marriage of the Lord with the church, and this in turn from the marriage of love and wisdom in Him, for good is of love, and truth of wisdom. It is plain, then, that it is the constant aim of divine providence to unite good to truth and truth to good in a man, for so he is united to the Lord.

But many have severed and do sever this marriage, especially by separating faith from charity (for faith is of truth and truth is of faith, and charity is of good and good is of charity), and in so doing they conjoin evil and falsity in themselves and thus come into and continue in the opposite to good and truth. The Lord therefore provides that they shall nevertheless serve

for uniting good and truth in others, through equilibrium, contrast and purification.

Conjunction of good and truth in others is provided by the Lord through equilibrium between heaven and hell. From hell evil and at the same time falsity constantly exhale, and from heaven good and at the same time truth. In equilibrium between them, and so in freedom to think, will, speak and act in which he can be reformed, every man is kept while he lives in the world. On the spiritual equilibrium from which the human being has freedom, see the work Heaven and Hell, nn. 589-596, 597-603.

Conjunction of good and truth is provided by the Lord through contrast. For the nature of good is not known except by contrast with what is less good and by its contrariety to evil. All perceptiveness and sensitivity arise so; their quality is thence. All pleasantness is perceived and felt over against the less pleasant and the unpleasant; all the beautiful by reference to the less beautiful and the unbeautiful; similarly all good of love by reference to lesser good and to evil; all truth of wisdom by a sense of lesser truth and of falsity. Everything inevitably varies from greatest to least, and with the same variation in its opposite and with equilibrium between them, there is contrast degree by degree, and the perception and sensation of a thing increase or diminish. But be it known that an opposite may either lower or exalt perceptions and sensitivities. It lowers them when it mingles in and exalts them when it does not mingle

in, for which reason the Lord separates good and evil with man that they shall not mingle, as exquisitely as He does heaven and hell.

Conjunction of good and truth in others is provided by the Lord through purification in two ways; one through temptations, and the other through fermentations. Spiritual temptations are nothing else than combats against the evils and falsities exhaled from hell and affecting man. By these combats a man is purified from evils and falsities, and good and truth are united in him. Spiritual fermentations take place in many ways, and in heaven as well as on earth; but in the world it is not known what they are or how they come about. For evils and their falsities, let into societies, act as ferments do in meal or in must, separating the heterogeneous and conjoining the homogeneous until there is clarity and purity. Such fermentations are meant in the Lord's words:

The kingdom of heaven is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened (Mt 13:33; Lu 12:21).

The Lord provides these uses through the united evil and falsity of those in hell. The Lord's kingdom, which extends over hell as well as over heaven, is a kingdom of uses. It is the Lord's providence that there shall be no creature and no thing whereby a use is not performed.



## II. THE LORD'S DIVINE PROVIDENCE HAS FOR ITS OBJECT A HEAVEN FROM THE HUMAN RACE

Heaven does not consist of angels created such to begin with, nor does hell come from any devil created an angel of light and cast down from heaven. Both heaven and hell are from mankind, heaven consisting of those in the love of good and consequent understanding of truth, and hell of those in the love of evil and consequent understanding of falsity. This has been made known and sure to me by long-continued intercourse with angels and spirits. See what was said on the subject in the work *\_Heaven and Hell\_* (nn. 311-316); also in the little work *\_The Last Judgment\_* (nn. 14-27), and in *\_Continuation about the Last Judgment and the Spiritual World\_* (throughout).

[2] As heaven is from mankind and is an abiding with the Lord to eternity, it must have been the Lord's purpose in creation; being the purpose in creation, it is the purpose of His providence. The Lord created the world not for His own sake but for the sake of those with whom He would be in heaven. Spiritual love by nature desires to give its own to another, and so far as it can do so is in its *\_esse\_*, peace, and blessedness. Spiritual love derives this from the Lord's divine love which is such infinitely. It follows that the divine love and hence divine providence has for its object a heaven consisting of human beings who have become or are becoming angels, on whom the Lord can bestow all the blessings and felicities of love and wisdom and do so from Himself in men. It

must be in this way, for the Lord's image and likeness are in men from creation, the image in them wisdom and the likeness love. Furthermore, the Lord in them is love united to wisdom and wisdom united to love or (what is the same) is good united to truth and truth united to good (this union was treated of in the preceding chapter).

[3] What heaven is in general or with a number, and in particular or with an individual, is not known. Nor is it known what heaven is in the spiritual world and what it is in the natural world. Yet this knowledge is important, for heaven is the purpose of providence. I therefore desire to set the subject in some light in this order:

i. Heaven is conjunction with the Lord. ii. By creation the human being is such that he can be conjoined more and more closely to the Lord. iii. The more closely one is conjoined to the Lord the wiser one becomes. iv. The more closely one is conjoined to the Lord the happier one becomes. v. The more closely one is conjoined to the Lord the more distinctly does he seem to himself to be his own, and the more plainly does he recognize that he is the Lord's.

(i) \_Heaven is conjunction with the Lord.\_ Heaven is heaven, not from the angels but from the Lord. For the love and wisdom in which angels are and which make heaven are not theirs, but the Lord's, indeed are the Lord in them. And as love and wisdom are the Lord's, and are the Lord in heaven, and make the life of angels, it is plain that their life is the Lord's, indeed

is the Lord. The angels themselves avow that they live from the Lord. Hence it is evident that heaven is conjunction with the Lord. But conjunction with Him is various and one man's heaven is not another's; therefore heaven is also according to the conjunction with the Lord. In the following proposition it will be seen that conjunction is more and more close or more and more remote.

[2] Here let something be said about how the conjunction takes place and what the nature of it is. It is a conjunction of the Lord with the angels and of the angels with Him, therefore is reciprocal. The Lord flows into the life's love of the angels, and they receive Him in wisdom, thus in turn conjoining themselves with Him. It must be said, however, that it seems to the angels that they conjoin themselves to the Lord by wisdom; actually the Lord conjoins them to Himself by their wisdom, for the wisdom is also from the Lord. It is the same thing if we say that the Lord conjoins Himself to the angels by good and they in turn conjoin themselves to the Lord by truth, for all good is of love, and truth, of wisdom.

[3] This reciprocal conjunction is an arcanum, however, which few can understand unless it is explained. I want therefore to unfold it so far as it can be done by things within one's grasp. We showed in the treatise *\_Divine Love and Wisdom\_* (nn. 404, 405) how love unites itself with wisdom, namely, through affection for knowing from which comes an affection for truth, through affection for understanding from

which comes perception of truth, and through affection for seeing what is known and understood, from which comes thought. Into all these affections the Lord flows, for they are all derivatives of one's life's love, and the angels receive the influx in perception of truth and in thought, for in these the influx becomes apparent to them, but not in the affections.

[4] As the perceptions and thoughts appear to the angels to be their own, although they arise from affections which are from the Lord, the appearance is that the angels reciprocally conjoin themselves to the Lord, when nevertheless the Lord conjoins them to Himself. The affection itself produces the perceptions and thoughts, for the affection, which is of love, is their soul. Apart from affection no one can perceive or think anything, and every one perceives and thinks according to his affection. It is evident that the reciprocal conjunction of the angels with the Lord is not from them, but as it were from them. Such, too, is the conjunction of the Lord with the church and of the church with Him, a union called celestial and spiritual marriage.

All conjunction in the spiritual world is effected by intent regard. When anyone there thinks of another with a desire to speak with him, the other is at once present, and the two come face to face. Likewise, when one thinks of another from an affection of love; by this affection, however, there is conjunction, but by the other only presence. This is peculiar to the

spiritual world; for there all are spiritual beings. It is otherwise in the natural world where all are physical beings. In the natural world something similar takes place in the affections and thoughts of the spirit; but as there is space here, while in the spiritual world space is appearance only, what takes place here in one's spirit occurs outwardly there.

[2] We have said so much to make known how conjunction of the Lord with angels and their seemingly reciprocal conjunction with Him is effected. All angels turn the face to the Lord; He regards them in the forehead, and they regard Him with the eyes. The reason is that the forehead corresponds to love and its affections, and the eyes correspond to wisdom and its perceptions. Still the angels do not of themselves turn the face to the Lord, but He faces them toward Himself, doing so by influx into their life's love, by this entering the perceptions and thoughts, and so turning the angels to Him.

[3] There is such a circuit from love to thoughts and under love's impulse from thoughts to love in all the mind's activity. It may be called the circling of life. On these subjects see some things also in the treatise Divine Love and Wisdom: as that "Angels constantly turn the face to the Lord as a sun" (nn. 129-134); "All the interiors of both the mind and the bodies of the angels are likewise turned to the Lord as a sun" (nn. 135-139); "Every spirit, whatever his character, turns himself likewise to his ruling love" (nn. 140-145); "Love conjoins itself to wisdom and

causes wisdom to be conjoined reciprocally with it" (nn. 410-412); "Angels are in the Lord and He in them; and as the angels are only recipients, the Lord alone is heaven" (nn. 113-118)

The Lord's heaven in the natural world is called the church; an angel of this heaven is a man of the church who is conjoined to the Lord; on departure from this world he also becomes an angel of the spiritual heaven. What was said of the angelic heaven is evidently to be understood, then, of the human heaven also which is called the church. The reciprocal conjunction with the Lord which makes heaven in the human being is revealed by the Lord in these words in John:

Abide in Me, and I in you; ... he who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing (15:4, 5, 7).

It is plain from this that the Lord is heaven not only in general with all in heaven, but in particular with each one there. For each angel is a heaven in least form; of as many heavens as there are angels, does heaven in general consist. In substantiation see *\_Heaven and Hell\_* (nn. 51-58). Since this is so, let no one cherish the mistaken idea, which first visits the thought of so many, that the Lord dwells in heaven among the angels or is among them like a king in his kingdom. To the sight He is above them in the sun there; He is in them in their life of love and wisdom.

(ii) \_By creation the human being is such that he can be conjoined more and more closely to the Lord.\_ This becomes evident from what was shown about degrees . . .

[2] But one must know well what degrees are and that there are two kinds --discrete degrees or degrees of height, and continuous degrees or degrees of breadth; also how they differ. It must be known, too, that every human being has by creation and hence from birth three discrete degrees or degrees of height, and that he comes at birth into the first degree, called natural, and can grow in this degree continuously until he becomes rational. He comes into the second degree, called spiritual, if he lives according to spiritual laws of order, which are divine truths. He can also come into the third degree, called celestial, if he lives according to the celestial laws of order, which are divine goods.

[3] These degrees are opened in a person by the Lord according to his life and actually opened in the world, but not perceptibly and sensibly until after his departure from the world. As they are opened and later perfected a man is conjoined to the Lord more and more closely. This conjunction can grow to eternity in nearness to God and does so with the angels. And yet no angel can attain or touch the first degree of the Lord's love and wisdom, for the Lord is infinite and an angel is finite, and between infinite and finite no ratio obtains. Man's state and the state of his elevation and nearness to the Lord cannot be

understood without a knowledge of these degrees; they have been specifically treated of, therefore, in the treatise *Divine Love and Wisdom*, nn. 173-281, which see.

We shall say briefly how man can be more and more closely conjoined to the Lord, and then how the conjunction seems closer and closer. *How man is more and more closely conjoined to the Lord:* this is effected not by knowledge alone, nor by intelligence alone, nor even by wisdom alone, but by a life conjoined to them. A man's life is his love, and love is manifold. In general there are love of good and love of evil. Love of evil is love of committing adultery, taking revenge, defrauding, blaspheming, depriving others of their possessions. In thinking and doing such things the love of evil finds its pleasure and joy. Of this love there are as many derivatives, which are affections, as there are evils in which it can find expression. And there are as many perceptions and thoughts of this love as there are falsities favoring and confirming such evils. The falsities make one with the evils as understanding makes one with will; they are mutually inseparable; the one is of the other.

[2] Inasmuch as the Lord flows into one's life's love and by its affections into the perceptions and thoughts, and not the other way about, as we said above, it follows that the Lord can conjoin Himself more closely to a man only as the love of evil is removed along with its affections, which are lusts. These lusts reside in the natural man. What a man



does from the natural man he feels that he does of himself. For his part, therefore, a man should remove the evils of that love; so far as he does, the Lord comes nearer and conjoins Himself to him. Anyone can see from reason that lusts with their pleasures block and close the door to the Lord and cannot be cast out by the Lord as long as the man himself keeps the door shut and presses and pushes from outside to keep it from being opened. It is plain from the Lord's words in the Apocalypse that a man must himself open the door:

Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with Me (3:20).

[3] Plainly, then, so far as one shuns evils as diabolical and as obstacles to the Lord's entrance, he is more and more closely conjoined to the Lord, and he the most closely who abhors them as so many dusky and fiery devils. For evil and the devil are one and the same, and the falsity of evil and satan are one and the same. As the Lord's influx is into the love of good and into its affections and by these into the perceptions and thoughts, which have it from the good in which a man is that they are truths, so the influx of the devil, that is of hell, is into the love of evil and its affections, which are lusts, and by these into the perceptions and thoughts, which have it from the evil in which the man is that they are falsities.

[4] \_How the conjunction seems closer and closer.\_  
The more the evils in the natural man are removed by

shunning and turning away from them, the more closely a man is conjoined to the Lord. Love and wisdom, which are the Lord Himself, are not in space, as affection which is of love, and thought which is of wisdom, have nothing in common with space. In the measure of the conjunction by love and wisdom, therefore, the Lord seems nearer; and, contrariwise, in the measure of the rejection of love and wisdom, more distant. There is no space in the spiritual world; distance and presence there are appearances according to similarity or dissimilarity of the affections. For, as we said, affections which are of love, and thoughts which are of wisdom, in themselves spiritual, are not in space (on this see what was shown in the treatise *\_Divine Love and Wisdom,\_* nn. 7-10, 69-72, and elsewhere).

[5] The Lord's conjunction with a man in whom evils have been put away is meant by the Lord's words:

The pure in heart shall see God (Mt 5:8); and by the words:

He who has my commandments and does them . . . with him will I make an abode (Jn 14:21, 23).

"To have the commandments" is to know and "to do them" is to love, for it is also said: "he who does my commandments, he it is that loves Me."

(iii) *\_The more closely one is conjoined to the Lord the wiser one becomes.\_* As there are three degrees of life in man by creation and so from birth (see just above,

n. 32), there are specifically three degrees of wisdom in him. These degrees it is that are opened in man according to conjunction, that is, according to love, for love is conjunction itself. Love's ascent by degrees, however, is only obscurely perceived by man; but wisdom's ascent is clearly perceived by those who know and see what wisdom is. The degrees of wisdom are perceived because love by its affections enters the perceptions and thoughts, and these present themselves to the internal mental sight, which corresponds to the external bodily sight. Thus wisdom appears, but not the affection of love which produces it. It is the same with all a man's deeds; he is aware how the body does them, but not how the soul does them. So he perceives how he meditates, perceives and thinks, but not how the soul of these mental activities, which is an affection of good and truth, produces them.

[2] There are three degrees of wisdom: natural, spiritual, and celestial. Man is in the natural degree of wisdom during his life in the world. This degree can be perfected in him to its height, but even so cannot pass into the spiritual degree, for the latter is not continuous with it, but conjoined to it by correspondences. After death man is in the spiritual degree of wisdom. This degree also is such that it can be perfected to its height, and yet cannot pass into the celestial degree of wisdom, because neither is this continuous with the spiritual but conjoined to it by correspondences. Plainly, then, wisdom can be raised

threefold, and in each degree can be perfected but only to its peak.

[3] One who understands the elevation and perfecting of these degrees can see to an extent why angelic wisdom is said to be ineffable. So ineffable, indeed, is it, that a thousand ideas in the thought of angels in their wisdom can present only a single idea in the thought of men in their wisdom, the other nine hundred and ninety-nine ideas being unutterable, because they are supernatural. Many a time have I been given to know this by living experience. But, as was said, no one can enter into the ineffable wisdom of the angels except by and according to conjunction with the Lord, for He alone opens spiritual and celestial degrees, and only in those who are wise from Him. Those are wise from the Lord who cast the devil, that is, evil, out of themselves.

But let no one believe that he has wisdom because he knows many things, perceives them in some light, and is able to talk intelligently about them, unless his wisdom is conjoined to love. For it is love that through its affections produces wisdom. Not conjoined to love, wisdom is like a meteor vanishing in the air and like a falling star. Wisdom united to love is like the abiding light of the sun and like a fixed star. A man has the love of wisdom when he is averse to the diabolical crew, that is, to the lusts of evil and falsity.

Wisdom that comes to perception is perception of truth from being affected by it, especially perception

of spiritual truth. For there is civil, moral, and spiritual truth. Those who have some perception of spiritual truth from affection by it also have perceptions of moral and civil truth, for the affection of spiritual truth is the soul of those perceptions. I have spoken with angels at times about wisdom who said that wisdom is conjunction with the Lord because He is wisdom itself, and that the man who rejects hell comes into this conjunction and comes into it so far as he rejects hell. They said that they picture wisdom to themselves as a magnificent and highly ornate palace into which one mounts by twelve steps. No one arrives at even the first step, they said, except from the Lord by conjunction with Him; and according to the measure of conjunction one ascends; also as one ascends, one perceives that no man is wise from himself but from the Lord. Furthermore, they said that the things in which one is wise are to those in which one is not wise like a few drops of water to a large lake. By the twelve steps into the palace of wisdom are meant goods united to truths and truths united to goods.

(iv) \_The more closely one is conjoined to the Lord the happier one becomes.\_ The like can be said of degrees of happiness as was said (nn. 32 and 34) of degrees of life and of wisdom according to conjunction with the Lord. Happiness, that is, blessedness and joy, also are heightened as the higher degrees of the mind, called spiritual and celestial, are opened with man. After his life in the world these degrees grow to eternity.

No one who is in the pleasures of the lusts of evil can know anything of the joys of the affections of good in which the angelic heaven is. These pleasures and joys are opposites in internals and hence inwardly in externals, though superficially they may differ little. Every love has its enjoyments; the love of evil with those in lusts also has, such as the love of committing adultery, of taking revenge, of defrauding, of stealing, of acting cruelly, indeed, in the worst men, of blaspheming the holy things of the church and of inveighing against God. The fountainhead of those enjoyments is the love of ruling from self-love. They come of lusts which obsess the interiors of the mind, from these flow into the body, and excite uncleannesses there which titillate the fibers. The physical pleasure springs from the pleasure which the mind takes in lusts.

[2] After death everyone comes to know in the spiritual world what the uncleannesses are which titillate the body's fibers in such persons and comes to know the nature of them. In general they are things cadaverous, excrementitious, filthy, malodorous, and urinous; for their hells teem with such uncleannesses. These are correspondences, as may be seen in the treatise *\_Divine Love and Wisdom\_* (nn. 422-424). After one has entered hell, however, these filthy delights are turned into wretchedness. This has been told in order that it may be understood what heaven's felicity is and its nature, of which we are now to speak; for a thing is known from its opposite.

It is impossible to describe in words the blessedness, satisfaction, joy and pleasure, in short, the felicity of heaven, so sensibly perceived there. What is perceived solely by feeling, cannot be described, for it does not fall into ideas of thought nor, therefore, into words. For the understanding sees only and sees what is of wisdom or truth, but not what is of love or good. Those felicities are therefore inexpressible, but still they ascend in like degree with wisdom. They are infinitely various, and each is ineffable. I have heard this, also perceived it.

[2] These felicities enter when a man, of himself and yet from the Lord, casts out the lusts of the love of evil and falsity. For these felicities are the happinesses of the affections of good and truth, the opposites of the lusts of the love of evil and falsity. Those happinesses begin from the Lord, thus from the inmost, diffuse themselves thence into things lower even to lowermost things, and thus fill the angel, making him a body of delight. Such happinesses are to be found in infinite variety in every affection of good and truth, and eminently in the affection of wisdom.

There is no comparing the joys of the lusts of evil and the joys of the affections of good. Inwardly in the former is the devil, in the latter the Lord. If comparisons are to be ventured, the pleasures of the lusts of evil can only be compared to the lewd pleasures of frogs in stagnant ponds or to those of snakes in filth, while the pleasures of the affections of

good must be likened to the delights which the mind takes in gardens and flower beds. For things like those which affect frogs and snakes affect those in the hells who are in lusts of evil; and things like those which affect the mind in gardens and flower beds affect those in the heavens who are in affections of good. For, as was said above, corresponding uncleannesses affect the evil, and corresponding cleannesses the good.

Plainly, then, the more closely one is conjoined with the Lord the happier one is. This happiness rarely shows itself in the world, however; for man is then in a natural state, and the natural does not communicate with the spiritual by continuity, but by correspondence. The communication is felt only in a certain repose and peace of mind, especially after struggles against evil. But when a person puts off the natural state and enters the spiritual state, as he does on leaving the world, the happiness described above gradually manifests itself.

(v) \_The more closely one is conjoined to the Lord the more distinctly does he seem to himself to be his own, and the more plainly does he recognize that he is the Lord's.\_ The appearance is that the more closely one is conjoined to the Lord the less one is one's own. This appearance prevails with all the evil. It also prevails with those who from religion believe that they are not under the yoke of the law and that no one can of himself do good. All these inevitably think that to be free only to do good and not to think and will evil is



not to be one's own. Inasmuch as a man who is conjoined to the Lord does not will and cannot think or will evil, they conclude from the look that this is not to be one's own. Yet that is the opposite of the truth.

There is infernal freedom, and there is heavenly freedom. Thinking and willing evil and also speaking and doing it so far as civil and moral laws do not prevent, is from infernal freedom. But thinking and willing good and speaking and doing it so far as opportunity offers, is from heavenly freedom. A man perceives as his own what he thinks, wills, speaks and does in freedom. The freedom anyone has always comes from his love. The man in an evil love cannot but deem infernal freedom to be real freedom, and a man in love of the good perceives that heavenly freedom is real freedom; consequently each regards the opposite of his freedom as bondage. No one can deny that one or the other must be freedom, for two kinds of freedom opposed to each other cannot both be freedom. Furthermore it cannot be denied that to be led by good is freedom and to be led by evil is bondage. For to be led by good is to be led by the Lord, but to be led by evil is to be led by the devil.

# The Didache

By Charles H. Hoole

[1894]

TRANSLATION OF

THE TEACHING OF THE APOSTLES

*AS GIVEN IN THE EDITION OF BRYENNIUS*

## THE TEACHING OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES.

I. THERE are two paths, one of life and one of death, and the difference is great between the two paths.

Now the path of life is this — first, thou shalt love the God who made thee, thy neighbour as thyself, and all things that thou wouldest not should be done unto thee, do not thou unto another. And the doctrine of these maxims is as follows. Bless them that curse you, and pray for your enemies. Fast on behalf of those that persecute you; for what thank is there if ye love them that love you? do not even the Gentiles do the same But do ye love them that hate you, and ye will not have an enemy. Abstain from fleshly and worldly lusts. If any one give thee a blow on thy right cheek, turn unto him the other also, and thou shalt be perfect; if any one compel thee to go a mile, go with him two; if a man take away thy cloak, give him thy coat also; if a man take from thee what is thine, ask not for it again, for neither art thou able to do so. Give

to every one that asketh of thee, and ask not again, for the Father wishes that from his own gifts there should be given to all. Blessed is he who giveth according to the commandment, for he is free from guilt; but woe unto him that receiveth. For if a man receive being in need, he shall be free from guilt; but he who receiveth when not in need, shall pay a penalty as to why he received and for what purpose; and when he is in tribulation he shall be examined concerning the things that he has done, and shall not depart thence until he has paid the last farthing. For of a truth it has been said on these matters, Let thy almsgiving abide in thy hands until thou knowest to whom thou hast given.

II. But the second commandment of the teaching is this. Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not corrupt youth; thou shalt not commit fornication; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not use soothsaying; thou shalt not practise sorcery; thou shalt not kill a child by abortion, neither shalt thou slay it when born; thou shalt not covet the goods of thy neighbour; thou shalt not commit perjury; thou shalt not bear false witness; thou shalt not speak evil; thou shalt not bear malice; thou shalt not be double-minded or double-tongued, for to be double-tongued is the snare of death. Thy speech shall not be false or empty, but concerned with action. Thou shalt not be covetous, or rapacious, or hypocritical, or malicious, or proud; thou shalt not take up an evil design against thy neighbour; thou shalt not hate any man, but some

thou shalt confute, concerning some thou shalt pray, and some thou shalt love beyond thine own soul.

III. My child, fly from everything that is evil, and from everything that is like to it. Be not wrathful, for wrath leadeth unto slaughter; be not jealous, or contentious, or quarrelsome, for from all these things slaughter ensues. My child, be not lustful, for lust leadeth unto fornication; be not a filthy talker; be not a lifter up of the eye, for from all these things come adulteries. My child, be not an observer of omens, since it leadeth to idolatry, nor a user of spells, nor an astrologer, nor a travelling purifier, nor wish to see these things, for from all these things idolatry ariseth. My child, be not a liar, for lying leadeth unto theft; be not covetous or conceited, for from all these things thefts arise. My child, be not a murmurer, since it leadeth unto blasphemy; be not self-willed or evil-minded, for from all these things blasphemies are produced; but be thou meek, for the meek shall inherit the earth; be thou long-suffering, and compassionate, and harmless, and peaceable, and good, and fearing alway the words that thou hast heard. Thou shalt not exalt thyself, neither shalt thou put boldness into thy soul. Thy soul shall not be joined unto the lofty, but thou shalt walk with the just and humble. Accept the things that happen to thee as good, knowing that without God nothing happens.

IV. My child, thou shalt remember both night and day him that speaketh unto thee the Word of God; thou shalt honour him as thou dost the Lord, for where the

teaching of the Lord is given, there is the Lord; thou shalt seek out day by day the favour of the saints, that thou mayest rest in their words; thou shalt not desire schism, but shalt set at peace them that contend; thou shalt judge righteously; thou shalt not accept the person of any one to convict him of transgression; thou shalt not doubt whether a thing shall be or not. Be not a stretcher out of thy hand to receive, and a drawer of it back in giving. If thou hast, give by means of thy hands a redemption for thy sins. Thou shalt not doubt to give, neither shalt thou murmur when giving; for thou shouldest know who is the fair recompenser of the reward. Thou shalt not turn away from him that is in need, but shalt share with thy brother in all things, and shalt not say that things are thine own; for if ye are partners in what is immortal, how much more in what is mortal? Thou shalt not remove thine heart from thy son or from thy daughter, but from their youth shalt teach them the fear of God. Thou shalt not command with bitterness thy servant or thy handmaid, who hope in the same God as thyself, lest they fear not in consequence the God who is over both; for he cometh not to call with respect of persons, but those whom the Spirit hath prepared. And do ye servants submit yourselves to your masters with reverence and fear, as being the type of God. Thou shalt hate all hypocrisy and everything that is not pleasing to God; thou shalt not abandon the commandments of the Lord, but shalt guard that which thou hast received, neither adding thereto nor taking therefrom; thou shalt confess thy

transgressions in the church, and shalt not come unto prayer with an evil conscience. This is the path of life.

V. But the path of death is this. First of all, it is evil and full of cursing; there are found murders, adulteries, lusts, fornication, thefts, idolatries, soothsaying, sorceries, robberies, false witnessings, hypocrisies, double-mindedness, craft, pride, malice, self-will, covetousness, filthy talking, jealousy, audacity, arrogance; there are they who persecute the good—lovers of a lie, not knowing the reward of righteousness, not cleaving to the good nor to righteous judgment, watching not for the good but for the bad, from whom meekness and patience are afar off, loving things that are vain, following after recompense, having no compassion on the needy, nor labouring for him that is in trouble, not knowing him that made them, murderers of children, corrupters of the image of God, who turn away from him that is in need, who oppress him that is in trouble, unjust judges of the poor, erring in all things. From all these, children, may ye be delivered.

VI. See that no one make thee to err from this path of doctrine, since he who doeth so teacheth thee apart from God. If thou art able to bear the whole yoke of the Lord, thou wilt be perfect; but if thou art not able, what thou art able, that do. But concerning meat, bear that which thou art able to do. But keep with care from things sacrificed to idols, for it is the worship of the infernal deities.

VII. But concerning baptism, thus baptize ye: having first recited all these precepts, baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in running water; but if thou hast not running water, baptize in some other water, and if thou canst not baptize in cold, in warm water; but if thou hast neither, pour water three times on the head, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. But before the baptism, let him who baptizeth and he who is baptized fast previously, and any others who may be able. And thou shalt command him who is baptized to fast one or two days before.

VIII. But as for your fasts, let them not be with the hypocrites, for they fast on the second and fifth days of the week, but do ye fast on the fourth and sixth days. Neither pray ye as the hypocrites, but as the Lord hath commanded in his Gospel so pray ye: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done as in heaven so on earth. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debt, as we also forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil: for thine is the power, and the glory, for ever. Thrice a day pray ye in this fashion.

IX. But concerning the Eucharist, after this fashion give ye thanks. First, concerning the cup. We thank thee, our Father, for the holy vine, David thy Son, which thou hast made known unto us through Jesus Christ thy Son; to thee be the glory for ever. And concerning the broken bread. We thank thee, our

Father, for the life and knowledge which thou hast made known unto us through Jesus thy Son; to thee be the glory for ever. As this broken bread was once scattered on the mountains, and after it had been brought together became one, so may thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth unto thy kingdom; for thine is the glory, and the power, through Jesus Christ, for ever. And let none eat or drink of your Eucharist but such as have been baptized into the name of the Lord, for of a truth the Lord hath said concerning this, Give not that which is holy unto dogs.

X. But after it has been completed, so pray ye. We thank thee, holy Father, for thy holy name, which thou hast caused to dwell in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which thou hast made known unto us through Jesus thy Son; to thee be the glory for ever. Thou, Almighty Master, didst create all things for the sake of thy name, and hast given both meat and drink for men to enjoy, that we might give thanks unto thee, but to us thou hast given spiritual meat and drink, and life everlasting, through thy Son. Above all, we thank thee that thou art able to save; to thee be the glory for ever. Remember, Lord, thy Church, to redeem it from every evil, and to perfect it in thy love, and gather it together from the four winds, even that which has been sanctified for thy kingdom which thou hast prepared for it; for thine is the kingdom and the glory for ever. Let grace come, and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the Son of David. If any one is holy,



let him come (to the Eucharist); if any one is not, let him repent. Maranatha. Amen. But charge the prophets to give thanks, so far as they are willing to do so.

XI. Whosoever, therefore, shall come and teach you all these things aforesaid, him do ye receive; but if the teacher himself turn and teach another doctrine with a view to subvert you, hearken not to him; but if he come to add to your righteousness, and the knowledge of the Lord, receive him as the Lord. But concerning the apostles and prophets, thus do ye according to the doctrine of the Gospel. Let every apostle who cometh unto you be received as the Lord. He will remain one day, and if it be necessary, a second; but if he remain three days, he is a false prophet. And let the apostle when departing take nothing but bread until he arrive at his resting-place; but if he ask for money, he is a false prophet. And ye shall not attempt or dispute with any prophet who speaketh in the spirit; for every sin shall be forgiven, but this sin shall not be forgiven. But not every one who speaketh in the spirit is a prophet, but he is so who hath the disposition of the Lord; by their disposition they therefore shall be known, the false prophet and the prophet. And every prophet who ordereth in the spirit that a table shall be laid, shall not eat of it himself, but if he do otherwise, he is a false prophet; and every prophet who teacheth the truth, if he do not what he teacheth is a false prophet; and every prophet who is approved and true, and ministering in the visible mystery of the Church, but

who teacheth not others to do the things that he doth himself, shall not be judged of you, for with God lieth his judgment, for in this manner also did the ancient prophets. But whoever shall say in the spirit, Give me money, or things of that kind, listen not to him; but if he tell you concerning others that are in need that ye should give unto them, let no one judge him.

XII. Let every one that cometh in the name of the Lord be received, but afterwards ye shall examine him and know his character, for ye have knowledge both of good and evil. If the person who cometh be a wayfarer, assist him so far as ye are able; but he will not remain with you more than two or three days, unless there be a necessity. But if he wish to settle with you, being a craftsman, let him work, and so eat; but if he know not any craft, provide ye according to your own discretion, that a Christian may not live idle among you; but if he be not willing to do so, he is a trafficker in Christ. From such keep aloof.

XIII. But every true prophet who is willing to dwell among you is worthy of his meat, likewise a true teacher is himself worthy of his meat, even as is a labourer. Thou shalt, therefore, take the first-fruits of every produce of the wine-press and threshing-floor, of oxen and sheep, and shalt give it to the prophets, for they are your chief priests; but if ye have not a prophet, give it unto the poor. If thou makest a feast, take and give the first-fruits according to the commandment; in like manner when thou openest a jar of wine or of oil, take the first-fruits and give it to

the prophets; take also the first-fruits of money, of clothes, and of every possession, as it shall seem good unto thee, and give it according to the commandment.

XIV. But on the Lord's day, after that ye have assembled together, break bread and give thanks, having in addition confessed your sins, that your sacrifice may be pure. But let not any one who hath a quarrel with his companion join with you, until they be reconciled, that your sacrifice may not be polluted, for it is that which is spoken of by the Lord. In every place and time offer unto me a pure sacrifice, for I am a great King, saith the Lord, and my name is wonderful among the Gentiles.

XV. Elect, therefore, for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are meek and not covetous, and true and approved, for they perform for you the service of prophets and teachers. Do not, therefore, despise them, for they are those who are honoured among you, together with the prophets and teachers. Rebuke one another, not in wrath, but peaceably, as ye have commandment in the Gospel; and, but let no one speak to any one who walketh disorderly with regard to his neighbour, neither let him be heard by you until he repent. But your prayers and your almsgivings and all your deeds so do, as ye have commandment in the Gospel of our Lord.

Watch concerning your life; let not your lamps be quenched or your loins be loosed, but be ye ready, for ye know not the hour at which our Lord cometh.

But be ye gathered together frequently, seeking what is suitable for your souls; for the whole time of your faith shall profit you not, unless ye be found perfect in the last time. For in the last days false prophets and seducers shall be multiplied, and the sheep shall be turned into wolves, and love shall be turned into hate; and because iniquity aboundeth they shall hate each other, and persecute each other, and deliver each other up; and then shall the Deceiver of the world appear as the Son of God, and shall do signs and wonders, and the earth shall be delivered into his hands; and he shall do unlawful things, such as have never happened since the beginning of the world. Then shall the creation of man come to the fiery trial of proof, and many shall be offended and shall perish; but they who remain in their faith shall be saved by the rock of offence itself. And then shall appear the signs of the truth; first the sign of the appearance in heaven, then the sign of the sound of the trumpet; and thirdly, the resurrection of the dead—not of all, but as it has been said, The Lord shall come and all his saints with him; then shall the world behold the Lord coming on the clouds of heaven.

# Mysticism

By Evelyn Underhill

[1911]

## II. The Awakening of the Self

First in the sequence of the mystic states, we must consider that decisive event, the awakening of the transcendental consciousness.

This awakening, from the psychological point of view, appears to be an intense form of the phenomenon of "conversion"; and closely akin to those deep and permanent conversions of the adult type which some religious psychologists call "sanctification." It is a disturbance of the equilibrium of the self, which results in the shifting of the field of consciousness from lower to higher levels, with a consequent removal of the centre of interest from the subject to an object now brought into view: the necessary beginning of any process of transcendence. It must not, however, be confused or identified with religious conversion as ordinarily understood: the sudden and emotional acceptance of theological beliefs which the self had previously either rejected or treated as conventions dwelling upon the margin of consciousness and having no meaning for her actual life. The mechanical process may be much the same; but the material involved, the results attained, belong to a higher order of reality.

“Conversion,” says Starbuck, in words which are really far more descriptive of mystical awakening than of the revivalistic phenomena encouraged by American Protestantism, “is primarily an unselfing. The first birth of the individual is into his own little world. He is controlled by the deep-seated instincts of self-preservation and self-enlargement—instincts which are, doubtless, a direct inheritance from his brute ancestry. The universe is organized around his own personality as a centre.” Conversion, then, is “the larger world-consciousness now pressing in on the individual consciousness. Often it breaks in suddenly and becomes a great new revelation. This is the first aspect of conversion: the person emerges from a smaller limited world of existence into a larger world of being. His life becomes swallowed up in a larger whole.”

All conversion entails the abrupt or gradual emergence of intuitions from below the threshold, the consequent remaking of the field of consciousness, an alteration in the self’s attitude to the world. “It is,” says Pratt, “a change of taste—the most momentous one that ever occurs in human experience.” But in the mystic this process is raised to the nth degree of intensity, for in him it means the first emergence of that passion for the Absolute which is to constitute his distinctive character: an emergence crucial in its effect on every department of his life. Those to whom it happens, often enough, are already “religious”: sometimes deeply and earnestly so. Rulman Merswin, St. Catherine of Genoa, George Fox, Lucie-Christine—

all these had been bred up in piety, and accepted in its entirety the Christian tradition. They were none the less conscious of an utter change in their world when this opening of the soul's eye took place.

Sometimes the emergence of the mystical consciousness is gradual, unmarked by any definite crisis. The self slides gently, almost imperceptibly, from the old universe to the new. The records of mysticism, however, suggest that this is exceptional: that travail is the normal accompaniment of birth. In another type, of which George Fox is a typical example, there is no conversion in the ordinary sense; but a gradual and increasing lucidity, of which the beginning has hardly been noticed by the self, intermittently accompanies the pain, misery of mind, and inward struggles characteristic of the entrance upon the Way of Purgation. Conversion and purification then go hand in hand, finally shading off into the serenity of the Illuminated State. Fox's "Journal" for the year 1647 contains a vivid account of these "showings" or growing transcendental perceptions of a mind not yet at one with itself, and struggling towards clearness of sight. "Though my exercises and troubles," he says, "were very great, yet were they not so continual but I had some intermissions, and was sometimes brought into such a heavenly joy that I thought I had been in Abraham's bosom. . . . Thus in the deepest miseries, and in the greatest sorrows and temptations that many times p. 178 beset me, the Lord in His mercy did keep me. I found that there were two thirsts in me, the one after

the creatures to get help and strength there; and the other after the Lord, the Creator. . . . It was so with me, that there seemed to be two pleadings in me. . . . One day when I had been walking solitarily abroad and was come home, I was wrapped up in the love of God, so that I could not but admire the greatness of his love. While I was in that condition it was opened unto me by the eternal Light and Power, and I saw clearly therein. . . . But O! then did I see my troubles, trials, and temptations more clearly than ever I had done."

The great oscillations of the typical mystic between joy and pain are here replaced by a number of little ones. The "two thirsts" of the superficial and spiritual consciousness assert themselves by turns. Each step towards the vision of the Real brings with it a reaction. The nascent transcendental powers are easily fatigued, and the pendulum of self takes a shorter swing. "I was swept up to Thee by Thy Beauty, and torn away from Thee by my own weight," says St. Augustine, crystallizing the secret of this experience in an unforgettable phrase.

Commonly, however, if we may judge from those first-hand accounts which we possess, mystic conversion is a single and abrupt experience, sharply marked off from the long, dim struggles which precede and succeed it. It usually involves a sudden and acute realization of a splendour and adorable reality in the world—or sometimes of its obverse, the divine sorrow at the heart of things—never before



perceived. In so far as I am acquainted with the resources of language, there are no words in which this realization can be described. It is of so actual a nature that in comparison the normal world of past perception seems but twilit at the best. Consciousness has suddenly changed its rhythm and a new aspect of the universe rushes in. The teasing mists are swept away, and reveal, if only for an instant, the sharp outline of the Everlasting Hills. "He who knows this will know what I say, and will be convinced that the soul has then another life."

In most cases, the onset of this new consciousness seems to the self so sudden, so clearly imposed from without rather than developed from within, as to have a supernatural character. The typical case is, of course, that of St. Paul: the sudden light, the voice, the ecstasy, the complete alteration of life. We shall see, however, when we come to study the evidence of those mystics who have left a detailed record of their preconverted state, that the apparently abrupt conversion is really, as a rule, the sequel and the result of a long period of restlessness, uncertainty, and mental stress. The deeper mind stirs uneasily in its prison, and its emergence is but the last of many efforts to escape. The temperament of the subject, his surroundings, the vague but persistent apprehensions of a supersensual reality which he could not find yet could not forget; all these have prepared him for it.

When, however, the subconscious intuitions, long ago quickened, are at last brought to birth and the eyes

are opened on new light—and it is significant that an actual sense of blinding radiance is a constant accompaniment of this state of consciousness—the storm and stress, the vague cravings and oscillations of the past life are forgotten. In this abrupt recognition of reality “all things are made new”: from this point the life of the mystic begins. Conversion of this sort has, says De Sanctis, three marked characteristics: a sense of liberation and victory: a conviction of the nearness of God: a sentiment of love towards God. We might describe it as a sudden, intense, and joyous perception of God immanent in the universe; of the divine beauty and unutterable power and splendour of that larger life in which the individual is immersed, and of a new life to be lived by the self in correspondence with this now dominant fact of existence. “Suddenly,” says the French contemplative Lucie-Christine of the beginning of her mystical life, “I saw before my inward eyes these words— *God only* . . . they were at the same time a Light, an Attraction and a Power. A Light which showed me how I could belong completely to God alone in this world, and I saw that hitherto I had not well understood this; an Attraction by which my heart was subdued and delighted; a Power which inspired me with a generous resolution and somehow placed in my hands the means of carrying it out.”

I will here set down for comparison a few instances of such mystical conversion; quoting, where this is available, the actual description left by the subject of his own experience, or in default of it, the earliest

authentic account. In these cases, when grouped together, we shall see certain constant characteristics, from which it may be possible to deduce the psychological law to which they owe their peculiar form.

First in point of time, and perhaps also in importance, amongst those I have chosen, is the case of that great poet and contemplative, that impassioned lover of the Absolute, St. Francis of Assisi. The fact that St. Francis wrote little and lived much, that his actions were of unequalled simplicity and directness, long blinded his admirers to the fact that he is a typical mystic: the only one, perhaps, who forced the most trivial and sordid circumstances of sensual life to become perfect expressions of Reality.

Now the opening of St. Francis's eyes, which took place in A.D. 1206 when he was twenty-four years old, had been preceded by a long, hard struggle between the life of the world and the persistent call of the spirit. His mind, in modern language, had not unified itself. He was a high-spirited boy, full of vitality: a natural artist, with all the fastidiousness which the artistic temperament involves. War and pleasure both attracted him, and upon them, says his legend, he "miserably squandered and wasted his time." Nevertheless, he was vaguely dissatisfied. In the midst of festivities, he would have sudden fits of abstraction: abortive attempts of the growing transcendental consciousness, still imprisoned below the threshold but aware of and in touch with the Real,

to force itself to the surface and seize the reins. "Even in ignorance," says Thomas of Celano again, "he was being led to perfect knowledge." He loved beauty, for he was by nature a poet and a musician, and shrank instinctively from contact with ugliness and disease. But something within ran counter to this temperamental bias, and sometimes conquered it. He would then associate with beggars, tend the leprous, perform impulsive acts of charity and self-humiliation.

When this divided state, described by the legend as "the attempt to flee God's hand," had lasted for some years, it happened one day that he was walking in the country outside the gates of Assisi, and passed the little church of S. Damiano, "the which" (I again quote from Thomas of Celano's "Second Life") "was almost ruinous and forsaken of all men. And, being led by the Spirit, he went in to pray; and he fell down before the Crucifix in devout supplication, and *having been smitten by unwonted visitations, found himself another man than he who had gone in.*"

Here, then, is the first stage of conversion. The struggle between two discrepant ideals of life has attained its term. A sudden and apparently "irrational" impulse to some decisive act reaches the surface-consciousness from the seething deeps. The impulse is followed; and the swift emergence of the transcendental sense results. This "unwonted visitation" effects an abrupt and involuntary alteration in the subject's consciousness: whereby he literally "finds himself another man." He is as one

who has slept and now awakes. The crystallization of this new, at first fluid apprehension of Reality in the form of vision and audition: the pointing of the moral, the direct application of truth to the awakened self, follow. "And whilst he was thus moved, straightway—a thing unheard of for long ages!—the painted image of Christ Crucified spoke to him from out its pictured lips. And, calling him by his name, "Francis," it said, "go, repair My house, the which as thou seest is falling into decay." And Francis trembled, being utterly amazed, and almost as it were carried away by these words. And he prepared to obey, for he was wholly set on the fulfilling of this commandment. But *forasmuch as he felt that the change he had undergone was ineffable*, it becomes us to be silent concerning it. . . ." From this time he "gave untiring toil to the repair of that Church. For though the words which were said to him concerned that divine Church which Christ bought with His own Blood, he would not hasten to such heights, but little by little from things of the flesh would pass to those of the Spirit."

In a moment of time, Francis's whole universe has suffered complete rearrangement. There are no hesitations, no uncertainties. The change, which he cannot describe, he knows to be central for life. Not for a moment does he think of disobeying the imperative voice which speaks to him from a higher plane of reality and demands the sacrifice of his career.

Compare now with the experience of St. Francis that of another great saint and mystic, who combined, as he did, the active with the contemplative life. Catherine of Genoa, who seems to have possessed from childhood a religious nature, was prepared for the remaking of her consciousness by years of loneliness and depression, the result of an unhappy marriage. She, like St. Francis—but in sorrow rather than in joy—had oscillated between the world, which did not soothe her, and religion, which helped her no more. At last, she had sunk into a state of dull wretchedness, a hatred alike of herself and of life.

Her emancipation was equally abrupt. In the year 1474, she being twenty-six years old, "The day after the feast of St. Benedict (at the instance of her sister that was a nun), Catherine went to make her confession to the confessor of that nunnery; but she was not disposed to do it. Then said her sister, 'At least go and recommend yourself to him, because he is a most worthy religious'; and in fact he was a very holy man. And suddenly, as she knelt before him, she received in her heart the wound of the unmeasured Love of God, with so clear a vision of her own misery and her faults, and of the goodness of God, that she almost fell upon the ground. And by these sensations of infinite love, and of the offenses that had been done against this most sweet God, she was so greatly drawn by purifying affection away from the poor things of this world that she was almost beside herself, and for this she cried inwardly with ardent love, 'No more world! no more sin!' And at this point

if she had possessed a thousand worlds, she would have thrown all of them away. . . . And she returned home, kindled and deeply wounded with so great a love of God, the which had been shown her inwardly, with the sight of her own wretchedness, that she seemed beside herself. And she shut herself in a chamber, the most secluded she could find, with burning sighs. And in this moment she was inwardly taught the whole practice of orison: but her tongue could say naught but this—‘O Love, can it be that thou has called me with so great a love, and made me to know in one instant that which worlds cannot express?’” This intuition of the Absolute was followed by an interior vision of Christ bearing the Cross, which further increased her love and self-abasement. “And she cried again, ‘O Love, no more sins! no more sins!’ And her hatred of herself was more than she could endure.”

Of this experience Von Hügel says, “If the tests of reality in such things are their persistence and large and rich spiritual applicability and fruitfulness, then something profoundly real and important took place in the soul of that sad and weary woman of six-and-twenty, within that convent-chapel, at that Annunciation-tide.” It is certain that for St. Catherine, as for St. Francis, an utterly new life did, literally, begin at this point. The centre of interest was shifted and the field of consciousness remade. She “knew in an instant that which words cannot express.” Some veil about her heart was torn away; so abruptly, that it left a wound behind. For the first time she saw and

knew the Love in which life is bathed; and all the energy and passion of a strong nature responded to its call.

The conversion of Madame Guyon to the mystic life, as told by herself in the eighth chapter of Part I. of her *Autobiography*—"How a holy Religious caused her to find God within her heart, with Admirable Results," is its characteristic title—is curiously like a dilute version of this experience of St. Catherine's. It, too, followed upon a period of mental distress; also the result of an uncongenial marriage. But since Madame Guyon's unbalanced, diffuse, and sentimental character entirely lacks the richness and dignity, the repressed ardours and exquisite delicacy of St. Catherine's mind, so, too, her account of her own interior processes is marred by a terrible and unctuous interest in the peculiar graces vouchsafed to her.

Madame Guyon's value to the student of mysticism partly consists in this feeble quality of her surface-intelligence, which hence had little or no modifying or contributory effect upon her spiritual life and makes her an ideal "laboratory specimen" for the religious psychologist. True to her great principle of passivity or "quiet," it lets the uncriticized interior impulses have their way; thus we are able to observe their workings uncomplicated by the presence of a vigorous intellect or a disciplined will. The wind that bloweth where it listeth whistles through her soul: and the response which she makes is that of a



weathercock rather than a windmill. She moves to every current; she often mistakes a draught for the divine breath; she feels her gyrations to be of enormous importance. But in the description of her awakening to the deeper life, even her effusive style acquires a certain dignity. Madame Guyon had from her childhood exhibited an almost tiresome taste for pious observances. At twelve years old she studied St. François de Sales and St. Jeanne Françoise de Chantal; begged her confessor to teach her the art of mental prayer; and when he omitted to do so, tried to teach herself, but without result. She wished at this time to become a nun of the Visitation, as St. Catherine at the same age wanted to be an Augustinian canoness; but as the longings of little girls of twelve for the cloister are seldom taken seriously, we are not surprised to find the refusal of her parents' consent chronicled in the chapter which is headed "*Diverses croix chez M. son père .*" Growing up into an unusually beautiful young woman, she went into society, and for a short time enjoyed life in an almost worldly way. Her marriage with Jacques Guyon, however—a marriage of which she signed the articles without even being told the bridegroom's name—put an end to her gaiety. "The whole town was pleased by this marriage; and in all this rejoicing only I was sad . . . hardly was I married, when the remembrance of my old desire to be a nun overcame me."

Her early married life was excessively unhappy. She was soon driven to look for comfort in the practices of religion. "Made to love much, and finding nothing to

love around her, she gave her love to God," says Guerrier tersely. But she was not satisfied: like most of her fellow-contemplatives, she was already vaguely conscious of something that she missed, some vital power unused, and identified this something with the "orison of quiet," the "practice of the presence of God" which mystically minded friends had described to her. She tried to attain to it deliberately, and naturally failed. "I could not give myself by multiplicity that which Thou Thyself givest, and which is only experienced in simplicity."

When these interior struggles had lasted for nearly two years, and Madame Guyon was nineteen, the long desired, almost despaired of, apprehension came—as it did to St. Catherine—suddenly, magically almost; and under curiously parallel conditions. It was the result of a few words spoken by a Franciscan friar whom a "secret force" acting in her interest had brought into the neighbourhood, and whom she had been advised to consult. He was a recluse, who disliked hearing the confessions of women, and appears to have been far from pleased by her visit; an annoyance which he afterwards attributed to her fashionable appearance, "which filled him with apprehension." "He hardly came forward, and was a long time without speaking to me. I, however, did not fail to speak to him and to tell him in a few words my difficulties on the subject of orison. He at once replied, 'Madame, you are seeking without that which you have within. Accustom yourself to seek God in your own heart, and you will find him.'

Having said this, he left me. The next morning he was greatly astonished when I again visited him and told him the effect which these words had had upon my soul: for, indeed, they were as an arrow, which pierced my heart through and through. I felt in this moment a *profound wound*, which was full of delight and of love—a wound so sweet that I desired that it might never heal. These words had put into my heart that which I sought for so many years, or, rather, they caused me to find that which was there. O, my Lord, you were within my heart, and you asked of me only that I should return within, in order that I might feel your presence. O, Infinite Goodness, you were so near, and I running here and there to seek you, found you not!" She, too, like St. Catherine, learned in this instant the long-sought practice of orison, or contemplation. "From the moment of which I have spoken, my orison was emptied of all form, species, and images; nothing of my orison passed through the mind; but it was an orison of joyous possession in the Will, where the taste for God was so great, pure, and simple that it attracted and absorbed the two other powers of the soul in a profound recollection without action or speech."

Take now the case of a less eminent mystic, who has also left behind him a vivid personal description of his entrance upon the Mystic Way. Rulman Merswin was a wealthy, pious, and respected merchant of Strassburg. In the year 1347, when he was about thirty-six years old, he retired from business in order that he might wholly devote himself to religious

matters. It was the time of that spiritual revival within the Catholic Church in Germany which, largely influenced by the great Rhenish mystics Suso and Tauler, is identified with the "Friends of God"; and Merswin himself was one of Tauler's disciples.

One evening, in the autumn which followed his retirement, "about the time of Martinmas," he was strolling in his garden alone. Meditating as he walked, a picture of the Crucifix suddenly presented itself to his mind. In such an imaginary vision as this there is nothing, of course, that we can call abnormal. The thoughts of a devout Catholic, influenced by Tauler and his school, must often have taken such a direction during his solitary strolls. This time, however, the mental image of the Cross seems to have released subconscious forces which had long been gathering way. Merswin was abruptly filled with a violent hatred of the world and of his own free-will. "Lifting his eyes to heaven he solemnly swore that he would utterly surrender his own will, person, and goods to the service of God."

This act of complete surrender, releasing as it were the earthbound self, was at once followed by the onset of pure mystical perception. "The reply from on high came quickly. A brilliant light shone about him: he heard in his ears a divine voice of adorable sweetness; he felt as if he were lifted from the ground and carried several times completely round his garden." Optical disturbance, auditions, and the sense of levitation, are of course frequent physical

accompaniments of these shiftings of the level of consciousness. There are few cases in which one or other is not present; and in some we find all. Coming to himself after this experience, Merswin's heart was filled by a new consciousness of the Divine; and by a transport of intense love towards God which made him undertake with great energy the acts of mortification which he believed necessary to the purification of his soul. From this time onwards, his mystical consciousness steadily developed. That it was a consciousness wholly different in kind from the sincere piety which had previously caused him to retire from business in order to devote himself to religious truth, is proved by the name of *Conversion* which he applies to the vision of the garden; and by the fact that he dates from this point the beginning of his real life.

The conversion of Merswin's greater contemporary, Suso, seems to have been less abrupt. Of its first stage he speaks vaguely at the beginning of his autobiography, wherein he says that "he began to be converted when in the eighteenth year of his age." He was at this time, as St. Francis had been, restless, dissatisfied; vaguely conscious of something essential to his peace, as yet unfound. His temperament, at once deeply human and ardently spiritual, passionately appreciative of sensuous beauty yet unable to rest in it, had not "unified itself": nor did it do so completely until after a period of purgation which is probably unequalled for its austerity in the history of the mysticism of the West. "He was kept of

God in this, that when he turned to those things that most enticed him he found neither happiness nor peace therein. He was restless, and-it seemed to him that something which was as yet unknown could alone give peace to his heart. And he suffered greatly of this restlessness. . . . God at last delivered him by a complete conversion. His brothers in religion were astonished by so quick a change: for the event took them unawares. Some said of it one thing, and some another: but none could know the reason of his conversion. It was God Who, *by a hidden light*, had caused this return to Himself."

This secret conversion was completed by a more violent uprush of the now awakened and active transcendental powers. Suso, whom one can imagine as a great and highly nervous artist if his genius had not taken the channel of sanctity instead, was subject all his life to visions of peculiar richness and beauty. Often these visions seem to have floated up, as it were, from the subliminal region without disturbing the course of his conscious life; and to be little more than pictorial images of his ardour towards and intuition of, divine realities. The great ecstatic vision—or rather apprehension—with which the series opens, however, is of a very different kind; and represents the characteristic experience of Ecstasy in its fullest form. It is described with a detail and intensity which make it a particularly valuable document of the mystical life. It is doubtful whether Suso ever *saw* more than this: the course of his long

education rather consisted in an adjustment of his nature to the Reality which he then perceived.

“In the first days of his conversion it happened upon the Feast of St. Agnes, when the Convent had breakfasted at midday, that the Servitor went into the choir. He was alone, and he placed himself in the last stall on the prior’s side. And he was in much suffering, for a heavy trouble weighed upon his heart. And being there alone, and devoid of all consolations—no one by his side, no one near him—of a sudden his soul was rapt in his body, or out of his body. Then did he see and hear that which no tongue can express.

“That which the Servitor saw had no form neither any manner of being; yet he had of it a joy such as he might have known in the seeing of the shapes and substances of all joyful things. His heart was hungry, yet satisfied, his soul was full of contentment and joy: his prayers and hopes were all fulfilled. And the Friar could do naught but contemplate this Shining Brightness, and he altogether forgot himself and all other things. Was it day or night? He knew not. It was, as it were, a manifestation of the sweetness of Eternal Life in the sensations of silence and of rest. Then he said, ‘If that which I see and feel be not the Kingdom of Heaven, I know not what it can be: for it is very sure that the endurance of all possible pains were but a poor price to pay for the eternal possession of so great a joy.’”

The physical accompaniments of ecstasy were also present. "This ecstasy lasted from half an hour to an hour, and whether his soul were in the body or out of the body he could not tell. But when he came to his senses it seemed to him that he returned from another world. And so greatly did his body suffer in this short rapture that it seemed to him that none, even in dying, could suffer so greatly in so short a time. The Servitor came to himself moaning, and he fell down upon the ground like a man who swoons. And he cried inwardly, heaving great sighs from the depth of his soul and saying, 'Oh, my God, where was I and where am I?' And again, 'Oh, my heart's joy, never shall my soul forget this hour!' He walked, but it was but his body that walked, as a machine might do. None knew from his demeanour that which was taking place within. But his soul and his spirit were full of marvels; heavenly lightnings passed and repassed in the deeps of his being, and it seemed to him that he walked on air. And all the powers of his soul were full of these heavenly delights. He was like a vase from which one has taken a precious ointment, but in which the perfume long remains."

Finally, the last phrases of the chapter seem to suggest the true position of this exalted pleasure-state as a first link in the long chain of mystical development. "This foretaste of the happiness of heaven," he says, "the which the Servitor enjoyed for many days, excited in him a most lively desire for God."



Mystical activity, then, like all other activities of the self, opens with that sharp stimulation of the will, which can only be obtained through the emotional life.

Suso was a scholar, and an embryo ecclesiastic. During the period which elapsed between his conversion and his description of it, he was a disciple of Meister Eckhart, a student of Dionysius and St. Thomas Aquinas. His writings show familiarity with the categories of mystical theology; and naturally enough this circumstance, and also the fact that they were written for purposes of edification, may have dictated to some extent the language in which his conversion-ecstasy is described. As against this, I will give two first-hand descriptions of mystical conversion in which it is obvious that theological learning plays little or no part. Both written in France within a few years of one another, they represent the impact of Reality on two minds of very different calibre. One is the secret document in which a great genius set down, in words intended only for his own eyes, the record of a two hours' ecstasy. The other is the plain, unvarnished statement of an uneducated man of the peasant class. The first is, of course, the celebrated Memorial, or Amulet, of Pascal; the second is the Relation of Brother Lawrence.

The Memorial of Pascal is a scrap of parchment on which, round a rough drawing of the Flaming Cross, there are written a few strange phrases, abrupt and broken words; all we know about one of the strangest

ecstatic revelations chronicled in the history of the mystic type. After Pascal's death a servant found a copy of this little document, now lost, sewn up in his doublet. He seems always to have worn it upon his person: a perpetual memorial of the supernal experience, the initiation into Reality, which it describes. Though Bremond has shown that the opening of Pascal's spiritual eyes had begun, on his own declaration, eleven months earlier, "d'une manière douce et obligeante," the conversion thus prepared was only made actual by this abrupt illumination; ending a long period of spiritual stress, in which indifference to his ordinary interests was counterbalanced by an utter inability to feel the attractive force of that Divine Reality which his great mind discerned as the only adequate object of desire.

The Memorial opens thus:—

"L'an de grace 1654

lundi, 23 novembre, jour de Saint Clément, pape

et martyr, et autres au martyrologe,

veille de Saint Chrysogone, martyr et autres

depuis environ dix heures et demie du soir jusques

environ minuit et demie,

Feu."

“From half-past ten till half-past twelve, Fire!” That is all, so far as description is concerned; but enough, apparently, to remind the initiate of all that passed. The rest tells us only the passion of joy and conviction which this nameless revelation—this long, blazing vision of Reality—brought in its train. It is but a series of amazed exclamations, crude, breathless words, placed there helter-skelter, the artist in him utterly in abeyance; the names of the overpowering emotions which swept him, one after the other, as the Fire of Love disclosed its secrets, evoked an answering flame of humility and rapture in his soul.

“Dieu d’Abraham, Dieu d’Isaac, Dieu de Jacob, Non des philosophes et des savants. Certitude. Certitude. Sentiment. Joie. Paix”.

“Not the God of philosophers and of scholars!” cries in amazement this great scholar and philosopher abruptly turned from knowledge to love.

“Oubli du monde et de tout hormis Dieu,” he says again, seeing his universe suddenly swept clean of all but this Transcendent Fact. Then, “Le monde ne t’a point connu, *mais je t’ai connu*. Joie! joie joie! pleurs de joie!” Compare with the classic style, the sharp and lucid definition of the “Pensées,” the irony and glitter of the “Provinciales,” these little broken phrases—this child-like stammering speech—in which a supreme master of language has tried to tell his wonder and his delight. I know few things in the history of mysticism at once more convincing, more poignant than this hidden talisman; upon which the brilliant

scholar and stylist, the merciless disputant, has jotted down in hard, crude words, which yet seem charged with passion—the inarticulate language of love—a memorial of the certitude, the peace, the joy, above all, the reiterated, all-surpassing joy, which accompanied his ecstatic apprehension of God.

“Mon Dieu, me quitterez vous?” he says again; the fire apparently beginning to die down, the ecstasy drawing to an end. “Que je n’en sois pas séparé éternellement!” “Are you going to leave me? Oh, let me not be separated from you for ever!—the one unendurable thought which would, said Aquinas, rob the Beatific Vision of its glory, were we not sure that it can never fade. But the rhapsody is over, the vision of the Fire has gone; and the rest of the Memorial clearly contains Pascal’s meditations upon his experience, rather than a transcript of the experience itself. It ends with the watchword of all mysticism, Surrender—“Renonciation, totale et douce” in Pascal’s words—the only way, he thinks, in which he can avoid continued separation from Reality.

Pascal’s vision of Light, Life, and Love was highly ecstatic; an indescribable, incommunicable experience, which can only be suggested by his broken words of certitude and joy. By his simple contemporary, Brother Lawrence, that Transcendent Reality Who “is not the God of philosophers and scholars,” was perceived in a moment of abrupt intuition, peculiarly direct, unecstatic and untheological in type, but absolutely enduring in its

results. Lawrence was an uneducated young man of the peasant class; who first served as a soldier, and afterwards as a footman in a great French family, where he annoyed his masters by breaking everything. When he was between fifty and sixty years of age, he entered the Carmelite Order as a lay brother; and the letters, "spiritual maxims," and conversations belonging to this period of his life were published after his death in 1691. "He told me," says the anonymous reporter of the conversations, supposed to be M. Beaufort, who was about 1660 Grand Vicar to the Cardinal de Noailles, "that God had done him a singular favour in his conversion at the age of eighteen. That in the winter, seeing a tree stripped of its leaves, and considering that within a little time the leaves would be renewed, and after that the flowers and fruit appear, he received a high view of the Providence and Power of God, which has never since been effaced from his soul. That this view had set him perfectly loose from the world and kindled in him such a love for God that he could not tell whether it had increased in above forty years that he had lived since."

Such use of visible nature as the stuff of ontological perceptions, the medium whereby the self reaches out to the Absolute, is not rare in the history of mysticism. The mysterious vitality of trees, the silent magic of the forest, the strange and steady cycle of its life, possess in a peculiar degree this power of unleashing the human soul: are curiously friendly to its cravings, minister to its inarticulate needs. Unsullied by the

corroding touch of consciousness, that life can make a contact with the "great life of the All"; and through its mighty rhythms man can receive a message concerning the true and timeless World of "all that is, and was, and evermore shall be." Plant life of all kinds, indeed, from the "flower in the crannied wall" to the "Woods of Westermain" can easily become, for selves of a certain type, a "mode of the Infinite." So obvious does this appear when we study the history of the mystics, that Steiner has drawn from it the hardly warrantable inference that "plants are just those natural phenomena whose qualities in the higher world are similar to their qualities in the physical world."

Though the conclusion be not convincing, the fact remains. The flowery garment of the world is for some mystics a medium of ineffable perception, a source of exalted joy, the veritable clothing of God. I need hardly add that such a state of things has always been found incredible by common sense. "The tree which moves some to tears of joy," says Blake, who possessed in an eminent degree this form of sacramental perception, "is in the Eyes of others only a green thing that stands in the Way."

Such a perception of the Divine in Nature, of the true and holy meaning of that rich, unresting life in which we are immersed, is really a more usual feature of Illumination than of Conversion. All the most marked examples of it must be referred to that state; and will be discussed when we come to its consideration.

Sometimes, however, as in the case of Brother Lawrence, the first awakening of the self to consciousness of Reality does take this form. The Uncreated Light manifests Itself in and through created things. This characteristically immanent discovery of the Absolute occurs chiefly in two classes: in unlettered men who have lived close to Nature, and to whom her symbols are more familiar than those of the Churches or the schools, and in temperaments of the mixed or mystical type, who are nearer to the poet than to the true contemplative, for whom as a rule the Absolute "hath no image." "It was like entering into another world, a new state of existence," says a witness quoted by Starbuck, speaking of his own conversion. "Natural objects were glorified. My spiritual vision was so clarified that I saw beauty in every material object in the universe. The woods were vocal with heavenly music." "Oh, how I was changed! Everything became new. My horses and hogs and everybody became changed!" exclaims with naive astonishment another in the same collection. "When I went in the morning into the fields to work," says a third, "the glory of God appeared in all His visible creation. I well remember we reaped oats, and how every straw and head of the oats seemed, as it were, arrayed in a kind of rainbow glory, or to glow, if I may so express it, in the glory of God."

Amongst modern men, Walt Whitman possessed in a supreme degree the permanent sense of this glory, the "light rare, untellable, lighting the very light." But

evidences of its existence, and the sporadic power of apprehending it, are scattered up and down the literature of the world. Its discovery constitutes the awakening of the mystical consciousness in respect of the World of Becoming: a sharp and sudden break with the old and obvious way of seeing things. The human cinematograph has somehow changed its rhythm, and begins to register new and more real aspects of the external world. With this, the self's first escape from the limitations of its conventional universe, it receives an immense assurance of a great and veritable life surrounding, sustaining, explaining its own. Thus Richard Jefferies says, of the same age as that at which Suso and Brother Lawrence awoke to sudden consciousness of Reality, "I was not more than eighteen when an inner and esoteric meaning began to come to me from all the visible universe." "I now became lost, and absorbed into the being or existence of the universe . . . and losing thus my separateness of being, came to seem like a part of the whole." "I feel on the margin of a life unknown, very near, almost touching it—on the verge of powers which, if I could grasp, would give men an immense breadth of existence."

What was this "life unknown" but the Life known to the great mystics, which Richard Jefferies apprehended in these moments of insight, yet somehow contrived to miss?

Such participation in the deep realities of the World of Becoming, the boundless existence of a divine



whole—which a modern psychologist has labelled and described as “Cosmic Consciousness” — whilst it is not the final object of the mystic’s journey, is a constant feature of it. It may represent one-half of his characteristic consciousness: an entrance into communion with the second of the Triune Powers of God, the Word which “is through all things everlastingly.” Jefferies stood, as so many mystically minded men have done, upon the verge of such a transcendental life. The “heavenly door,” as Rolle calls it, was ajar but not pushed wide. He peeped through it to the greater world beyond; but, unable to escape from the bonds of his selfhood, he did not pass through to live upon the independent spiritual plane.

Rolle, Jefferies’s fellow countryman, and his predecessor by close upon six hundred years in the ecstatic love and understanding of natural things, shall be our last example of the mystical awakening. He, like his spiritual brother St. Francis, and other typical cases, had passed through a preliminary period of struggle and oscillation between worldly life and a vague but growing spirituality: between the superficial and the deeper self. “My youth was fond, my childhood vain, my young age unclean,” but “when I should flourish unhappily, and youth of wakeful age was now come, the grace of my Maker was near, the which lust of temporal shape restrained, and unto ghostly supplications turned my desires, and the soul, from low things lifted, to heaven has borne.”

The real "life-changing," however, was sharply and characteristically marked off from this preparatory state. Rolle associates it with the state which he calls "Heat": the form in which his ardour of soul was translated to the surface consciousness. "Heat soothly I call when the mind truly is kindled in Love Everlasting, and the heart on the same manner to burn not hopefully but verily is felt. The heart truly turned into fire, gives feeling of burning love." This burning heat is not merely a mental experience. In it we seem to have an unusual but not unique form of psychophysical parallelism: a bodily expression of the psychic travail and distress accompanying the "New Birth." "More have I marvelled than I show, forsooth," he says in his prologue, "when I first felt my heart wax warm, and truly, *not imaginingly, but as it were with a sensible fire*, burned. I was forsooth marvelled, as this burning burst up in my soul, and of an unwonted solace; for in my ignorance of such healing abundance, oft have I groped my breast, seeing whether this burning were of any bodily cause outwardly. But when I knew that only it was kindled of ghostly cause inwardly, and this burning was naught of fleshly love or desire, in this I conceived it was the gift of my Maker." Further on, he gives another and more detailed account. "From the beginning, forsooth, of my life-changing and of my mind, to the opening of the heavenly door which Thy Face showed, that the heart might behold heavenly things and see by what way its Love it might seek and busily desire, three years are run except three months or four. The door, forsooth, biding open, a year near-

by I passed unto the time in which the heat of Love Everlasting was verily felt in heart. I sat forsooth in a chapel and whilst with sweetness of prayer and meditation greatly I was delighted, suddenly in me I felt a merry heat and unknown. But at first I wondered, doubting of whom it should be; but a long time I am assured that not of the Creature but of my Maker it was, for more hot and gladder I found it."

To this we must add a passage which I cannot but think one of the most beautiful expressions of spiritual joy to be found in mystical literature. Based though it certainly is upon a passage in St. Augustine—for the nightingale is not a Yorkshire bird—its sketch of the ideal mystic life, to the cultivation of which he then set himself, reveals in a few lines the most charming aspect of Rolle's spirituality, its poetic fervour, its capacity for ardent love.

"In the beginning truly of my conversion and singular purpose, I thought I would be like the little bird that for love of her lover longs, but in her longing she is gladdened when he comes that she loves. And joying she sings, and singing she longs, but in sweetness and heat. It is said the nightingale to song and melody all night is given, that she may please him to whom she is joined. How muckle more with greatest sweetness to Christ my Jesu should I sing, that is spouse of my soul by all this present life, that is night in regard of clearness to come."

Glancing back at the few cases here brought together, we can see in them, I think, certain similarities and diversities which are often of great psychological interest and importance: and have their influence upon the subsequent development of the mystic life. We see in particular at this point—before purification, or the remaking of character, begins—the reaction of the natural self, its heart and its mind, upon that uprush of new truth which operates “mystical conversion.” This reaction is highly significant, and gives us a clue not only to the future development of the mystic, but to the general nature of man’s spiritual consciousness.

We have said that this consciousness in its full development seems to be extended not in one but in two directions. These directions, these two fundamental ways of apprehending Reality may be called the eternal and temporal, transcendent and immanent, absolute and dynamic aspects of Truth. They comprise the twofold knowledge of a God Who is both Being and Becoming near and far: pairs of opposites which the developed mystical experience will carry up into a higher synthesis. But the first awakening of the mystic sense, the first breaking in of the suprasensible upon the soul, commonly involves the emergence of one only of these complementary forms of perception. One side always wakes first: the incoming message always choosing the path of least resistance. Hence mystical conversion tends to belong to one of two distinctive types: tends also, as regards its expression, to follow that temperamental

inclination to objectivize Reality as a Place, a Person, or a State which we found to govern the symbolic systems of the mystics.

There is first, then, the apprehension of a splendour without: an expansive, formless, ineffable vision, a snatching up of the self, as it were, from knowledge of this world to some vague yet veritable knowledge of the next. The veil parts, and the Godhead is perceived as transcendent to, yet immanent in, the created universe. Not the personal touch of love transfiguring the soul, but the impersonal glory of a transfigured world, is the dominant note of this experience: and the reaction of the self takes the form of awe and rapture rather than of intimate affection. Of such a kind was the conversion of Suso, and in a less degree of Brother Lawrence. Of this kind also were the Light which Rulman Merswin saw, and the mystical perception of the Being of the universe reported by Richard Jefferies and countless others.

This experience, if it is to be complete, if it is to involve the definite emergence of the self from "the prison of I-hood," its setting out upon the Mystic Way, requires an act of concentration on the self's part as the complement of its initial act of expansion. It must pass beyond the stage of metaphysical rapture or fluid splendour, and crystallize into a willed response to the Reality perceived; a definite and personal relation must be set up between the self and the Absolute Life. To be a spectator of Reality is not enough. The awakened subject is not merely to

perceive transcendent life, but to participate therein; and for this, a drastic and costly life-changing is required. In Jefferies's case this crystallization, this heroic effort towards participation did not take place, and he never therefore laid hold of "the glory that has been revealed." In Suso's it did, "exciting in him a most lively desire for God."

In most cases this crystallization, the personal and imperative concept which the mind constructs from the general and ineffable intuition of Reality, assumes a theological character. Often it presents itself to the consciousness in the form of visions or voices: objective, as the Crucifix which spoke to St. Francis, or mental, as the visions of the Cross experienced by Rulman Merswin and St. Catherine of Genoa. Nearly always, this concept, this intimate realization of the divine, has reference to the love and sorrow at the heart of things, the discord between Perfect Love and an imperfect world; whereas the complementary vision of Transcendence strikes a note of rapturous joy. "The beatings of the Heart of God sounded like so many invitations which thus spake: Come and do penance, come and be reconciled, come and be consoled, come and be blessed; come, My love, and receive all that the Beloved can give to His beloved. . . . Come, My bride, and enjoy My Godhead."

It is to this personal touch, to the individual appeal of an immediate Presence, not to the great light and the Beatific Vision, that the awakened self makes its most ardent, most heroic response. Not because he was

rapt from himself, but because the figure on the Cross called him by name, saying, "Repair My Church" did St. Francis, with that simplicity, that disregard of worldly values which constituted his strength, accept the message in a literal sense and set himself instantly to the work demanded; bringing stones, and, in defiance alike of comfort and convention, building up with his own hands the crumbling walls.

In many conversions to the mystic life, the revelation of an external splendour, the shining vision of the transcendent spiritual world, is wholly absent. The self awakes to that which is within, rather than to that which is without: to the immanent not the transcendent God, to the personal not the cosmic relation. Where those who look out receive the revelation of Divine Beauty, those who look in receive rather the wound of Divine Love: another aspect of the "triple star." Emotional mystics such as Richard Rolle and Madame Guyon give us this experience in an extreme form. We find in St. Catherine of Genoa a nobler example of the same type of response. That inward revelation in its anguish and abruptness, its rending apart of the hard tissues of I-hood and vivid disclosures of the poverty of the finite self, seemed, says the legend of St. Catherine "the wound of Unmeasured Love," an image in which we seem to hear the very accents of the saint. "A wound full of delight," says the effusive Madame Guyon, "I wished that it might never heal." Rolle calls this piercing rapture a great heat: the heat which is to light the Fire of Love. "As it were if the finger were put in fire, it

should be clad with feeling of burning so the soul with love (as aforesaid) set afire, truly feels most very heat."

Love, passionate and all-dominant, here takes the place of that joyous awe which we noticed as the characteristic reaction upon reality in conversions of the Transcendent type. In the deep and strong temperaments of the great mystics this love passes quickly – sometimes instantly – from the emotional to the volitional stage. Their response to the voice of the Absolute is not merely an effusion of sentiment, but an act of will: an act often of so deep and comprehensive a kind as to involve the complete change of the outward no less than of the inward life. "Divine love," says Dionysius "draws those whom it seizes beyond themselves: and this so greatly that they belong no longer to themselves but wholly to the Object loved."

Merswin's oath of self-surrender: St. Catherine of Genoa's passionate and decisive "No more world! no more sins!": St. Francis's naive and instant devotion to church-restoration in its most literal sense: these things are earnest of the reality of the change. They represent – symbolize as well as they can upon the sensual plane – the spontaneous response of the living organism to a fresh external stimulus: its first effort of adjustment to the new conditions which that stimulus represents. They complete the process of conversion; which is not one-sided, not merely an infusion into the surface-consciousness of new truth,



but rather the beginning of a life-process, a breaking down of the old and building up of the new. A never to be ended give-and-take is set up between the individual and the Absolute. The Spirit of Life has been born: and the first word it learns to say is *Abba*, Father. It aspires to its origin, to Life in its most intense manifestation: hence all its instincts urge it to that activity which it feels to be inseparable from life. It knows itself a member of that mighty family in which the stars are numbered: the family of the sons of God, who, free and creative, sharing the rapture of a living, striving Cosmos, "shout for joy."

So, even in its very beginning, we see how active, how profoundly organic, how deeply and widely alive is the true contemplative life; how truly on the transcendent as on the phenomenal plane, the law of living things is action and reaction, force and energy. The awakening of the self is to a new and more active plane of being, new and more personal relations with Reality; hence to a new and more real work which it must do.

### **III. The Purification of the Self**

Here, then, stands the newly awakened self: aware, for the first time, of reality, responding to that reality by deep movements of love and of awe. She sees herself, however, not merely to be thrust into a new world, but set at the beginning of a new road. Activity is now to be her watchword, pilgrimage the business of her life. "That a quest there is, and an end, is the single secret spoken." Under one symbol or another,

the need of that long slow process of transcendence, of character building, whereby she is to attain freedom, become capable of living upon high levels of reality, is present in her consciousness. Those in whom this growth is not set going are no mystics, in the exact sense in which that word is here used; however great their temporary illumination may have been.

What must be the first step of the self upon this road to perfect union with the Absolute? Clearly, a getting rid of all those elements of normal experience which are not in harmony with reality: of illusion, evil, imperfection of every kind. By false desires and false thoughts man has built up for himself a false universe: as a mollusk by the deliberate and persistent absorption of lime and rejection of all else, can build up for itself a hard shell which shuts it from the external world, and only represents in a distorted and unrecognisable form the ocean from which it was obtained. This hard and wholly unnutritious shell, this one-sided secretion of the surface-consciousness, makes as it were a little cave of illusion for each separate soul. A literal and deliberate getting out of the cave must be for every mystic, as it was for Plato's prisoners, the first step in the individual hunt for reality.

In the plain language of old-fashioned theology "man's sin is stamped upon man's universe." We see a sham world because we live a sham life. We do not know ourselves; hence do not know the true character

of our senses and instincts; hence attribute wrong values to their suggestions and declarations concerning our relation to the external world. That world, which we have distorted by identifying it with our own self-regarding arrangements of its elements, has got to reassume for us the character of Reality, of God. In the purified sight of the great mystics it did reassume this character: their shells were opened wide, they knew the tides of the Eternal Sea. This lucid apprehension of the True is what we mean when we speak of the Illumination which results from a faithful acceptance of the trials of the Purgative Way.

That which we call the "natural" self as it exists in the "natural" world—the "old Adam" of St. Paul—is wholly incapable of supersensual adventure. All its activities are grouped about a centre of consciousness whose correspondences are with the material world. In the moment of its awakening, it is abruptly made aware of this disability. It knows itself finite. It now aspires to the infinite. It is encased in the hard crust of individuality: it aspires to union with a larger self. It is fettered: it longs for freedom. Its every sense is attuned to illusion: it craves for harmony with the Absolute Truth. "God is the only Reality," says Patmore, "and we are real only as far as we are in His order and He is in us." Whatever form, then, the mystical adventure may take it, must begin with a change in the attitude of the subject; a change which will introduce it into the order of Reality, and enable it to set up permanent relations with an Object which

is not normally part of its universe. Therefore, though the end of mysticism is not adequately defined as goodness, it entails the acquirement of goodness. The virtues are the “ornaments of the spiritual marriage” because that marriage is union with the Good no less than with the Beautiful and the True.

Primarily, then, the self must be purged of all that stands between it and goodness: putting on the character of reality instead of the character of illusion or “sin.” It longs ardently to do this from the first moment in which it sees itself in the all-revealing radiance of the Uncreated Light. “When love openeth the inner eyes of the soul for to see this truth,” says Hilton, “with other circumstances that come withal then beginneth the soul for sooth to be vastly meek. For then by the sight of God it feeleth and seeth itself as it is, and then doth the soul forsake the beholding and leaning to itself.”

So, with Dante, the first terrace of the Mount of Purgatory is devoted to the cleansing of pride and the production of humility: the inevitable—one might almost say mechanical—result of a vision, however fleeting, of Reality, and an undistorted sight of the earthbound self. All its life that self has been measuring its candlelight by other candles. Now for the first time it is out in the open air and sees the sun. “This is the way,” said the voice of God to St. Catherine of Siena in ecstasy. “If thou wilt arrive at a perfect knowledge and enjoyment of Me, the Eternal Truth, thou shouldst never go outside the knowledge

of thyself; and by humbling thyself in the valley of humility thou wilt know Me and thyself, from which knowledge thou wilt draw all that is necessary. . . . In self knowledge, then, thou wilt humble thyself; seeing that, in thyself, thou dost not even exist."

The first thing that the self observes, when it turns back upon itself in that awful moment of lucidity—enters, as St. Catherine says, into "the cell of self-knowledge,"—is the horrible contrast between its clouded contours and the pure sharp radiance of the Real; between its muddled faulty life, its perverse self-centred drifting, and the clear onward sweep of that Becoming in which it is immersed. It is then that the outlook of rapture and awe receives the countersign of repentance. The harbinger of that new self which must be born appears under the aspect of a desire: a passionate longing to escape from the suddenly perceived hatefulness of selfhood, and to conform to Reality, the Perfect which it has seen under its aspect of Goodness, of Beauty, or of Love—to be worthy of it, in fact to be *real*. "This showing," says Gerlac Petersen of that experience, "is so vehement and so strong that the whole of the interior man, not only of his heart but of his body, is marvellously moved and shaken, and faints within itself, unable to endure it. And by this means, his interior aspect is made clear without any cloud, and conformable in its own measure to Him whom he seeks."

The lives of the mystics abound in instances of the "vehemence of this showing": of the deep-seated sense of necessity which urges the newly awakened self to a life of discomfort and conflict, often to intense poverty and pain, as the only way of replacing false experience by true. Here the transcendental consciousness, exalted by a clear intuition of its goal, and not merely "counting" but *perceiving* the world to be obviously well lost for such a prize, takes the reins. It forces on the unwilling surface mind a sharp vision of its own disabilities, its ugly and imperfect life; and the thirst for Perfection which is closely bound up with the mystic temperament makes instant response. "No more sins!" was the first cry of St. Catherine of Genoa in that crucial hour in which she saw by the light of love her own self-centred and distorted past. She entered forthwith upon the Purgative Way, in which for four years she suffered under a profound sense of imperfection, endured fasting, solitude and mortification; and imposed upon herself the most repulsive duties in her efforts towards that self-conquest which should make her "conformable in her own measure" to the dictates of that Pure Love which was the aspect of reality that she had seen. It is the inner conviction that this conformity—this transcendence of the unreal—is possible and indeed normal which upholds the mystic during the terrible years of Purgation: so that "not only without heaviness, but with a joy unmeasured he casts back all thing that may him let."

To the true lover of the Absolute, Purgation no less than Illumination is a privilege, a dreadful joy. It is an earnest of increasing life. "Let me suffer or die!" said St. Teresa: a strange alternative in the ears of common sense, but a forced option in the spiritual sphere. However harsh its form, however painful the activities to which it spurs him, the mystic recognizes in this breakup of his old universe an essential part of the Great Work: and the act in which he turns to it is an act of loving desire, no less than an act of will. "Burning of love into a soul truly taken all vices purgeth: . . . for whilst the true lover with strong and fervent desire into God is borne, all things him displease that from the sight of God withdrawn." His eyes once opened, he is eager for that costly ordering of his disordered loves which alone can establish his correspondences with Transcendental Life. "Teach me, my only joy," cries Suso, "the way in which I may bear upon my body the marks of Thy Love." "Come, my soul, depart from outward things and gather thyself together into a true interior silence, that thou mayst set out with all thy courage and bury and lose thyself in the desert of a deep contrition."

It is in this torment of contrition, this acute consciousness of unworthiness, that we have the first swing back of the oscillating self from the initial state of mystic pleasure to the complementary state of pain. It is, so to speak, on its transcendental side, the reflex action which follows the first touch of God. Thus, we read that Rulman Merswin, "swept away by the transports of Divine Love," did not surrender himself

to the passive enjoyment of this first taste of Absolute Being, but was impelled by it to diligent and instant self-criticism. He was "seized with a hatred of his body, and inflicted on himself such hard mortifications that he fell ill." It is useless for lovers of healthy-mindedness to resent this and similar examples of self-examination and penance: to label them morbid or mediaeval. The fact remains that only such bitter knowledge of wrongness of relation, seen by the light of ardent love, can spur the will of man to the hard task of readjustment.

"I saw full surely," says Julian of Norwich, "that it behoveth needs to be that we should be in longing and in penance, until the time that we be led so deep into God that we verily and truly know our own soul."

Dante's whole journey up the Mount of Purgation is the dramatic presentation of this one truth. So, too, the celebrated description of Purgatory attributed to St. Catherine of Genoa is obviously founded upon its author's inward experience of this Purgative Way. In it, she applies to the souls of the dead her personal consciousness of the necessity of purification; its place in the organic process of spiritual growth. It is, as she acknowledges at the beginning, the projection of her own psychological adventures upon the background of the spiritual world: its substance being simply the repetition after death of that eager and heroic acceptance of suffering, those drastic acts of purification, which she has herself been compelled to



undertake under the whip of the same psychic necessity—that of removing the rust of illusion, cleansing the mirror in order that it may receive the divine light. “It is,” she says, “as with a covered object, the object cannot respond to the rays of the sun, not because the sun ceases to shine—for it shines without intermission—but because the covering intervenes. Let the covering be destroyed, and again the object will be exposed to the sun, and will answer to the rays which beat against it in proportion as the work of destruction advances. Thus the souls are covered by a rust—that is, by sin—which is gradually consumed away by the fire of purgatory. The more it is consumed, the more they respond to God their true Sun. Their happiness increases as the rust falls off and lays them open to the divine ray . . . the instinctive tendency to seek happiness in God develops itself, and goes on increasing through the fire of love which draws it to its end with such impetuosity and vehemence that any obstacle seems intolerable; and the more clear its vision, the more extreme its pain.”

“Mostratene la via di gire al monte!” cry the souls of the newly-dead in Dante’s vision, pushed by that “instinctive tendency” towards the purifying flames. Such a tendency, such a passionate desire, the aspiring self must have. No cool, well-balanced knowledge of the need of new adjustments will avail to set it on the Purgative Way. This is a heroic act, and demands heroic passions in the soul.

“In order to overcome our desires,” says St. John of the Cross, who is the classic authority upon this portion of the mystic quest, “and to renounce all those things, our love and inclination for which are wont so to inflame the will that it delights therein, we require a more ardent fire and a nobler love—that of the Bridegroom. Finding her delight and strength in Him, the soul gains the vigour and confidence which enable her easily to abandon all other affections. It was necessary, in her struggle with the attractive force of her sensual desires, not only to have this love for the Bridegroom, but also to be filled with a burning fervour, full of anguish . . . if our spiritual nature were not on fire with other and nobler passions we should never cast off the yoke of the senses, nor be able to enter on their night, neither should we have the courage to remain in the darkness of all things, and in denial of every desire.”

“We must be filled with a burning fervour full of anguish.” Only this deep and ardent passion for a perceived Object of Love can persuade the mystic to those unnatural acts of abnegation by which he kills his lesser love of the world of sense, frees himself from the “remora of desire,” unifies all his energies about the new and higher centre of his life. His business, I have said, is transcendence: a mounting up, an attainment of a higher order of reality. Once his eyes have been opened on Eternity, his instinct for the Absolute roused from its sleep, he sees union with that Reality as his duty no less than his joy: sees too,

that this union can only be consummated on a plane where illusion and selfhood have no place.

The inward voice says to him perpetually, at the least seasonable moments, "Dimitte omnia transitoria, quaere aeterna." Hence the purgation of the senses, and of the character which they have helped to build is always placed first in order in the Mystic Way; though sporadic flashes of illumination and ecstasy may, and often do, precede and accompany it. Since spiritual no less than physical existence, as we know it, is an endless Becoming, it too has no end. In a sense the whole of the mystical experience in this life consists in a series of purifications, whereby the Finite slowly approaches the nature of its Infinite Source: climbing up the cleansing mountain pool by pool, like the industrious fish in Rulman Merswin's vision, until it reaches its Origin. The greatest of the contemplative saints, far from leaving purgation behind them in their progress, were increasingly aware of their own inadequateness, the nearer they approached to the unitive state: for the true lover of the Absolute, like every other lover, is alternately abased and exalted by his unworthiness and his good fortune. There are moments of high rapture when he knows only that the banner over him is Love: but there are others in which he remains bitterly conscious that in spite of his uttermost surrender there is within him an ineradicable residuum of selfhood, which "stains the white radiance of eternity."

In this sense, then, purification is a perpetual process. That which mystical writers mean, however, when they speak of the Way of Purgation, is rather the slow and painful completion of Conversion. It is the drastic turning of the self from the unreal to the real life: a setting of her house in order, an orientation of the mind to Truth. Its business is the getting rid, first of self-love; and secondly of all those foolish interests in which the surface-consciousness is steeped.

“The essence of purgation,” says Richard of St. Victor, “is self-simplification.” Nothing can happen until this has proceeded a certain distance: till the involved interests and tangled motives of the self are simplified, and the false complications of temporal life are recognized and cast away.

“No one,” says another authority in this matter, “can be enlightened unless he be first cleansed or purified and stripped.” Purgation, which is the remaking of character in conformity with perceived reality, consists in these two essential acts: the cleansing of that which is to remain, the stripping of that which is to be done away. It may best be studied, therefore, in two parts: and I think that it will be in the reader’s interest if we reverse the order which the “*Theologia Germanica*” adopts, and first consider Negative Purification, or self-stripping, and next Positive Purification, or character-adjustment. These, then, are the branches into which this subject will here be split. (1) The Negative aspect, the stripping or purging away of those superfluous, unreal, and harmful

things which dissipate the precious energies of the self. This is the business of Poverty, or *Detachment*. (2) The Positive aspect: a raising to their highest term, their purest state, of all that remains—the permanent elements of character. This is brought about by *Mortification*, the gymnastic of the soul: a deliberate recourse to painful experiences and difficult tasks.

### I. Detachment

Apart from the plain necessity of casting out imperfection and sin, what is the type of “good character” which will best serve the self in its journey towards union with the Absolute?

The mystics of all ages and all faiths agree in their answer. Those three virtues which the instinct of the Catholic Church fixed upon as the necessities of the cloistered life—the great Evangelical counsel of voluntary Poverty with its departments, Chastity, the poverty of the senses, and Obedience, the poverty of the will—are also, when raised to their highest term and transmuted by the Fire of Love, the essential virtues of the mystical quest.

By *Poverty* the mystic means an utter self-stripping, the casting off of immaterial as well as material wealth, a complete detachment from all finite things. By *Chastity* he means an extreme and limpid purity of soul, cleansed from personal desire and virgin to all but God: by *Obedience*, that abnegation of selfhood, that mortification of the will, which results in a complete self-abandonment, a “holy indifference” to

the accidents of life. These three aspects of perfection are really one: linked together as irrevocably as the three aspects of the self. Their common characteristic is this: they tend to make the subject regard itself, not as an isolated and interesting individual, possessing desires and rights, but as a scrap of the Cosmos, an ordinary bit of the Universal Life, only important as a part of the All, an expression of the Will Divine. Detachment and purity go hand in hand, for purity is but detachment of the heart; and where these are present they bring with them that humble spirit of obedience which expresses detachment of will. We may therefore treat them as three manifestations of one thing: which thing is Inward Poverty. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven," is the motto of all pilgrims on this road.

"God is pure Good in Himself," says Eckhart, "therefore will He dwell nowhere but in a pure soul. There He can pour Himself out: into that He can wholly flow. What is Purity? It is that a man should have turned himself away from all creatures and have set his heart so entirely on the Pure Good that no creature is to him a comfort, that he has no desire for aught creaturely, save so far as he may apprehend therein the Pure Good, which is God. And as little as the bright eye can endure aught foreign in it, so little can the pure soul bear anything in it, any stain on it, that comes between it and God. To it all creatures are pure to enjoy; for it enjoyeth all creatures in God, and God in all creatures."

“To it all creatures are pure to enjoy!” This is hardly the popular concept of the mystic; which credits him, in the teeth of such examples as St. Francis, St. Mechthild of Magdeburg, Rolle, Suso, and countless others, with a hearty dread of natural things. Too many examples of an exaggerated asceticism—such as the unfortunate story told of the holy Curé d’Ars, who refused to smell a rose for fear of sin—have supported in this respect the vulgar belief; for it is generally forgotten that though most mystics have practised asceticism as a means to an end, all ascetics are not mystics. Whatever may be the case with other deniers of the senses, it is true that the soul of the great mystic, dwelling on high levels of reality, his eyes set on the Transcendental World, is capable of combining with the perfection of detachment that intense and innocent joy in natural things, as veils and vessels of the divine, which results from seeing “all creatures in God and God in all creatures.” “Whoso knows and loves the nobleness of My Freedom,” said the voice of God to Mechthild of Magdeburg, “cannot bear to love Me alone, he must love also Me in the creatures.” That all-embracing love is characteristic of the illumination which results from a faithful endurance of the Purgative Way; for the corollary of “blessed are the pure in heart” is not merely a poetic statement. The annals of mysticism prove it to be a psychological law.

How then is this contradiction to be resolved: that the mystic who has declared the fundamental necessity of “leaving all creatures” yet finds them pure to enjoy?

The answer to the riddle lies in the ancient paradox of Poverty: that we only enjoy true liberty in respect of such things as we neither possess nor desire. "That thou mayest have pleasure in everything, seek pleasure in nothing. That thou mayest know everything, seek to know nothing. That thou mayest possess all things, seek to possess nothing. . . . In detachment the spirit finds quiet and repose, for coveting nothing, nothing wearies it by elation, and nothing oppresses it by dejection, because it stands in the centre of its own humility. For as soon as it covets anything, it is immediately fatigued thereby."

It is not love but lust—the possessive case, the very food of selfhood—which poisons the relation between the self and the external world and "immediately fatigues" the soul. Divide the world into "mine" and "not mine," and unreal standards are set up, claims and cravings begin to fret the mind. We are the slaves of our own property. We drag with us not a treasure, but a chain. "Behold," says the "Theologia Germanica," "on this sort must we cast all things from us and strip ourselves of them: we must refrain from claiming anything for our own. When we do this, we shall have the best, fullest, clearest, and noblest knowledge that a man can have, and also the noblest and purest love and desire." "Some there are," says Plotinus, "that for all their effort have not attained the Vision. . . . They have received the authentic Light, all their soul has gleamed as they have drawn near, but they come with a load on their shoulders which holds them back from the place of



Vision. They have not ascended in the pure integrity of their being, but are burdened with that which keeps them apart. They are not yet made one within." Accept Poverty, however, demolish ownership, the verb "to have" in every mood and tense, and this downward drag is at an end. At once the Cosmos belongs to you, and you to it. You escape the heresy of separateness, are "made one," and merged in "the greater life of the All." Then, a free spirit in a free world, the self moves upon its true orbit; undistracted by the largely self-imposed needs and demands of ordinary earthly existence.

This was the truth which St. Francis of Assisi grasped, and applied with the energy of a reformer and the delicate originality of a poet to every circumstance of the inner and the outer life. This noble liberty it is which is extolled by his spiritual descendant, Jacopone da Todi, in one of his most magnificent odes:—

"Povertá, alto sapere,  
 a nulla cosa sojacere,  
 en desprezo possedere  
 tutte le cose create. . . .  
 Dio non alberga en core stretto,  
 tant'è grande quant' hai affetto,  
 povertate ha si gran petto  
 che ci alberga deitate. . . .  
 Povertate è nulla avere  
 e nulla cosa poi volere;

ad omne cosa possedere  
en spirito de libertate."

"My little sisters the birds," said St. Francis, greatest adept of that high wisdom, "Brother Sun, Sister Water, Mother Earth." Not my servants, but my kindred and fellow-citizens; who may safely be loved so long as they are not desired. So, in almost identical terms, the dying Hindu ascetic: —

"Oh Mother Earth, Father Sky,  
Brother Wind, Friend Light, Sweetheart Water,  
Here take my last salutation with folded hands!  
For to-day I am melting away into the Supreme  
Because my heart became pure,  
And all delusion vanished,  
Through the power of your good company."

It is the business of Lady Poverty to confer on her lovers this freedom of the Universe, to eradicate delusion, cut out the spreading growth of claimfulness, purify the heart, and initiate them into the "great life of the All." Well might St. Francis desire marriage with that enchantress, who gives back ten-fold all that she takes away. "Holy poverty," he said, "is a treasure so high excelling and so divine that we be not worthy to lay it up in our vile vessels; since this is that celestial virtue whereby all earthly things and fleeting are trodden underfoot, and whereby all hindrances are lifted from the soul, so that freely she may join herself to God Eternal."

Poverty, then, prepares man's spirit for that union with God to which it aspires. She strips off the clothing which he so often mistakes for himself, transvaluates all his values, and shows him things as they are. "There are," says Eckhart, "four ascending degrees of such spiritual poverty. 1. The soul's contempt of all things that are not God. 2. Contempt of herself and her own works. 3. Utter self-abandonment. 4. Self-loss in the incomprehensible Being of God." So, in the "Sacrum Commercium," when the friars, climbing "the steep of the hill," found Lady Poverty at the summit "enthroned only in her nakedness," she "preventing them with the blessings of sweetness," said, "Why hasten ye so from the vale of tears to the mount of light? If, peradventure, it is me that ye seek, lo, I am but as you behold, a little poor one, stricken with storms and far from any consolation." Whereto the brothers answer, "*Only admit us to thy peace; and we shall be saved.*"

The same truth: the saving peace of utter detachment from everything but Divine Reality—a detachment which makes those who have it the citizens of the world, and enabled the friars to say to Lady Poverty as they showed her from the hill of Assisi the whole countryside at her feet, "Hoc est claustrum nostrum, Domina," —is taught by Meister Eckhart in a more homely parable.

"There was a learned man who, eight years long, desired that God would show him a man who would teach him the truth. And once when he felt a very

great longing, a voice from God came to him and said, 'Go to the church, and there shalt thou find a man who shalt show thee the way to blessedness.' And he went thence and found a poor man whose feet were torn and covered with dust and dirt: and all his clothes were hardly worth three farthings. And he greeted him, saying:—

“God give you good day!”

“He answered: ‘I have never had a bad day.’

“God give you good luck.’

“I have never had ill luck.’

“May you be happy! but why do you answer me thus?”

“I have never been unhappy.’

“Pray explain this to me, for I cannot understand it.’

“The poor man answered, ‘Willingly. You wished me good day. I never had a bad day; for if I am hungry I praise God; if it freezes, hails, snows, rains, if the weather is fair or foul, still I praise God; am I wretched and despised, I praise God, and so I have never had an evil day. You wished that God would send me luck. But I never had ill luck, for I know how to live with God, and I know that what He does is best; and what God gives me or ordains for me, be it good or ill, I take it cheerfully from God as the best

that can be, and so I have never had ill luck. You wished that God would make me happy. I was never unhappy; for my only desire is to live in God's will, and I have so entirely yielded my will to God's, that what God wills, I will.'

"'But if God should will to cast you into hell,' said the learned man, 'what would you do then?'"

"'Cast me into hell? His goodness forbids! But if He did cast me into hell, I should have two arms to embrace Him. One arm is true humility, that I should lay beneath Him, and be thereby united to His holy humanity. And with the right arm of love, which is united with His holy divinity, I should so embrace Him that He would have to go to hell with me. And I would rather be in hell and have God, than in heaven and not have God.'

"Then the Master understood that true abandonment with utter humility is the nearest way to God.

"The Master asked further: 'Whence are you come?'"

"'From God.'

"'Where did you find God?'"

"'When I forsook all creatures.'

"'Where have you left God?'"

"'In pure hearts, and in men of good will.'

“The Master asked: ‘What sort of man are you?’

“‘I am a king.’

“‘Where is your kingdom?’

“‘My soul is my kingdom, for I can so rule my senses inward and outward, that all the desires and power of my soul are in subjection, and this kingdom is greater than a kingdom on earth.’

“‘What brought you to this perfection?’

“‘My silence, my high thoughts, and my union with God. For I could not rest in anything that was less than God. Now I have found God; and in God have eternal rest and peace.’”

Poverty, then, consists in a breaking down of man’s inveterate habit of trying to rest in, or take seriously, things which are “less than God”: *i.e.* , which do not possess the character of reality. Such a habit is the most fertile of all causes of “world-weariness,” disillusion and unrest: faults, or rather spiritual diseases, which the mystics never exhibit, but which few who are without all mystic feeling can hope to escape. Hence the sharpened perceptions of the contemplatives have always seen poverty as a counsel of prudence, a higher form of common sense. It was not with St. Francis, or any other great mystic, a first principle, an end in itself. It was rather a logical deduction from the first principle of their science—

the paramount importance to the soul of an undistracted vision of reality.

Here East and West are in agreement: "Their science," says Al Ghazzali of the Sufis, who practised, like the early Franciscans, a complete renunciation of worldly goods, "has for its object the uprooting from the soul of all violent passions, the extirpation from it of vicious desires and evil qualities; so that the heart may become detached from all that is not God, and give itself for its only occupation meditation upon the Divine Being."

All those who have felt themselves urged towards the attainment of this transcendental vision, have found that possessions interrupt the view; that claims, desires, attachments become centres of conflicting interest in the mind. They assume a false air of importance, force themselves upon the attention, and complicate life. Hence, in the interest of self-simplification, they must be cleared away: a removal which involves for the real enthusiast little more sacrifice than the weekly visit of the dustman. "Having entirely surrendered my own free-will," says Al Ghazzali of his personal experience, "my heart no longer felt any distress in renouncing fame, wealth, or the society of my children."

Others have reconciled self-surrender with a more moderate abandonment of outward things; for possessions take different rank for almost every human soul. The true rule of poverty consists in giving up those things which enchain the spirit,

divide its interests, and deflect it on its road to God—whether these things be riches, habits, religious observances, friends, interests, distastes, or desires—not in mere outward destitution for its own sake. It is attitude, not act, that matters; self-denudation would be unnecessary were it not for our inveterate tendency to attribute false value to things the moment they become our own. “What is poverty of spirit but meekness of mind, by which a man knows his own infirmity?” says Rolle, “seeing that to perfect stableness he may not come but by the grace of God, all thing that him might let from that grace he forsakes, and only in joy of his Maker he sets his desire. And as of one root spring many branches, so of wilful poverty on this wise taken proceed virtues and marvels untrowed. Not as some, that change their clothes and not their souls; riches soothly it seems these forsake, and vices innumerable they cease not to gather. . . . If thou truly all thing for God forsake, *see more what thou despised than what thou forsaketh.*”

The Poverty of the mystics, then, is a mental rather than a material state. Detachment of the will from all desire of possessions is the inner reality, of which Franciscan poverty is a sacrament to the world. It is the poor in spirit, not the poor in substance, who are to be spiritually blessed. “Let all things be forsaken of me,” says Gerlac Petersen, “so that being poor I may be able in great inward spaciousness, and without any hurt, to suffer want of all those things which the



mind of man can desire; out of or excepting God Himself."

"The soul," says St. John of the Cross, "is not empty, so long as the desire for sensible things remains. But the absence of this desire for things produces emptiness and liberty of soul; even when there is an abundance of possessions."

Every person in whom the mystical instinct awakes soon discovers in himself certain tastes or qualities which interrupt the development of that instinct. Often these tastes and qualities are legitimate enough upon their own plane; but they are a drain upon the energy of the self, preventing her from attaining that intenser life for which she was made and which demands her undivided zest. They distract her attention, fill the field of perception, stimulate her instinctive life: making of the surface-consciousness so active a thing that it can hardly be put to sleep. "Where can he have that pure and naked vision of unchangeable Truth whereby he see into all things," says Petersen again, "who is so busied in other things, not perhaps evil, which operate . . . upon his thoughts and imagination and confuse and enchain his mind . . . that his sight of that unique One in Whom all things are is overclouded?"

The nature of these distracting factors which "confuse and enchain the mind" will vary with almost every individual. It is impossible to predict what those things will be which a self must give up, in order that the transcendental consciousness may grow. "It

makes little difference whether a bird be held by a slender thread or by a rope; the bird is bound, and cannot fly until the cord that holds it is broken. It is true that a slender thread is more easily broken; still notwithstanding, if it is not broken the bird cannot fly. This is the state of a soul with particular attachments: it never can attain to the liberty of the divine union, whatever virtues it may possess. Desires and attachments affect the soul as the remora is said to affect a ship; that is but a little fish, yet when it clings to the vessel it effectually hinders its progress."

Thus each adventurer must discover and extirpate all those interests which nourish selfhood, however innocent or even useful these interests may seem in the eyes of the world. The only rule is the ruthless abandonment of everything which is in the way. "When any man God perfectly desires to love, all things as well inward as outward that to God's love are contrary and from His love do let, he studies to do away." This may mean the prompt and utter self-stripping of St. Francis of Assisi, who cast off his actual clothing in his relentless determination to have nothing of his own: the reluctant bit-by-bit renunciations which at last set his follower Angela of Foligno free, or the drastic proceedings of Antoinette Bourignon, who found that a penny was enough to keep her from God.

"Being one night in a most profound Penitence," says the biographer of this extraordinary woman, "she

said from the bottom of her Heart, 'O my Lord! what must I do to please Thee? For I have nobody to teach me. Speak to my soul and it will hear Thee.'" At that instant she heard, as if another had spoken within her "Forsake all earthly things. Separate thyself from the love of the creatures. Deny thyself." From this time, the more she entered into herself the more she was inclined to abandon all. But she had not the courage necessary for the complete renunciation towards which her transcendental consciousness was pressing her. She struggled to adjust herself to the inner and the outer life, but without success. For such a character as hers, compromise was impossible. "She asked always earnestly, When shall I be perfectly thine, O my God? and she thought He still answered her, *When thou shalt no longer possess anything, and shalt die to thyself.* And where shall I do that, Lord? He answered, *In the Desert.*" At last the discord between her deeper and her superficial self became intolerable. Reinforced by the miseries of an unsympathetic home, still more by a threat of approaching marriage, the impulse to renunciation got its way. She disguised herself in a hermit's dress—she was only eighteen, and had no one to help or advise her—and "went out of her chamber about Four in the Morning, taking nothing but one Penny to buy Bread for that Day and it being said to her in the going out, *Where is thy Faith? In a Penny?* she threw it away. . . . Thus she went away wholly delivered from the heavy burthen of the Cares and Good Things of this World."

An admirable example of the mystic's attitude towards the soul-destroying division of interests, the natural but hopeless human struggle to make the best of both worlds, which sucks at its transcendental vitality, occurs in St. Teresa's purgative period. In her case this war between the real and the superficial self extended over many years; running side by side with the state of Illumination, and a fully developed contemplative life. At last it was brought to an end by a "Second Conversion" which unified her scattered interests and set her firmly and for ever on the Unitive Way. The virile strength of Teresa's character, which afterwards contributed to the greatness of her achievement, opposed the invading transcendental consciousness; disputed every inch of territory; resisted every demand made upon it by the growing spiritual self. Bit by bit it was conquered, the sphere of her deeper life enlarged; until the moment came in which she surrendered, once for all, to her true destiny.

During the years of inward stress, of penance and growing knowledge of the Infinite, which she spent in the Convent of the Incarnation, and which accompanied this slow remaking of character, Teresa's only self-indulgence—as it seems, a sufficiently innocent one—was talking to the friends who came down from Avila to the convent-parlour, and spoke to her through the *grille*. Her confessors, unaccustomed to the education of mystical genius, saw nothing incompatible between this practice and the pursuit of a high contemplative life. But as her

transcendental consciousness, her states of orison grew stronger, Teresa felt more and more the distracting influence of these glimpses of the outer world. They were a drain upon the energy which ought to be wholly given to that new, deep, more real life which she felt stirring within her, and which could only hope to achieve its mighty destiny by complete concentration upon the business in hand. No genius can afford to dissipate his energies: the mystic genius least of all. Teresa knew that so long as she retained these personal satisfactions, her life had more than one focus; she was not whole-hearted in her surrender to the Absolute. But though her inward voices, her deepest instincts, urged her to give them up, for years she felt herself incapable of such a sacrifice. It was round the question of their retention or surrender that the decisive battle of her life was fought.

“The devil,” says her great Augustinian eulogist, Fray Luis de Leon, in his vivid account of these long interior struggles, “put before her those persons most sympathetic by nature; and God came, and in the midst of the conversation discovered Himself aggrieved and sorrowful. The devil delighted in the conversation and pastime, but when she turned her back on them and betook herself to prayer, God redoubled the delight and favours, as if to show her how false was the lure which charmed her at the grating, and that His sweetness was the veritable sweetness. . . . So that these two inclinations warred with each other in the breast of this blessed woman,

and the authors who inspired them each did his utmost to inflame her most, and the oratory blotted out what the grating wrote, and at times the grating vanquished and diminished the good fruit produced by prayer, causing agony and grief which disquieted and perplexed her soul: for though she was resolved to belong entirely to God, she knew not how to shake herself free from the world: and at times she persuaded herself that she could enjoy both, which ended mostly, as she says, in complete enjoyment of neither. For the amusements of the locutorio were embittered and turned into wormwood by the memory of the secret and sweet intimacy with God; and in the same way when she retired to be with God, and commenced to speak with Him, the affections and thoughts which she carried with her from the grating took possession of her."

Compare with these violent oscillations between the superficial and mystical consciousness—characteristic of Teresa's strong volitional nature, which only came to rest after psychic convulsions which left no corner of its being unexplored—the symbolic act of renunciation under which Antoinette Bourignon's "interior self" vanquished the surface intelligence and asserted its supremacy. Teresa must give up her passionate delight in human friendship. Antoinette, never much tempted in that direction, must give up her last penny. What society was to Teresa's generous, energetic nature, prudence was to the temperamentally shrewd and narrow Antoinette: a distraction, a check on the development of the all-

demanding transcendental genius, an unconquered relic of the "lower life."

Many a mystic, however, has found the perfection of detachment to be consistent with a far less drastic renunciation of external things than that which these women felt to be essential to their peace. The test, as we have seen, does not lie in the nature of the things which are retained, but in the reaction which they stimulate in the self. "Absolute poverty is thine," says Tauler, "when thou canst not remember whether anybody has ever owed thee or been indebted to thee for anything; just as all things will be forgotten by thee in the last journey of death." Poverty, in this sense, may be consistent with the habitual and automatic use of luxuries which the abstracted self never even perceives. Thus we are told that St. Bernard was reproached by his enemies with the inconsistency of preaching evangelical poverty whilst making his journeys from place to place on a magnificently caparisoned mule, which had been lent to him by the Cluniac monks. He expressed great contrition: but said that he had never noticed what it was that he rode upon.

Sometimes, the very activity which one self has rejected as an impediment becomes for another the channel of spiritual perception. I have mentioned the Curé d'Ars, who, among other inhibitions, refused to allow himself to smell a rose. Yet St. Francis preached to the flowers, and ordered a plot to be set aside for their cultivation when the convent garden was made,

“in order that all who saw them might remember the Eternal Sweetness.” So, too, we are told of his spiritual daughter, St. Douceline, that “out of doors one day with her sisters, she heard a bird’s note. ‘What a lovely song!’ she said: and the song drew her straight way to God. Did they bring her a flower, *its beauty had a like effect* .” “To look on trees, water, and flowers,” says St. Teresa of her own beginnings of contemplation, “helped her to recollect the Presence of God.” Here we are reminded of Plato. “The true order of going is to use the beauties of Earth as steps along which one mounts upwards for the sake of that other Beauty.” This, too, is the true order of Holy Poverty: the selfless use, not the selfish abuse of lovely and natural things.

To say that some have fallen short of this difficult ideal and taken refuge in mere abnegation is but to say that asceticism is a human, not a superhuman art, and is subject to “the frailty of the creature.” But on the whole, these excesses are mainly found amongst saintly types who have not exhibited true mystic intuition. This intuition, entailing as it does communion with intensest Life, gives to its possessors a sweet sanity, a delicate balance, which guards them, as a rule, from such conceptions of chastity as that of the youthful saint who shut himself in a cupboard for fear he should see his mother pass by: from the obedience which identifies the voice of the director with the voice of God; from detachment such as that exhibited by the Blessed Angela of Foligno, who, though a true mystic, viewed with almost murderous



satisfaction the deaths of relatives who were "impediments." The detachment of the mystic is just a restoration to the liberty in which the soul was made: it is a state of joyous humility in which he cries, "Nought I am, nought I have, nought I lack." To have arrived at this is to have escaped from the tyranny of selfhood: to be initiated into the purer air of that universe which knows but one rule of action—that which was laid down once for all by St. Augustine when he said, in the most memorable and misquoted of epigrams: "Love, and do what you like."

## **2. Mortification**

By mortification, I have said, is to be understood the positive aspect of purification: the remaking in relation to reality of the permanent elements of character. These elements, so far, have subserved the interests of the old self, worked for it in the world of sense. Now they must be adjusted to the needs of the new self and to the transcendent world in which it moves. Their focal point is the old self; the "natural man" and his self-regarding instincts and desires. The object of mortification is to kill that old self, break up his egoistic attachments and cravings, in order that the higher centre, the "new man," may live and breathe. As St. Teresa discovered when she tried to reconcile the claims of worldly friendships and contemplation, one or other must go: a house divided against itself cannot stand. "Who hinders thee more," says Thomas a Kempis, "than the unmortified affections of thy own heart? . . . if we were perfectly dead unto ourselves, and not entangled within our

own breasts, then should we be able to taste Divine things, and to have some experience of heavenly contemplation.”

In psychological language, the process of mortification is the process of setting up “new paths of neural discharge.” That is to say, the mystic life has got to express itself in action: and for this new paths must be cut and new habits formed—all, in spite of the new self’s enthusiasm, “against the grain”—resulting in a complete sublimation of personality. The energy which wells up incessantly in every living being must abandon the old road of least resistance and discharge itself in a new and more difficult way. In the terms of the hormic psychology, the conative drive of the psyche must be concentrated on new objectives; and the old paths, left to themselves, must fade and die. When they are dead, and the new life has triumphed, Mortification is at an end. The mystics always know when this moment comes. Often an inner voice then warns them to lay their active penances aside.

Since the greater and stronger the mystic, the stronger and more stubborn his character tends to be, this change of life and turning of energy from the old and easy channels to the new is often a stormy matter. It is a period of actual battle between the inharmonious elements of the self, its lower and higher springs of action: of toil, fatigue, bitter suffering, and many disappointments. Nevertheless, in spite of its etymological associations, the object of mortification

is not death but life: the production of health and strength, the health and strength of the human consciousness viewed *sub specie aeternitatis* . “In the truest death of all created things, the sweetest and most natural life is hidden.”

“This dying,” says Tauler again, “has many degrees, and so has this life. A man might die a thousand deaths in one day and find at once a joyful life corresponding to each of them. This is as it must be: God cannot deny or refuse this to death. The stronger the death the more powerful and thorough is the corresponding life; the more intimate the death, the more inward is the life. Each life brings strength, and strengthens to a harder death. When a man dies to a scornful word, bearing it in God’s name, or to some inclination inward or outward, acting or not acting against his own will, be it in love or grief, in word or act, in going or staying; or if he denies his desires of taste or sight, or makes no excuses when wrongfully accused; or anything else, whatever it may be, to which he has not yet died, it is harder at first to one who is unaccustomed to it and unmortified than to him who is mortified. . . . A great life makes reply to him who dies in earnest even in the least things, a life which strengthens him immediately to die a greater death; a death so long and strong, that it seems to him hereafter more joyful, good and pleasant to die than to live, for he finds life in death and light shining in darkness.”

No more than detachment, then, is mortification an end in itself. It is a process, an education directed towards the production of a definite kind of efficiency, the adjustment of human nature to the demands of its new life. Severe, and to the outsider apparently unmeaning—like their physical parallels the exercises of the gymnasium—its disciplines, faithfully accepted, do release the self from the pull of the lower nature, establish it on new levels of freedom and power. “Mortification,” says the Benedictine contemplative Augustine Baker, “tends to subject the body to the spirit and the spirit to God. And this it does by crossing the inclinations of sense, which are quite contrary to those of the Divine Spirit . . . by such crossing and afflicting of the body, self-love and self-will (the poison of our spirits) are abated, and in time in a sort destroyed; and instead of them there enter into the soul the Divine love and Divine will, and take possession thereof.” This transformation accomplished, mortification may end, and often does, with startling abruptness. After a martyrdom which lasted sixteen years, says Suso—speaking as usual in the third person—of his own experience, “On a certain Whitsun Day a heavenly messenger appeared to him, and ordered him in God’s name to continue it no more. He at once ceased, and threw all the instruments of his sufferings [irons, nails, hair-shirt, etc.] into a river.” From this time onward, austerities of this sort had no part in Suso’s life.

The Franco-Flemish mystic who wrote, and the English contemplative who translated, “The Mirror of

Simple Souls," have between them described and explained in bold and accurate language the conditions under which the soul is enabled to abandon that "hard service of the virtues" which has absorbed it during the Purgative Way. The statement of the "French Book" is direct and uncompromising; well calculated to startle timid piety. "Virtues, I take leave of you for evermore!" exclaims the Soul. "Now shall mine heart be more free and more in peace than it hath been before. I wot well your service is too travaillous. . . . Some time I laid mine heart in you without any dissevering: ye wot well this: I was in all things to you obedient. O I was then your servant, but now I am delivered out of your thraldom."

To this astounding utterance the English translator has added a singularly illuminating gloss. "I am stirred here," he says, "to say more to the matter, as thus: First: when a soul giveth her to perfection, she laboureth busily day and night to get virtues, by counsel of reason, and striveth with vices at every thought, at every word and deed that she perceiveth cometh of them, and busily searcheth vices, them to destroy. Thus the virtues be mistresses, and every virtue maketh her to war with its contrary, the which be vices. Many sharp pains and bitterness of conscience feeleth the soul in this war. . . . But so long one may bite on the bitter bark of the nut, that at last he shall come to the sweet kernel. Right so, ghostly to understand, it fareth by these souls that be come to peace. They have so long striven with vices and wrought by virtues, that they be come to the nut

kernel, that is, to the love of God, which is sweetness. And when the soul hath deeply tasted this love, so that this love of God worketh and hath his usages in her soul, then the soul is wondrous light and gladsome. . . . Then is she mistress and lady over the virtues, for she hath them all within herself. . . . And then this soul taketh leave of virtues, as of the thralldom and painful travail of them that she had before, and now she is lady and sovereign, and they be subjects."

Jacopone da Todi speaks to the same effect: —

"La guerra è terminata  
de le virtu battaglia,  
de la mente travaglia  
cosa nulla contende".

Thus, St. Catherine of Genoa, after a penitential period of four years, during which she was haunted by a constant sense of sin, and occupied by incessant mortifications, found that "all thought of such mortifications was *in an instant* taken from her mind: in such a manner that, had she even wished to continue such mortifications, she would have been unable to do so . . . the sight of her sins was now taken from her mind, so that henceforth she did not catch a glimpse of them: it was as though they had all been cast into the depths of the sea." In other words, the new and higher centre of consciousness, finally established, asserted itself and annihilated the old. "La guerra e teminata," all the energy of a strong nature flows freely in the new channels; and

mortification ceases, mechanically, to be possible to the now unified, sublimated, or “regenerated” self.

Mortification takes its name from the reiterated statement of all ascetic writers that the senses, or “body of desire,” with the cravings which are excited by different aspects of the phenomenal world, must be mortified or killed; which is, of course, a description of psychological necessities from their special point of view. All those self-regarding instincts—so ingrained that they have become automatic—which impel the self to choose the more comfortable part, are seen by the awakened intuition of the embryo mystic as gross infringements of the law of love. “This is the travail that a man behoveth, to draw out his heart and his mind from the fleshly love and the liking of all earthly creatures, from vain thoughts and from fleshly imaginations, and out from the love and the vicious feeling of himself, that his soul should find no rest in no fleshly thought, nor earthly affection.” The rule of Poverty must be applied to the temper of normal consciousness as well as to the tastes and possessions of the self. Under this tonic influence, real life will thrive, unreal life will wither and die.

This mortifying process is necessary, not because the legitimate exercise of the senses is opposed to Divine Reality, but because those senses have usurped a place beyond their station; become the focus of energy, steadily drained the vitality of the self. “The dogs have taken the children’s meat.” The senses

have grown stronger than their masters, monopolized the field of perception, dominated an organism which was made for greater activities, and built up those barriers of individuality which must be done away if true personality is to be achieved, and with it some share in the boundless life of the One. It is thanks to this wrong distribution of energy, this sedulous feeding of the cuckoo in the nest, that "in order to approach the Absolute, mystics must withdraw from everything, even themselves." "The soul is plunged in utter ignorance, when she supposes that she can attain to the high estate of union with God before she casts away the desire of all things, natural and supernatural, which she may possess," says St. John of the Cross, "because the distance between them and that which takes place in the state of pure transformation in God is infinite." Again, "until the desires be lulled to sleep by the mortification of sensuality, and sensuality itself be mortified in them, so that it shall war against the spirit no more, the soul cannot go forth in perfect liberty to union with the Beloved."

The death of selfhood in its narrow individualistic sense is, then, the primary object of mortification. All the twisted elements of character which foster the existence of this unreal yet complex creature are to be pruned away. Then, as with the trees of the forest, so with the spirit of man, strong new branches will spring into being, grow towards air and light. "I live, yet not I" is to be the declaration of the mystic who has endured this "bodily death." The self-that-is-to-be



will live upon a plane where her own prejudices and preferences are so uninteresting as to be imperceptible. She must be weaned from these nursery toys: and weaning is a disagreeable process. The mystic, however, undertakes it as a rule without reluctance: pushed by his vivid consciousness of imperfection, his intuition of a more perfect state, necessary to the fulfilment of his love. Often his entrance upon the torments of the Purgative Way, his taking up of the spiritual or material instruments of mortification, resembles in ardour and abruptness that "heroic plunge into Purgatory" of the newly dead when it perceives itself in the light of Love Divine, which is described in the "Treatise" of St. Catherine of Genoa as its nearest equivalent. "As she, plunged in the divine furnace of purifying love, was united to the Object of her love, and satisfied with all he wrought in her, so she understood it to be with the souls in Purgatory."

This "divine furnace of purifying love" demands from the ardent soul a complete self-surrender, and voluntary turning from all impurity, a humility of the most far-reaching kind: and this means the deliberate embrace of active suffering, a self-discipline in dreadful tasks. As gold in the refiner's fire, so "burning of love into a soul truly taken all vices purgeth." Detachment may be a counsel of prudence, a practical result of seeing the true values of things; but the pain of mortification is seized as a splendid opportunity, a love token, timidly offered by the awakened spirit to that all-demanding Lover from

Whom St. Catherine of Siena heard the terrible words "I, Fire, the Acceptor of sacrifices, ravishing away from them their darkness, give the light." "Suffering is the ancient law of love," says the Eternal Wisdom to Suso, "there is no quest without pain, there is no lover who is not also a martyr. Hence it is inevitable that he who would love so high a thing as Wisdom should sometimes suffer hindrances and griefs."

The mystics have a profound conviction that Creation, Becoming, Transcendence, is a painful process at the best. Those who are Christians point to the Passion of Christ as a proof that the cosmic journey to perfection, the path of the Eternal Wisdom, follows of necessity the Way of the Cross. That law of the inner life, which sounds so fantastic and yet is so bitterly true—"No progress without pain"—asserts itself. It declares that birth pangs must be endured in the spiritual as well as in the material world: that adequate training must always hurt the athlete. Hence the mystics' quest of the Absolute drives them to an eager and heroic union with the reality of suffering, as well as with the reality of joy.

This divine necessity of pain, this necessary sharing in the travail of a World of Becoming, is beautifully described by Tauler in one of those "internal conversations" between the contemplative soul and its God, which abound in the works of the mystics and are familiar to all readers of "The Imitation of Christ." "A man once thought," says Tauler, "that God drew some men even by pleasant paths, while

other were drawn by the path of pain. Our Lord answered him thus, 'What think ye can be pleasanter or nobler than to be made most like unto Me? that is by suffering. Mark, to whom was ever offered such a troubled life as to Me? And in whom can I better work in accordance with My true nobility than in those who are most like Me? They are the men who suffer. . . . Learn that My divine nature never worked so nobly in human nature as by suffering; and because suffering is so efficacious, it is sent out of great love. I understand the weakness of human nature at all times, and out of love and righteousness I lay no heavier load on man than he can bear. The crown must be firmly pressed down that is to bud and blossom in the Eternal Presence of of My Heavenly Father. He who desires to be wholly immersed in the fathomless sea of My Godhead must also be deeply immersed in the deep sea of bitter sorrow. I am exalted far above all things, and work supernatural and wonderful works in Myself: the deeper and more supernaturally a man crushes himself beneath all things the more supernaturally will he be drawn far above all things.'"

Pain, therefore, the mystics always welcome and often court: sometimes in the crudely physical form which Suso describes so vividly and horribly in the sixteenth chapter of his *Life*, more frequently in those refinements of torture which a sensitive spirit can extract from loneliness, injustice, misunderstanding—above all, from deliberate contact with the repulsive accidents of life. It would seem from a collation of the

evidence that the typical mystical temperament is by nature highly fastidious. Its passionate apprehension of spiritual beauty, its intuitive perception of divine harmony, is counterbalanced by an instinctive loathing of ugliness, a shrinking from the disharmonies of squalor and disease. Often its ideal of refinement is far beyond the contemporary standards of decency: a circumstance which is alone enough to provide ample opportunity of wretchedness. This extreme sensitiveness, which forms part of the normal psychophysical make-up of the mystic, as it often does of the equally highly-strung artistic type, is one of the first things to be seized upon by the awakened self as a disciplinary instrument. Then humility's axiom, "Naught is too low for love" is forced to bear the less lovely gloss, "Naught must be too disgusting."

Two reasons at once appear for this. One is the contempt for phenomena, nasty as well as nice—the longing to be free from all the fetters of sense—which often goes with the passion for invisible things. Those mystics to whom the attractions of earth are only illusion, are inconsistent if they attribute a greater reality to the revolting and squalid incidents of life. St. Francis did but carry his own principles to their logical conclusion, when he insisted that the vermin were as much his brothers as the birds. Real detachment means the death of preferences of all kinds: even of those which seem to other men the very proofs of virtue and fine taste.

The second reason is nobler. It is bound up with that principle of self-surrender which is the mainspring of the mystic life. To the contemplative mind, which is keenly conscious of unity in multiplicity – of Gods in the world – all disinterested service is service of the Absolute which he loves: and the harder it is, the more opposed to his self-regarding and aesthetic instincts, the more nearly it approaches his ideal. The point to which he aspires – though he does not always know it – is that in which all disharmony, all appearance of vileness, is resolved in the concrete reality which he calls the Love of God. Then, he feels dimly, everything will be seen under the aspect of a cosmic and charitable beauty; exhibiting through the woof of corruption the web of eternal life.

It is told of St. Francis of Assisi, in whom the love of lovely things was always paramount, how he forced himself to visit the lepers whose sight and smell disgusted him: how he served them and even kissed them. "Then as he departed, in very truth that which had aforetime been bitter unto him, to wit, the sight and touch of lepers, now changed into sweetness. For, as he confessed, the sight of lepers had been so grievous unto him that he had been minded to avoid not only seeing them, but even going nigh their dwelling. And if at any time he chanced to pass their abodes, or to see them, albeit he were moved by compassion to do them an alms through another person, yet alway would he turn aside his face, stopping his nostrils with his hand. But through the grace of God he became so intimate a friend of the

lepers that, even as he recorded in his will, he did sojourn with them and did humbly serve them."

Also, after his great renunciation of all property, he, once a prosperous young man who had been "dainty in his father's home," accustomed himself to take a bowl and beg scraps of food from door to door: and here too, as in the case of the lepers, that which at first seemed revolting became to him sweet. "And when he would have eaten that medley of various meats," says the legend, "at first he shrank back, for that he had never been used willingly even to see, much less to eat, such scraps. At length, conquering himself, he began to eat; and it seemed to him that in eating no rich syrup had he ever tasted aught so delightful."

The object, then, of this self-discipline is, like the object of all purgation, freedom: freedom from the fetters of the senses, the "remora of desire," from the results of environment and worldly education, from pride and prejudice, preferences and distaste: from selfhood in every form. Its effect is a sharp reaction to the joy of self-conquest. The very act that had once caused in the enchained self a movement of loathing becomes not merely indifferent, but an occasion of happiness. So Margery Kempe "had great mourning and sorrowing if she might not kiss a leper when she met them in the way for the love of our Lord, *which was all contrary to her disposition* in the years of her youth and prosperity, for then she abhorred them most."

I spare the sensitive reader a detailed account of the loathsome ordeals by which St. Catherine of Genoa and Madame Guyon strove to cure themselves of squeamishness and acquire this liberty of spirit. They, like St. Francis, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, and countless other seekers for the Real, sought out and served with humility and love the sick and the unclean; deliberately associated themselves with life in its meanest forms; compelled themselves to contact with the most revolting substances; and mortified the senses by the traditional ascetic expedient of deliberately opposing all—even their most natural and harmless—inclinations. “In the first four years after she received the sweet wound from her Lord,” says the Life of St. Catherine of Genoa, she “made great penances: so that all her senses were mortified. And first, so soon as she perceived that her nature desired anything at once she deprived it thereof, and did so that it should receive all those things that it abhorred. She wore harsh hair, ate no meat nor any other thing that she liked; ate no fruit, neither fresh nor dried . . . and she lived greatly submitted to all persons, and always sought to do all those things which were contrary to her own will; in such a way that she was always inclined to do more promptly the will of others than her own.” . . . “And while she worked such and so many mortifications of all her senses it was several times asked of her ‘Why do you do this?’ And she answered ‘I do not know, but I feel myself drawn inwardly to do this . . . and I think it is God’s will.’”

St. Ignatius Loyola, in the world a highly bred Spanish gentleman of refined personal habits, found in those habits an excellent opportunity of mortification. "As he was somewhat nice about the arrangement of his hair, as was the fashion of those days and became him not ill, he allowed it to grow naturally, and neither combed it nor trimmed it nor wore any head covering by day or night. For the same reason he did not pare his finger or toe nails; for on these points he had been fastidious to an extreme."

Madame Guyon, a delicate girl of the leisured class, accustomed to the ordinary comforts of her station, characteristically chose the most crude and immoderate forms of mortification in her efforts towards the acquirement of "indifference." But the peculiar psychic constitution which afterwards showed itself in the forms of automatism and clairvoyance, seems to have produced a partial anesthesia. "Although I had a very delicate body, the instruments of penitence tore my flesh without, as it seemed to me, causing pain. I wore girdles of hair and of sharp iron, I often held wormwood in my mouth." "If I walked, I put stones in my shoes. These things, my God, Thou didst first inspire me to do, in order that I might be deprived even of the most innocent satisfactions."

In the earlier stages of their education, a constant *agere contra*, even in apparently indifferent things, seems essential to the mystics; till the point is reached at which the changes and chances of mortal life are



accepted with a true indifference and do not trouble the life of the soul. This established ascendancy of the "interior man," the transcendental consciousness, over "sensitive nature" – the self in its reactions to the ups and downs and manifold illusions of daily life – is the very object of Purgation. It is, then, almost impossible that any mystic, whatever his religion, character or race, should escape its battles: for none at the beginning of their growth are in a position to dispense with its good offices. Neoplatonists and Mahommedans, no less than the Christian ascetics, are acquainted with the Purgative Way. All realize the first law of Spiritual Alchemy, that you must tame the Green Lion before you give him wings. Thus in 'Attar's allegory of the Valleys, the valley of self-stripping and renunciation comes first. So too Al Ghazzali, the Persian contemplative, says of the period immediately following his acceptance of the principles of Sufiism and consequent renunciation of property, "I went to Syria, where I remained more than two years; without any other object than that of living in seclusion and solitude, conquering my desires, struggling with my passions, striving to purify my soul, to perfect my character, and to prepare my heart to meditate upon God." At the end of this period of pure purgation circumstances forced him to return to the world; much to his regret, since he "had not yet attained to the perfect ecstatic state, unless it were in one or two isolated moments."

Such gleams of ecstatic vision, distributed through the later stages of purification, seem to be normal features

of mystical development. Increasing control of the lower centres, of the surface intelligence and its scattered desires, permits the emergence of the transcendental perceptions. We have seen that Fox in his early stages displayed just such an alternation between the light and shade of the mystic way. So too did that least ascetic of visionaries, Jacob Boehme. "Finding within myself a powerful contrarium, namely the desires that belong to the flesh and blood," he says, "I began to fight a hard battle against my corrupted nature, and with the aid of God I made up my mind to overcome the inherited evil will, to break it, and to enter wholly into the Love of God. . . . This, however, was not possible for me to accomplish, but I stood firmly by my earnest resolution, and fought a hard battle with myself. Now while I was wrestling and battling, being aided by God, a wonderful light arose within my soul. It was a light entirely foreign to my unruly nature, but in it I recognized the true nature of God and man, and the relation existing between them, a thing which heretofore I had never understood, and for which I would never have sought."

In these words Boehme bridges the gap between Purgation and Illumination: showing these two states or ways as coexisting and complementary one to another, the light and dark sides of a developing mystic consciousness. As a fact, they do often exist side by side in the individual experience: and any treatment which exhibits them as sharply and completely separated may be convenient for purposes

of study, but becomes at best diagrammatic if considered as a representation of the mystic life. The mystical consciousness, as we have seen, belongs—from the psychological point of view—to that mobile or “unstable” type in which the artistic temperament also finds a place. It sways easily between the extremes of pleasure and pain in its gropings after transcendental reality. It often attains for a moment to heights in which it is not able to rest: is often flung from some rapturous vision of the Perfect to the deeps of contrition and despair.

The mystics have a vivid metaphor by which to describe that alternation between the onset and the absence of the joyous transcendental consciousness which forms as it were the characteristic intermediate stage between the bitter struggles of pure Purgation, and the peace and radiance of the Illuminative Life. They call it *Ludus Amoris*, the “Game of Love” which God plays with the desirous soul. It is the “game of chess,” says St. Teresa, “in which game Humility is the Queen without whom none can checkmate the Divine King.” “Here,” says Martensen, “God plays a blest game with the soul.” The “Game of Love” is a reflection in consciousness of that state of struggle, oscillation and unrest which precedes the first unification of the self. It ceases when this has taken place and the new level of reality has been attained. Thus St. Catherine of Siena, that inspired psychologist, was told in ecstasy, “With the souls who have arrived at perfection, I play no more the Game of Love, which consists in leaving and returning again

to the soul; though thou must understand that it is not, properly speaking, I, the immovable GOD, Who thus elude them, but rather the sentiment that My charity gives them of Me." In other terms, it is the imperfectly developed spiritual perception which becomes tired and fails, throwing the self back into the darkness and aridity whence it has emerged. So we are told of Rulman Merswin that after the period of harsh physical mortification which succeeded his conversion came a year of "delirious joy alternating with the most bitter physical and moral sufferings." It is, he says, "the Game of Love which the Lord plays with His poor sinful creature." Memories of all his old sins still drove him to exaggerated penances: morbid temptations "made me so ill that I feared I should lose my reason." These psychic storms reacted upon the physical organism. He had a paralytic seizure, lost the use of his lower limbs, and believed himself to be at the point of death. When he was at his worst, however, and all hope seemed at an end, an inward voice told him to rise from his bed. He obeyed, and found himself cured. Ecstasies were frequent during the whole of this period. In these moments of exaltation he felt his mind to be irradiated by a new light, so that he knew, intuitively, the direction which his life was bound to take, and recognized the inevitable and salutary nature of his trials. "God showed Himself by turns harsh and gentle: to each access of misery succeeded the rapture of supernatural grace." In this intermittent style, torn by these constant fluctuations between depression and delight, did Merswin, in whom the psychic instability

of the artistic and mystic types is present in excess, pass through the purgative and illuminated states. They appear to have coexisted in his consciousness, first one and then the other emerging and taking control. Hence he did not attain the peaceful condition which is characteristic of full illumination, and normally closes the "First Mystic Life"; but passed direct from these violent alternations of mystical pleasure and mystical pain to the state which he calls "the school of suffering love." This, as we shall see when we come to its consideration, is strictly analogous to that which other mystics have called the "Dark Night of the Soul," and opens the "Second Mystic Life" or Unitive Way.

Such prolonged coexistence of alternating pain and pleasure states in the developing soul, such delay in the attainment of equilibrium, is not infrequent, and must be taken into account in all analyses of the mystic type. Though it is convenient for purposes of study to practise a certain dissection, and treat as separate states which are, in the living subject, closely intertwined, we should constantly remind ourselves that such a proceeding is artificial. The struggle of the self to disentangle itself from illusion and attain the Absolute is a life-struggle. Hence, it will and must exhibit the freedom and originality of life: will, as a process, obey artistic rather than scientific laws. It will sway now to the light and now to the shade of experience: its oscillations will sometimes be great, sometimes small. Mood and environment, inspiration and information, will all play their part.

There are in this struggle three factors.

- (1) The unchanging light of Eternal Reality: that Pure Being “which ever shines and nought shall ever dim.”
- (2) The web of illusion, here thick, there thin; which hems in, confuses, and allures the sentient self.
- (3) That self, always changing, moving, struggling – always, in fact, *becoming* – alive in every fibre, related at once to the unreal and to the real; and, with its growth in true being, ever more conscious of the contrast between them.

In the ever-shifting relations between these three factors, the consequent energy engendered, the work done, we may find a cause of the innumerable forms of stress and travail which are called in their objective form the Purgative Way. One only of the three is constant: the Absolute to which the soul aspires. Though all else may fluctuate, that goal is changeless. That Beauty so old and so new, “with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning,” which is the One of Plotinus, the All of Eckhart and St. John of the Cross, the Eternal Wisdom of Suso, the Unplumbed Abyss of Ruysbroeck, the Pure Love of St. Catherine of Genoa, awaits yesterday, to-day, and for ever the opening of Its creature’s eyes.

In the moment of conversion those eyes were opened for an instant: obtained, as it were, a dazzling and unforgettable glimpse of the Uncreated Light. They must learn to stay open: to look steadfastly into the

eyes of Love: so that, in the beautiful imagery of the mystics, the "faithful servant" may become the "secret friend." Then it is, says Boehme, that "the divine glimpse and beam of joy ariseth in the soul, being a new eye, in which the dark, fiery soul conceiveth the Ens and Essence of the divine light." So hard an art is not at once acquired in its perfection. It is in accordance with all that we know of the conditions of development that a partial achievement should come first; bewildering moments of lucidity, splendid glimpses, whose brevity is due to the weakness of the newly opened and unpractised "eye which looks upon Eternity," the yet undisciplined strength of the "eye which looks upon Time." Such is that play of light and dark, of exaltation and contrition, which often bridges the gap between the Purgative and the Illuminative states. Each by turn takes the field and ousts the other; for "these two eyes of the soul of man cannot both perform their work at once."

To use another and more domestic metaphor, that Divine Child which was, in the hour of the mystic conversion, born in the spark of the soul, must learn like other children to walk. Though it is true that the spiritual self must never lose its sense of utter dependence on the Invisible; yet within that supporting atmosphere, and fed by its gifts, it must "find its feet." Each effort to stand brings first a glorious sense of growth, and then a fall: each fall means another struggle to obtain the difficult balance which comes when infancy is past. There are many

eager trials, many hopes, many disappointments. At last, as it seems suddenly, the moment comes: tottering is over, the muscles have learnt their lesson, they adjust themselves automatically, and the new self suddenly finds itself—it knows not how—standing upright and secure. That is the moment which marks the boundary between the purgative and the illuminative states.

The process of this passage of the “new” or spiritual man from his awakening to the illuminated life, has been set out by Jacob Boehme in language which is at once poetic and precise. “When Christ the Corner-Stone [ *i.e.* , the divine principle latent in man] stirreth himself in the extinguished Image of Man in his hearty Conversion and Repentance,” he says, “then Virgin Sophia appeareth in the stirring of the Spirit of Christ in the extinguished Image, in her Virgin’s attire before the Soul; at which the Soul is so amazed and astonished in its Uncleanness that all its Sins immediately awake in it, and it trembleth before her; for then the judgment passeth upon the Sins of the Soul, so that it even goeth back in its unworthiness, being ashamed in the Presence of its fair Love, and entereth into itself, feeling and acknowledging itself utterly unworthy to receive such a Jewel. This is understood by those who are of our tribe and have tasted of this heavenly Gift, and by none else. But the noble Sophia draweth near in the Essence of the Soul, and kisseth it in friendly Manner, and tinctureth its dark Fire with her Rays of Love, and shineth through it with her bright and powerful Influence. Penetrated



with the strong Sense and Feeling of which, the Soul skippeth in its Body for great Joy, and in the strength of this Virgin Love exulteth, and praiseth the great God for his blest Gift of Grace. I will set down here a short description how it is when the Bride thus embraceth the Bridegroom, for the consideration of the Reader, who perhaps hath not yet been in this wedding chamber. It may be he will be desirous to follow us, and to enter into the Inner Choir, where the Soul joineth hands and danceth with Sophia, or the Divine Wisdom."

# The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage

By Jan van Ruysbroeck

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ed. by Evelyn Underhill

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## CHAPTER IV

### OF THE MEN WHO PRACTISE A FALSE VACANCY

Behold, such folk, by means of a onefold simplification and a natural tendency, are turned in upon the bareness of their own being; and therefore they think eternal life is and shall be nought else but an enduring state of beatitude, without distinction in order in holiness or in reward. Yea, all such are so deep in error that they say that the Persons shall pass away into the Godhead, and that nought else shall remain in eternity than the essential substance of the Godhead; and that all blessed spirits shall be so simply absorbed with God in the Essential Blessedness that nothing shall remain beside it, neither willing nor working, nor the discerning knowledge of any creature whatsoever. Behold, these men have gone astray into the vacant and blind simplicity of their own being, and they seek for

blessedness in bare nature; for they are so simply and so idly united with the bare essence of their souls, and with that wherein God always is, that they have neither zeal, nor cleaving to God, neither from without, nor from within. For in the highest part into which they have entered, they feel nothing but the simplicity of their own proper being, depending upon the Being of God. And the onefold simplicity which they there possess, they take to be God, because they find a natural rest therein. And so they think themselves to be God in their simple ground; for they lack true faith, hope and charity. And, because of the naked emptiness which they feel and possess, they say that they are without knowledge and without love, and are exempt from the virtues. And so they endeavour to live without heeding their conscience, what wickedness soever they commit. And they are careless of the sacraments, and of all virtues, and of all the practices of Holy Church, and believe that they have no need of them: for they fancy in their folly that they have passed beyond all these things, but imperfect men, they say, have need of them. And some men have become so accustomed to and deep-rooted in this simplification that they would know and heed as little of all the works which God has wrought, and all that Scripture teaches, as though not one line had ever been written; for they believe themselves to have found and to possess that for the sake of which all Scriptures have been made, namely, the blind essential rest which they feel. But in fact they have lost God and all the ways which may lead to Him; for they have no more inwardness, nor more

devotion, nor holy practices, than a dead beast has. Yet they sometimes approach the sacraments, and at times they quote the Scriptures, that thus they may the better dissimulate and cover themselves; and they like to take some dark saying of Scripture, which they can falsely turn to their own sense, so that they may please other simple men, and may draw them into the false vacancy which they themselves feel. Behold, these folk think themselves wise and subtle beyond any one else, and yet they are the most coarse and crude of all men living; for that which even Pagans and Jews and bad Christians, learned and unlearned, find and understand through their natural reason, these wretched men neither can nor will attain. You may cross yourselves against the devil, but beware earnestly of these perverted men, and take care lest you should not recognise them in their words and works. For they would teach, and be taught of none; they would reprove, and be reprov'd of none; they would command, and obey none. They would oppress others, but no one may oppress them; they wish to say whatever they like, but will endure no contradiction; they recognise only their own self-will and are subject to no one; and this they take to be ghostly freedom. They practise the liberty of the flesh, for they give to the body whatsoever it lusts after; and this they take to be natural freedom. They have unified themselves in a blind and dark vacancy of their own being; and there, they think, they are one with God, and they take this for the Eternal Blessedness. And they have entered into this, and have taken possession of it, through self-will and their

natural tendency; and therefore they imagine themselves to be set above the law and above the commandments of God and Holy Church. For, above that essential rest which they possess, they feel neither God nor any otherness; for the Divine light has not shone into their dimness. And this is because they have neither sought after it through active love nor through supernatural freedom. And thus they have lost truth and every virtue, and have fallen into a perverted unlikeness; for they make it a part of the highest holiness that a man should yield to all that concerns his nature, and be without restraint, so that he may abide, with an inclined spirit, in vacancy; and that as regards the lusts of the flesh whenever they move him, he should turn outwards, that the flesh being satisfied, he may quickly escape from the image and may return once more unencumbered into the bare vacancy of his spirit. Lo! this is a fruit of hell, which grows from their unbelief; and therewith shall unbelief be nourished even in death. For, when the time has come and their nature is weighed down with bitter woe and the sorrow of death, then they are filled with images and unrest and inward fear; and they lose their vacant introversion in quietude, and fall into such despair that none can console them, and they die like mad dogs. And their vacancy shall bring them no reward, and those who worked wicked works, and died in them shall go to the eternal flames, as our faith teaches.

I have shown to you the evil and the good side by side, so that you may so much the better understand

the good and be able to guard against the evil. You shall abhor and fly from such folk, for, how holy soever they seem in their conduct, in works, in dress and demeanour, they are the mortal enemies of your soul. For they are the devil's ministers, and the most noxious of all who now live to simple and unlearned men of good-will. But I will leave this subject, and go back again to the matter with which I first began.

### **OF THREE ENEMIES TO BE OVERCOME BY RIGHTEOUSNESS**

Now, if we wish to possess these virtues, and to cast out their opposites, we must possess righteousness, and we must practise and preserve it in purity of heart unto death; for we have three powerful adversaries, who tempt us and make war on us at all times, in all places, and in many ways. If we make peace with one of these three, and become subject to him, we are vanquished; for the three of them agree together in all iniquity.

These three adversaries are the devil, the world and our own flesh; and this last is the nearest to us and often the worst and most harmful of all three to us; for our fleshly lusts are the weapons with which our enemies make war on us. Idleness and indifference to virtue and the glory of God, these are the causes and the occasions of the struggle. But the weakness of our nature, our carelessness and ignorance of truth, these are the swords with which our enemies often wound, and sometimes conquer us.

And for this reason we should build up a wall and make a separation within ourselves. And the lower part of ourselves, which is beastly and contrary to the virtues, and which wills our separation from God, we should hate and persecute, and we should torment it by means of penances and austerity of life; so that it be always repressed, and subject to reason, that thereby righteousness and purity of heart may always have the upper hand in all the works of virtue. And all the suffering, grief, and persecution, which God sends us through these enemies of virtue, we should gladly bear for the glory of God, and for the honour of the virtues, and that we may obtain and possess righteousness in purity of heart; for Christ says: Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. For a righteousness which is maintained in suffering and in virtuous deeds is like the penny which is counted as heavy as the kingdom of God; and with it is bought eternal life.

And with these virtues a man goes out towards God, towards himself, and towards his neighbour, in good customs, in virtues, and in righteousness.

## **OF HUMILITY**

Now understand this: we find in Christ, according to His Godhead, two kinds of humility.

The first kind is this: that He willed to become man, and took upon Himself that very nature which had been banished and cursed to the bottom of hell, and

willed to become one with it according to His personality; so that now any man, either good or evil, can say: Christ, the Son of God, is my brother.

The second kind of humility according to His Godhead consists in this; that He chose a poor maiden, and not a king's daughter, for His mother, so that a poor maiden should be the mother of God, who is Lord of heaven and earth and all creatures.

And further, we can say of all the works of humility which Christ ever wrought, that they were wrought by God Himself.

Now let us take the humility which was in Christ according to His manhood and through the grace and the gifts of God. In this humility His soul with all its powers bowed down in reverence and adoration before the most high might of the Father; for a bowed down heart is a humble heart. And therefore He wrought all His works for the praise and for the honour of His Father, and never and in nothing sought His own glory according to His humanity.

He was humble and subject to the old law, and to the commandments, and also to custom whenever such was right. And that is why He was circumcised, and taken into the temple, and redeemed in the customary way; and He paid His tribute money to Caesar like any other Jew. And He was humble and subject to His mother and to the lord Joseph; and that is why He served them with true reverence according to all their needs. He chose poor and outcast people for His



comrades, to live with, and wherewith to convert the world: these were the Apostles. And He was lowly and meek among them and among all other men. And He was ever ready for all men in whatever inward or outward need they might be: as if he were the servant of all the world.

This is the first point which we find in Christ our Bridegroom.

### OF CHARITY

The second point is charity, beginning and origin of all virtues. This charity upheld the higher powers of His soul in quietness, and in a fruition of that very bliss which He now enjoys. And this charity kept Him constantly uplifted to His Father in reverence, in love, in adoration, in praise; with fervent prayers for the needs of all men, and with an offering up of all His works to the glory of His Father.

It was also this same charity that made Christ stoop with loving faithfulness and kindness to the bodily and ghostly needs of all men. And in this He gave an example to all men, teaching them by His life how to live. He fed in ghostly wise with true and inward teachings all those men who could understand them: and others from without through the senses with signs and wonders. And sometimes He fed them also with bodily food, as when they had followed Him into the desert and were in need of it. He made the deaf hear and the lame walk straight, and the blind see, and the dumb speak, and cast forth devils from

men. He raised up the dead; and this should be understood both in a bodily and a ghostly way. Christ, our Lover, has laboured for us from without and from within, with true faithfulness. His charity we cannot fathom and understand, for it flows out of the unfathomable fountain of the Holy Ghost, and transcends all that creatures have ever experienced of charity; for Christ was God and man in one Person.

And this is the second point: that is to say, charity.

### **OF PATIENT ENDURANCE**

The third point is patient endurance. We should mark this point carefully, for it adorned Christ our Bridegroom during all His life. For His sufferings began very early, as soon as He was born; they began with poverty and cold. Then He was circumcised and shed His blood; He was driven to a strange country; He served the lord Joseph and His mother; He suffered hunger and thirst, shame and contempt, the vile words and works of the Jews. He fasted, He watched, and He was tempted by the devil. He was subject to all men; He wandered from country to country, from town to town, with much labour and great zeal, that He might preach the Gospel.

At last He was taken prisoner by the Jews, who were His enemies, though He was their friend. He was betrayed, mocked and insulted, scourged and buffeted, and condemned by false witness. He bore His cross with great pains up to the highest point of the land. He was stripped stark naked. So fair a body

neither man nor woman ever saw so cruelly ill-used. He suffered shame, and anguish, and cold, before all the world: for He was naked, and it was cold, and a searching wind cut into His wounds. He was nailed to the wood of the cross with blunt nails, and so stretched out that His veins were torn asunder. He was lifted up and then flung down, and because of the blow His wounds began to bleed again. His head was crowned with thorns; His ears heard the Jews cry in their fury: Crucify Him, Crucify Him, with many other infamous words. His eyes saw the hardness and malice of the Jews, and the anguish of His mother. And His eyes overflowed with the bitterness of sorrow and death; His nose smelt the filth which the Jews spat out of their mouths into His face; His mouth and tongue dripped with vinegar mingled with gall, and every sensitive part of His body had been wounded by the scourge.

Christ our Bridegroom, wounded to the death, forsaken of God and of all creatures, dying on the cross, hanging like a log for which no one cared, save Mary, His poor mother, who could not help Him!

Christ also suffered spiritually, in His soul, because of the hardened hearts of the Jews and of those who were putting Him to death; for whatever signs and wonders they saw, they remained in their wickedness. And He suffered because of their corruption and because of the vengeance for His death; for He knew that God would avenge it on them, body and soul. Also He suffered from the

distress and anguish of His mother and His disciples, who were in great affliction. And He suffered still more, because His death would be of no profit to so many men, and because of the ingratitude of man and because of the false oaths which many would swear, reviling and blaspheming Him Who had died out of love for us all. And also His bodily nature and His lower reason suffered, because God had withdrawn the inflow of His grace and of His consolations, and had left them alone in such distress. And of this Christ complained, exclaiming: My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? But as to all His sufferings our Lover was silent; and cried to His Father saying: Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And Christ was heard of His Father because of His reverence; for those who acted from ignorance were soon afterwards converted.

These then were Christ's inward virtues: humility, charity, and patient endurance. These three virtues Christ our Bridegroom practised during all His life, and He died with them, and paid our debt according to justice. And of His generosity He has opened His side. Thence flow forth the rivers of well-being and the sacraments of bliss. And He has ascended in power, and sits at the right hand of the Father, and reigns in eternity.

This is the first coming of our Bridegroom, and it is wholly past.

## HOW HUMILITY IS THE FOUNDATION OF ALL OTHER VIRTUES

Now consider this: as we have laid down humility as a foundation, so therefore we shall speak of humility first.

Humility, that is lowliness or self-abasement, is an inward bowing down or prostrating of the heart and of the conscience before God's transcendent worth. Righteousness demands and orders this, and through charity a loving heart cannot leave it undone. When a lowly and loving man considers that God has served him so humbly, so lovingly, and so faithfully; and sees God so high, and so mighty, and so noble, and man so poor, and so little, and so low: then there springs up within the humble heart a great awe and a great veneration for God. For to pay homage to God by every outward and inward act, this is the first and dearest work of humility, the most savoury among those of charity, and most meet among those of righteousness. The loving and humble heart cannot pay homage enough, either to God or to His noble manhood, nor can it abase itself as much as it would. And that is why a humble man thinks that his worship of God and his lowly service are always falling short. And he is meek, reverencing Holy Church and the sacraments. And he is discreet in food and drink, in speech, in the answers which he makes to everybody; and in his behaviour, dress, and lowly service he is without hypocrisy and without pretence. And he is humble in his devotions, both outwardly and inwardly, before God and before all men, so that

none are offended because of him. And so he overcomes and casts out Pride, which is the source and origin of all other sins. By humility the snares of the devil, and of sin, and of the world, are broken, and man is set in order, and established in the very condition of virtue. And heaven is opened to him, and God stoops to hear his prayers, and he is fulfilled with grace. And Christ, that strong rock, is his foundation. Whosoever therefore grounds his virtues in humility, he shall never err.

## OF OBEDIENCE

From this humility there springs obedience, for none can be inwardly obedient save the humble man.

Obedience means an unassuming, submissive, and pliable humour, and a will in readiness for all that is good. Obedience makes a man submit to the biddings, the forbiddings, and the will of God; it subjects the senses and the animal powers to the higher reason, so that a man may live decently and reasonably. And it makes men submissive and obedient to Holy Church, to the sacraments, to the prelates and their teaching, to their commandments and their counsels, and to all the good customs practised by Holy Christendom. It also makes a man ready and supple in his intercourse with other men, in deed and counsel, in ghostly and bodily business, with prudent discretion, according to the needs of each.

And it casts out disobedience, that daughter of pride, more to be abhorred than venom or poison. To be obedient in will and deed adorns and enlarges and reveals the humility of a man. It makes peace in the cloister. If it is in the prelate, as it ought to be, it will draw to him all those whom he rules. It makes for peace and unanimity between equals; and he who has it is loved by his superiors and by those who are set over him; whilst by God he is advanced, and enriched with His gifts, which are eternal.

### OF THE RENUNCIATION OF SELF WILL

From this obedience there springs the renunciation of one's own will and one's own opinion, for none can submit his own will in all things to the will of another, save the obedient man: though one may obey in outward things and yet remain self-willed.

The forsaking of one's own will causes a man to live without preference for either this or that, in doing or leaving undone, in those things which are strange and special in the saints, in their precepts and in their practice; but it makes him to live always according to the glory and the commandments of God, and the will of his prelates, and in peace with all men in his neighbourhood, so far as true prudence permits.

By renouncing self-will in doing, in leaving undone, and in suffering, the material and occasion of pride are wholly cast out, and humility is made perfect in the highest degree. And God becomes the Lord of the man's whole will; and the man's will is so united with

the will of God that he can neither will nor desire in any other way. This man has put off the old man, and has put on the new man, who is renewed and made according to the dearest will of God. Of all such Christ says: Blessed are the poor in spirit that is to say, those who have renounced self-will – for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

## OF PATIENCE

From the renunciation of self-will springs patience; for none can be perfectly patient in all things save the man who has subjected his own will to the will of God, and also in all profitable and seemly things, to the will of all other men.

Patience is a peaceful endurance of all things that may befall a man either from God or from the creatures. Nothing can trouble the patient man; neither the loss of earthly goods, of friends and kinsmen, nor sickness, nor disgrace, nor life, nor death, nor purgatory, nor devil, nor hell. For he has abandoned himself in perfect charity to the will of God, and as he is not burdened by mortal sin, everything that God imposes on him, in time and in eternity, is light to him. By this patience a man is also adorned and armed against peevishness and sudden wrath, and impatience in suffering; which often stir a man from within and from without, and lay him open to many temptations.



## OF MEEKNESS

From this patience there spring meekness and kindliness, for none can be meek in adversity save the patient man.

Meekness gives a man peace and rest in all things. For the meek man can bear provoking words and ways, uncivil looks and deeds, and every kind of injustice towards himself and his friends, and yet in all things remain in peace, for meekness is peaceful endurance.

By meekness the irascible or repulsive power remains unmoved, in quietude; the desirous power is uplifted toward virtue; the rational power, perceiving this, rejoices. And the conscience, tasting it, rests in peace; for the second mortal sin, Anger, fury, or wrath, has been cast out. For the Spirit of God dwells in the humble and the meek; and Christ says: Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth, that is, their own nature and all earthly things, in meekness; and after that the Country of Life in Eternity.

## OF KINDLINESS

Out of the same source wherein meekness takes its rise springs kindliness, for none can be kind save the meek man.

This kindness makes a man show a friendly face, and give a cordial response, and do compassionate deeds, to those who are quarrelsome, when he hopes that

they will come to know themselves and mend their ways.

By gentleness and kindness, charity is kept quick and fruitful in man, for a heart full of kindness is like a lamp full of precious oil; for the oil of mercy enlightens the erring sinner with good example, and with words and works of comfort it anoints and heals those whose hearts are wounded or grieved or perplexed. And it is a fire and a light for those who dwell in the virtues, in the fire of charity; and neither jealousy nor envy can perturb it.

## OF COMPASSION

Out of kindness springs compassion, which is a fellow-feeling with all men; for none can share the griefs of all, save him who is kind.

Compassion is an inward movement of the heart, stirred by pity for the bodily and ghostly griefs of all men. This compassion makes a man suffer with Christ in His passion; for he who is compassionate marks the wherefore of His pains and the way of His resignation; of His love, His wounds, His tenderness; of His grief and His nobleness; of the disgrace, the misery, and the shame He endured; of the way in which He was despised; of His crown; of the nails; of His mercifulness; of His destruction and dying in patience. These manifold and unheard-of sorrows of Christ, our Saviour and our Bridegroom, move all kindly men to pity and compassion with Christ.

Compassion makes a man look into himself, and recognize his faults, his feebleness in virtues and in the worship of God, his lukewarmness, his laziness, his many failings, the time he has wasted and his present imperfection in moral and other virtues; all this makes a man feel true pity and compassion for himself. Further, compassion marks the errors and disorders of our fellow-creatures, how little they care for their God and their eternal blessedness, their ingratitude for all the good things which God has done for them, and the pains He suffered for their sake; how they are strangers to virtue, unskilled and unpractised in it, but skilful and cunning in every wickedness; how attentive they are to the loss and gain of earthly goods, how careless and reckless they are of God, of eternal things, and their eternal bliss. When he marks this, a good man is moved to compassion for the salvation of all men.

Such a man will also regard with pity the bodily needs of his neighbours, and the manifold sufferings of human nature; seeing men hungry, thirsty, cold, naked, sick, poor, and abject; the manifold oppressions of the poor, the grief caused by loss of kinsmen, friends, goods, honour, peace; all the countless sorrows which befall the nature of man. These things move the just to compassion, so that they share the sorrows of all. But their greatest pain springs from this: that men are so impatient of this suffering, that they lose their reward, and may often earn hell for themselves. Such is the work of compassion and of pity.

This work of compassion and of common neighbourly love overcomes and casts out the third mortal sin, that is hatred or Envy. For compassion is a wound in the heart, whence flows a common love to all mankind and which cannot be healed so long as any suffering lives in man; for God has ordained grief and sorrow of heart before all the virtues. And this is why Christ says: Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. And that shall come to pass when they reap in joy that which now, through compassion and pity, they sow in tears.

### OF GENEROSITY

From this compassion springs generosity; for none can be generous in a supernatural way, with faithfulness and goodwill towards all, save him who has a pitiful heart though a man may often show generosity to a particular person without charity and without supernatural generosity.

Generosity is a liberal flowing forth of the heart which has been touched by charity and pity. When a man considers with compassion the sufferings and the sorrows of Christ, therefrom springs generosity; which makes him offer to Christ, for His pains and for His love, praise and thanks, worship and adoration, with a joyful and humble surrender of body and soul, in time and in eternity. If a man considers himself with compassion, and has pity on himself, and thinks upon the good which God has done to him, and his own failings: then he must pour himself forth into the generosity of God, taking refuge in His faithfulness

and His mercy, turning to Him with trust and with a perfect and free intention to serve Him for evermore. And the generous man who sees the errors and disorders of others, and their unrighteousness, beseeches and prays God, with ardent faith, that He will let His Divine gifts flow forth, that He will show His generosity to all men, and they may know Him and turn to the Truth. The generous man also marks with compassion the bodily needs of all men, and he serves, and he gives, and he lends, and he consoles everyone, according to the needs of each, in so far as he is able, with prudent discretion.

Because of this generosity men are wont to practise the seven works of mercy; the rich do them by their alms and because of their riches, the poor by their good-will and by their hearty desire to do as the rich if they could. And thus the virtue of generosity is made perfect.

By generosity of heart all other virtues are increased, and all the powers of the soul are adorned; for the generous man is always blithe in spirit and untroubled of heart, and he flows forth with desire and in his works of virtue, to all men in common. Whosoever is generous, and loves not earthly goods how poor soever he be, he is like God: for all that he has in himself, and all that he feels, flow forth and are given away. And in this way he has cast out the fourth mortal sin, which is covetousness or Avarice. Of all such Christ says: Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy in that day when they shall

hear these words: Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you because of your mercy, from the foundation of the world.

## OF ZEAL AND DILIGENCE

Out of this generosity there spring a supernatural zeal and diligence in all virtues and all that is seemly. And none can feel this zeal save him who overflows with generosity. It is an inward restless striving after every virtue, after the likeness of Christ and of all His saints. In this zeal a man longs to devote his heart and his senses, his soul and his body, and all that he is, and all that he has and all toward which he aspires, to the glory and praise of God.

This zeal makes a man grow in reason and prudence, and practise the virtues, both of soul and of body, in righteousness. Through this supernatural zeal all the powers of the soul are laid open to God, and are made ready for all virtues. And the conscience rejoices, and the grace of God is increased; the virtues are practised with joy and gladness, and the outward works are adorned.

Whosoever has received this living zeal from God has cast out the fifth mortal sin, which is indolence of the mind or Sloth, as regards the virtues which it is needful that we should practise. And sometimes, this living zeal also casts out the sloth and indolence of the natural body. Of all such Christ says: Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled, and this shall come to pass

when the glory of God shall be manifest to them, and shall fill them, each according to his love and righteousness.

## OF TEMPERANCE AND SOBRIETY

From this zeal there spring temperance and sobriety, both inward and outward; for none can possess the right measure of sobriety save him who is greatly zealous and diligent to keep his soul and body in righteousness. Sobriety divides the higher powers from the animal powers; it saves a man from intemperance and from excess. Sobriety wishes neither to taste, nor to know, those things which are forbidden.

The incomprehensible and most high Nature of God transcends all creatures in heaven and on earth. For all that a creature can comprehend is of the creature; but God is above all creatures and within and without all creatures, and every created comprehension is too narrow to comprehend Him. But if a creature is to comprehend and to understand God, it must be caught up beyond itself into God, and comprehend God with God. Whosoever then would know and understand what God is which is not permitted he would go mad. Behold, all created light is powerless to know what God is. What God is in Himself, transcends all creatures, but that God exists, is testified by nature, and by Holy Writ, and by every creature. We should believe the articles of faith, and not desire to understand them, for this is impossible as long as we are here below: such is sobriety. The

mysterious and subtle teachings of Holy Writ, inspired by the Holy Ghost, should not be explained and understood in any other way than in their bearing upon the lives of Christ and His saints. Man should consider nature, and the Scriptures, and all creatures, and take from these that which profits him and nothing more. Such is sobriety of spirit.

A man should keep his senses in sobriety and should restrain the animal powers by means of the reason; so that the lusts of the flesh do not enter too far into the savouring of food and of drink; but he should eat and drink as the sick take their physic, because it is needful to support his strength, that he may serve God therewith. This is sobriety of body. He should also observe method and moderation in doing and in leaving undone, in words and in works, in silence and in speaking, in food and in drink, according to the custom of Holy Church, and after the example of the saints.

By inward and ghostly temperance and sobriety a man preserves firmness and constancy of faith, purity of intelligence, that tranquillity of reason necessary to the comprehension of truth, an impulse towards all virtues according to the will of God, peace of heart, and serenity of conscience. And herewith he possesses an enduring peace, in God and in himself.

And by temperance and sobriety of the outward bodily senses, a man often preserves the health and the soundness of his natural body, the dignity of his outward life, and a good reputation. And thus he



lives in peace with himself and with his neighbours; for by his temperance and sobriety he draws to himself and pleases all men of good-will. And thus he casts out the sixth mortal sin, which is intemperance, greed or Gluttony. Of all such Christ says: Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God; for they are like unto the Son, Who has made peace in every creature who desired peace. And whosoever makes peace in himself through his temperance and sobriety shall partake with Him of the inheritance of His Father; and shall possess it with Him in eternity.

### OF PURITY

From this temperance there springs purity both of soul and of body, for none can be perfectly pure in body and in soul save him who is temperate in body and in soul.

Purity of spirit is this: that a man should not cleave to any creature with desirous affection, but to God alone; for we should use all creatures, but enjoy only God. Purity of spirit makes a man cleave to God, above all understanding, and above all feelings, and above all the gifts which God may pour into his soul: for all that a creature receives in his understanding and in his feeling, purity will pass by, to rest in God. Go therefore to the Sacrament of the Altar, not for the sake of refreshment, nor because of desire, nor for pleasure, nor for peace, nor for satisfaction, nor for sweetness, nor for anything else than the glory of God

and your own growth in all virtues. This is purity of spirit.

Purity of heart is this: that a man, in every bodily temptation or natural inclination, of his own free will, and with an ever-renewed confidence and without hesitation, turns to God; with an ever-renewed faithfulness and with a firm will ever to remain with Him. For consenting to those sins or satisfactions, which the bodily nature seeks like a beast, is a departure from God.

Purity of body is this: that a man withdraws from, and bewares of, all unchaste deeds, in whatsoever manner they be, which his conscience teaches and declares to be unchaste, and contrary to the commandments, the honour, and the will of God.

By these three kinds of purity the seventh mortal sin is overcome and cast out; that is, Unchastity. And this is a consenting and turning of the spirit from God to some creaturely thing; it is the unchaste work of the body contrary to the dispensation of Holy Church; it is a sensual dwelling of the heart upon the taste or enjoyment of some creature, whatsoever it be. But thereby I do not mean those sudden movements of appetite and desire, which no one can prevent.

Now you should know that purity of spirit keeps a man in the likeness of God, untroubled by any creature and inclined towards God, and united with Him.

Purity of body is likened to the whiteness of lilies and to the cleanness of the angels. In withstanding, it is likened to the redness of roses and to the nobleness of martyrs. If it is kept for the love and the glory of God, it is perfect. And so it is likened to the sunflower, for it is one of the highest ornaments of nature.

Purity of heart works a renewal and increase of the grace of God. By purity of heart all the virtues are prompted, practised and preserved. It guards and keeps the senses from without; it quells and restrains the animal lusts from within; it is an adornment of all inwardness. And it is the door of the heart; barred against all earthly things and all deceit, but opened to all heavenly things and to all truth. And of all such Christ says: Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God; and in this vision consist our eternal joy, our reward and our entrance into bliss. Therefore men should be sober and temperate in all things, and beware of all intercourse and occasion whereby purity, whether of soul or of body, may be defiled.

### **HOW GOOD MEN IN THEIR CONTEMPLATION HAVE THE LOVE OF GOD BEFORE THEM, AND HOW THEY ARE LIFTED UP INTO GOD**

They have the Love of God before them in their inward seeing, as a common good pouring forth through heaven and earth; and they feel the Holy Trinity inclined towards them, and within them, with fulness of grace. And therefore they are adorned without and within with all the virtues, with holy practices and with good works. And thus they are

united with God through Divine grace and their own holy lives. And because they have abandoned themselves to God in doing, in leaving undone, and in suffering, they have steadfast peace and inward joy, consolation and savour, of which the world cannot partake; neither any dissembler, nor the man who seeks and means himself more than the glory of God. Moreover, those same inward and enlightened men have before them in their inward seeing whenever they will, the Love of God as something drawing or urging them into the Unity; for they see and feel that the Father with the Son through the Holy Ghost, embrace Each Other and all the chosen, and draw themselves back with eternal love into the unity of Their Nature. Thus the Unity is ever drawing to itself and inviting to itself everything that has been born of It, either by nature or by grace. And therefore, too, such enlightened men are, with a free spirit, lifted up above reason into a bare and imageless vision, wherein lives the eternal indrawing summons of the Divine Unity; and, with an imageless and bare understanding, they pass through all works, and all exercises, and all things, until they reach the summit of their spirits. There, their bare understanding is drenched through by the Eternal Brightness, even as the air is drenched through by the sunshine. And the bare, uplifted will is transformed and drenched through by abysmal love, even as iron is by fire. And the bare, uplifted memory feels itself enwrapped and established in an abysmal Absence of Image. And thereby the created image is united above reason in a threefold way with its Eternal Image, which is the

origin of its being and its life; and this origin is preserved and possessed, essentially and eternally, through a simple seeing in an imageless void: and so a man is lifted up above reason in a threefold manner into the Unity, and in a onefold manner into the Trinity. Yet the creature does not become God, for the union takes place in God through grace and our homeward-turning love: and therefore the creature in its inward contemplation feels a distinction and an otherness between itself and God. And though the union is without means, yet the manifold works which God works in heaven and on earth are nevertheless hidden from the spirit. For though God gives Himself as He is, with clear discernment, He gives Himself in the essence of the soul, where the powers of the soul are simplified above reason, and where, in simplicity, they suffer the transformation of God. There all is full and overflowing, for the spirit feels itself to be one truth and one richness and one unity with God. Yet even here there is an essential tending forward, and therein is an essential distinction between the being of the soul and the Being of God; and this is the highest and finest distinction which we are able to feel.

### **OF THE HIGHEST UNION, WITHOUT DIFFERENCE OR DISTINCTION**

And after this there follows the union without distinction. For you must apprehend the Love of God not only as an outpouring with all good, and as drawing back again into the Unity; but it is also, above all distinction, an essential fruition in the bare

Essence of the Godhead. And in consequence of this enlightened men have found within themselves an essential contemplation which is above reason and without reason, and a fruitive tendency which pierces through every condition and all being, and through which they immerse themselves in a wayless abyss of fathomless beatitude, where the Trinity of the Divine Persons possess Their Nature in the essential Unity. Behold, this beatitude is so onefold and so wayless that in it every essential gazing, tendency, and creaturely distinction cease and pass away. For by this fruition, all uplifted spirits are melted and noughted in the Essence of God, Which is the superessence of all essence. There they fall from themselves into a solitude and an ignorance which are fathomless; there all light is turned to darkness; there the three Persons give place to the Essential Unity, and abide without distinction in fruition of essential blessedness. This blessedness is essential to God, and superessential to all creatures; for no created essence can become one with God's Essence and pass away from its own substance. For so the creature would become God, which is impossible; for the Divine Essence can neither wax nor wane, nor can anything be added to It or taken from It. Yet all loving spirits are one fruition and one blessedness with God without distinction; for that beatific state, which is the fruition of God and of all His beloved, is so simple and onefold that therein neither Father, nor Son, nor Holy Ghost, is distinct according to the Persons, neither is any creature. But all enlightened spirits are here lifted up above themselves into a wayless

fruition, which is an abundance beyond all the fulness that any creature has ever received or shall ever receive. For there all uplifted spirits are, in their superessence, one fruition and one beatitude with God without distinction; and there this beatitude is so onefold that no distinction can enter into it. And this was prayed for by Christ when He besought His Father in heaven that all His beloved might be made perfect in one, even as He is one with the Father through the Holy Ghost: even so He prayed and besought that He in us and we in Him and His heavenly Father might be one in fruition through the Holy Ghost. And this I think the most loving prayer which Christ ever made for our blessedness.

### **OF THE THREEFOLD PRAYER OF CHRIST, THAT WE MIGHT BE ONE WITH GOD**

But you should also observe that His prayer, as it has been written by St John in this same Gospel, was threefold. For He prayed that we might be with Him, that we might behold the glory which His Father had given Him. And therefore I said at the beginning that all good men are united with God by means of Divine grace and their own virtuous life; for the love of God is always pouring into us with new gifts, and whosoever is aware of this is fulfilled with new virtues and holy exercises and with all good, in the way that I told you heretofore: and this union through the fulness of grace and glory, in body and soul, begins here below and shall endure throughout eternity.

Further, Christ prayed thus, that He might be in us and we in Him. This we find in the Gospel, in many places. And this is the union without means; for the Love of God is not only outpouring, but it also draws us inwards, into the Unity. And those who feel and are aware of this, become inward and enlightened men, and their highest powers are uplifted, above all exercises, into their naked being; and there, above reason, the powers become simplified in their essence, and so they are full and overflowing. For in that simplicity, the spirit finds itself united with God without means; and this union, with the exercise which belongs to it, shall endure eternally, as I have told you heretofore.

Further, Christ uttered His most sublime prayer, namely, that His beloved might be made perfect in one, as He is one with the Father: not one as He is with the Father one single Divine Substance, for this is impossible to us; but so one, and in such a unity, as He is one fruition and one beatitude with the Father without distinction in Essential Love. Those who are thus united with God in this threefold way, in them the prayer of Christ has been fulfilled.

These with God shall ebb and flow,  
 Having and joying, they shall empty go;  
 They shall both work and passively endure,  
 And in their superessence rest secure.  
 They shall go out and in, and find their food,  
 And, drunk with love, in radiant darkness sleep in  
 God.



Many more words I should like to say here, but those who possess this have no need of them: and he to whom it has been shown, and who cleaves with love to Love, he shall be taught the whole truth by Love itself. But those who turn outwards, and would find consolation in outward things, do not feel this; and, even though I should say much more of it, yet they would not understand. For those who give themselves wholly to outward works, or those who are idle in inward passivity, shall never be able to understand it. Now although reason and all bodily feelings must here give place and yield to the faith and contemplation of the spirit, and to those things which are above reason; yet reason and also the life of the senses continue to abide in their place, and cannot pass away, any more than the nature of man can pass away. And further, though the gazing and tendency of the spirit towards God must give place to fruition in simplicity; yet this gazing and this tendency continue to exist in their place. For this is the inmost life of the spirit; and, in the enlightened and uplifted man, the life of the senses adheres to the spirit. And so his sensual powers are joined to God by heart-felt love, and his nature is fulfilled with all good; and he feels that his ghostly life adheres to God without means. And thereby his highest powers are uplifted to God in eternal love, and drenched through by Divine truth, and established in imageless freedom. And so he is filled with God, and overflowing without measure. In this inundation there comes to pass the essential outpouring or immersion in the superessential Unity; and this is the union without

distinction, of which I have often told you. For in the superessence all our ways end. If we will go with God upon the highway of love, we shall rest with Him eternally and without end: and thus we shall eternally go forth towards God and enter into Him and rest in Him.

# Islam

## The Alchemy of Happiness

BY AL GHAZZALI

CLAUD FIELD, translator [b. 1863, d. 1941]

[1909]

### CHAPTER VIII

#### THE LOVE OF GOD

THE love of God is the highest of all topics, and is the final aim to which we have been tending hitherto. We have spoken of spiritual dangers as they hinder the love of God in a man's heart, and we have spoken of various good qualities as being the necessary preliminaries to it. Human perfection resides in this, that the love of God should conquer a man's heart and possess it wholly, and even if it does not possess it wholly it should predominate in the heart over the love of all other things. Nevertheless, rightly to understand the love of God is so difficult a matter that one sect of theologians have altogether denied that man can love a Being who is not of his own species, and they have defined the love of God as

consisting merely in obedience. Those who hold such views do not know what real religion is.

All Moslems are agreed that the love of God is a duty. God says concerning the believers, "He loves them and they love Him, and the Prophet said, "Till a man loves God and His Prophet more than anything else he has not the right faith." When the angel of death came to take the soul of Abraham the latter said, "Have you ever seen a friend take his friend's life?" God answered him, "Have you ever seen a friend unwilling to see his friend?" Then Abraham said, "O Azrael! take my soul!" The following prayer was taught by the Prophet to his companions, "O God, grant me to love Thee and to love those who love Thee, and whatsoever brings me nearer to Thy love, and make Thy love more precious to me than cold water to the thirsty." Hassan Basri used to say, "He who knows God loves Him, and he who knows the world hates it."

We come now to treat of love in its essential nature. Love may be defined as an inclination to that which is pleasant. This is apparent in the case of the five senses, each of which may be said to love that which gives it delight; thus the eye loves beautiful forms, the ear music, etc. This is a kind of love we share with the animals. But there is a sixth sense, or faculty of perception, implanted in the heart, which animals do not possess, through which we become aware of spiritual beauty and excellence. Thus, a man who is only acquainted with sensuous delights cannot

understand what the Prophet meant when he said he loved prayer more than perfumes or women, though the last two were also pleasant to him. But he whose inner eye is opened to behold the beauty and perfection of God will despise all outward sights in comparison, however fair they may be.

The former kind of man will say that beauty resides in red-and-white complexions, well-proportioned limbs, and so forth, but he will be blind to moral beauty, such as men refer to when they speak of such and such a man as possessing a "beautiful" character. But those possessed of inner perception find it quite possible to love the departed great, such as the Caliphs Omar and Abu Bakr, on account of their noble qualities, though their bodies have long been mingled with the dust. Such love is directed not towards any outward form, but towards the inner character. Even when we wish to excite love in a child towards any one, we do not describe their outward beauty of form, etc., but their inner excellences.

When we apply this principle to the love of God we shall find that He alone is worthy of our love, and that, if any one loves Him not, it is because he does not know Him. Whatever we love in any one we love because it is a reflection of Him. It is for this reason that we love Muhammad, because he is the Prophet and the Beloved of God, and the love of learned and pious men is really the love of God. We shall see this more clearly if we consider what are the causes which excite love.

The first cause is this, that man loves himself and the perfection of his own nature. This leads him directly to the love of God, for man's very existence and man's attributes are nothing else but the gift of God, but for whose grace and kindness man would never have emerged from behind the curtain of non-existence into the visible world. Man's preservation and eventual attainment to perfection are also, entirely dependent upon the grace of God. It would indeed be a wonder, if one should take refuge from the heat of the sun under the shadow of a tree and not be grateful to the tree, without which there would be no shadow at all. Precisely in the same way, were it not for God, man would have no existence nor attributes at all; wherefore, then, should he not love God, unless he be ignorant of Him? Doubtless fools cannot love Him, for the lover of Him springs directly from the knowledge of Him, and whence should a fool have knowledge?

The second cause of this love is that man loves his benefactor, and in truth his only Benefactor is God, for whatever kindness he receives from any fellow-creature is due to the immediate instigation of God. Whatever motive may have prompted the kindness he receives from another, whether the desire to gain religious merit or a good name, God is the Agent who set that motive to work.

The third cause is the love that is aroused by contemplation of the attributes of God, His power and wisdom, of which human power and wisdom are

but the feeblest reflections. This love is akin to that we feel to the great and good men of the past, such as the Imam Malik and the Imam Shafi, though we never expect to receive any personal benefits from them, and, is therefore a more disinterested kind of love. God said to the Prophet David, "That servant is dearest to Me who does not seek Me from fear of punishment or hope of reward, but to pay the debt due to My Deity." And in the Psalms it is written, "Who is a greater transgressor than he who worships Me from fear of hell or hope of heaven? If I had created neither, should I not then have deserved to be worshipped?"

The fourth cause of this love is the affinity between man and God, which is referred to in the saying of the Prophet, "Verily God created man in His own likeness." Furthermore, God has said, "My servant seeks proximity to Me, that I may make him My friend, and when I have made him My friend I become his ear, his eye, his tongue." Again, God said to Moses, "I was sick, and thou didst not visit Me?" Moses replied, "O God! Thou art Lord of heaven and earth: how couldest Thou be sick?"

God said, "A certain servant of Mine was sick; hadst thou visited, him, thou wouldst have visited Me."

This is a somewhat dangerous topic to dwell upon, as it is beyond the understanding of common people, and even intelligent men have stumbled in treating of it, and come to believe in incarnation and union with God. Still, the affinity which does exist between man

and God disposes of the objection of those theologians mentioned above, who maintain that man cannot love a Being who is not of his own species. However great the distance between them, man can love God because of the affinity indicated in the saying, "God created man in His own likeness."

*The Vision of God*

All Moslems profess to believe that the Vision of God is the summit of human felicity, because it is so stated in the Law; but with many this is a mere lip-profession which arouses no emotion in their hearts. This is quite, natural, for how can a man long for a thing of which he has no knowledge? We will endeavour you to show briefly why the Vision of God is the greatest happiness to which a man can attain.

In the first place, every one of man's faculties has its appropriate function which it delights to fulfil. This holds good of them all, from the lowest bodily appetite to the highest form of intellectual apprehension. But even a comparatively low form of mental exertion affords greater pleasure than the satisfaction of bodily appetites. Thus, if a man happens to be absorbed in a game of chess, he will not come to his meal, though repeatedly summoned. And the higher the subject-matter of our knowledge, the greater is our delight in it; for instance, we would take more pleasure in knowing the secrets of a king than the secrets of a vizier. Seeing, then, that God is the highest possible object of knowledge, the knowledge of Him must afford more delight than any other. He



who knows God, even in this world, dwells, as it were, in a paradise, "the breadth of which is as the breadth of the heavens and the earth," a paradise the fruits of which no envy can prevent him plucking, and the extent of which is not narrowed by the multitude of those who, occupy it.

But the delight of knowledge still falls short of the delight of vision, just as our pleasure in thinking of those we love is much less than the pleasure afforded by the actual sight of them. Our imprisonment in bodies of clay and water, and entanglement in the things of sense constitute a veil which hides the Vision of God from us, although it does not prevent our attaining to some knowledge of Him. For this reason God said to Moses on Mount Sinai, "Thou shalt not see Me."

The truth of the matter is this, that, just as the seed of man becomes a man, and a buried datestone becomes a palm-tree, so the knowledge of God acquired on earth will in the next world change into the Vision of God, and he who has never learnt the knowledge will never have the Vision. This Vision will not be shared alike by all who know, but their discernment of it will vary exactly as their knowledge. God is one, but He will be seen in many different ways, just as one object is reflected in different ways by different mirrors, some showing it straight, and some distorted, some clearly and some dimly. A mirror may be so crooked as to make even a beautiful form appear misshapen, and a man may carry into the next world a heart so

dark and distorted that the sight which will be a source of peace and joy to others will be to him a source of misery. He, in whose heart the love of God has prevailed over all else, will derive more joy from this vision than he in whose heart it has not so prevailed; just as in the case of two men with equally powerful eyesight, gazing on a beautiful face, he who already loves the possessor of that face will rejoice in beholding it more than he who does not. For perfect happiness mere knowledge is not enough, unaccompanied by love, and the love of God cannot take possession of a man's heart till it be purified from love of the world, which purification can only be effected by abstinence and austerity. While he is in this world a man's condition with regard to the Vision of God is like that of a lover who should see his Beloved's face in the twilight, while his clothes are infested with hornets and scorpions, which continually torment him. But should the sun arise and reveal his Beloved's face in all its beauty, and the noxious vermin leave off molesting him, then the lover's joy will be like that of God's servant, who, released from the twilight and the tormenting trials of this world, beholds Him without a veil. Abu Suleiman said, "He who is busy with himself now will be busy with himself then, and he who is occupied with God now will be occupied with Him then."

Yahya Ibn Muaz relates, "I watched Bayazid Bistami at prayer through one entire night. When he had finished he stood up and said, 'O Lord! some of Thy servants have asked and obtained of Thee the power

to perform miracles, to walk on the sea, and to fly in, the air, but this I do not ask; some have asked and obtained treasures, but these I do not ask.' Then he turned, and, seeing me, said, 'Are you there, Yahya?' I replied, 'Yes.' He asked, 'Since when?' I answered, 'For a long time.' I then asked him to reveal to me some of his spiritual experiences. 'I will reveal,' he answered, 'what is lawful to tell you. The Almighty showed me His kingdom, from its loftiest to its lowest; He raised me above the throne and the seat and all the seven heavens. Then He said, "Ask of me whatsoever thing thou desirest." I answered, "Lord! I wish for nothing beside Thee." "'Verily," He said, "thou art My servant.'"

On another occasion Bayazid said, "Were God to offer thee the intimacy with Himself of Abraham, the power in prayer of Moses, the spirituality of Jesus, yet keep thy face directed to Him only, for He has treasures surpassing even these." One day a friend said to him, "For thirty years I have fasted by day and prayed by night and have found none of that spiritual joy of which thou speakest." Bayazid answered, "If you fasted and prayed for three hundred years, you would never find it." "How is that?" asked the other. "Because," said Bayazid, "your selfishness is acting as a veil between you and God." "Tell me, then, the cure." "It is a cure which you cannot carry out." However, as his friend pressed him to reveal it, Bayazid said, "Go to the nearest barber and have your beard shaved; strip yourself of your clothes, with the exception of a girdle round your loins. Take a horse's

nosebag full of walnuts, hang it round your neck, go into the bazaar and cry out, 'Any boy who gives me a slap on the nape of my neck shall have a walnut.' Then, in this manner, go where the Cadi and the doctors of the law are sitting." "Bless my soul!" said his friend, "I really can't do that; do suggest some other remedy." "This is the indispensable preliminary to a cure," answered Bayazid, "but, as I told you, you are incurable."

The reason Bayazid indicated this method of cure for want of relish in devotion was that his friend was an ambitious seeker after place and honour. Ambition and pride are diseases which can only be cured in some such way. God said unto Jesus, "O Jesus! when I see in My servants' hearts pure love for Myself unmixed with any selfish desire concerning this world or the next, I act as guardian over that love." Again, when people asked Jesus "What is the highest work of all?" he answered, "To love God and to be resigned to His will." The saint Rabia was once asked whether she loved the Prophet: "The love of the Creator," she said, "has prevented my loving the creature." Ibrahim Ben Adham, in his prayers, said, "O God! In my eyes heaven itself is less than a gnat in comparison with the love of Thee and the joy of Thy remembrance which thou hast granted me."

He who supposes that it is possible to enjoy happiness in the next world apart from the love of God is far gone in error, for the very essence of the future life is to arrive at God as at an object of desire

long aimed at and attained through countless obstacles. This enjoyment of God is happiness. But if he had no delight in God before, he will not delight in Him then, and if his joy in God was but slight before it will be but slight then. In brief, our future happiness will be in strict proportion to the degree in which we have loved God here.

But (and may God preserve us from such a doom!) if in a man's heart there has been growing up a love of what is opposed to God, the conditions of the next life will be altogether alien to him, and that which will cause joy to others will to him cause misery.

This may be illustrated by the following anecdote: A certain scavenger went into the perfume-sellers' bazaar, and, smelling the sweet scents, fell down unconscious. People came round him and sprinkled rose-water upon him and held musk to his nose, but he only became worse. At last one came who had been a scavenger himself; he held a little filth under the man's nose and he revived instantly, exclaiming, with a sigh of satisfaction, "Ah! this is perfume indeed!" Thus in the next life a worldling will no longer find the filthy lucre and the filthy pleasures of the world; the spiritual joys of that world will be altogether alien to him and but increase his wretchedness. For the next world is a world of Spirit and of the manifestation of the Beauty of God; happy is that man who has aimed at and acquired affinity with it. All austerities, devotions, studies have the acquirement of that affinity for their aim, and that

affinity is love. This is the meaning of that saying of the Koran, "He who has purified his soul is happy." Sins and lusts directly oppose the attainment of this affinity; therefore the Koran goes on to say, "And he who has corrupted his soul is miserable." Those who are gifted with spiritual insight have really grasped this truth as a fact of experience, and not a merely traditional maxim. Their clear perception of it leads them to the conviction that he by whom it was spoken was a prophet indeed, just as a man who has studied medicine knows when he is listening to a physician. This is a kind of certainty which requires no support from miracles such as the conversion of a rod into a snake, the credit of which may be shaken by apparently equally extraordinary miracles performed by magicians.

### *The Signs of the Love of God*

Many claim to love God, but each should examine himself as to the genuineness of the love which he professes. The first test is this: he should not dislike the thought of death, for no friend shrinks from going to see a friend. The Prophet said, "Whoever wishes to see God, God wishes to see him." It is true a sincere lover of God may shrink from the thought of death coming before he has finished his preparation for the next world, but if he *is* sincere, he will be diligent in making such preparation.

The second test of sincerity is that a man should be willing to sacrifice his will to God's, should cleave to what brings him nearer to God, and should shun

what places him at a distance from God. The fact of a man's sinning is no proof that he does not love God at all, but it proves that he does not love Him with his whole heart. The saint Fudhail said to a certain man, "If any one asks you whether you love God, keep silent; for if you say, 'I do not love Him,' you are an infidel; and if you say, 'I do,' your deeds contradict you."

The third test is that the remembrance of God should always remain fresh in a man's heart without effort, for what a man loves he constantly remembers, and if his love is perfect he never forgets it. It is possible, however, that, while the love of God does not take the first place in a man's heart, the love of the love of God may, for love is one thing and the love of love another.

The fourth test is that he will love the Koran, which is the Word of God, and Muhammad, who is the Prophet of God; if his love is really strong, he will love all men, for all are God's servants, nay, his love will embrace the whole creation, for he who loves any one loves the works he composes and his handwriting.

The fifth test is, he will be covetous of retirement and privacy for purposes of devotion; he will long for the approach of night, so that he may hold intercourse with his Friend without let or hindrance. If he prefers conversation by day and sleep at night to such retirement, then, his love is imperfect. God said to David, "Be not too intimate with men; for two kinds

of persons are excluded from My presence: those who are earnest in seeking reward and slack when they obtain it, and those who prefer their own thoughts to the remembrance of Me. The sign of My displeasure is that I leave such to themselves."

In truth, if the love of God really take possession of the heart all other love is excluded. One of the children of Israel was in the habit of praying at night, but, observing that a bird sang in a certain tree very sweetly, he began to pray under that tree, in order to have the pleasure of listening to the bird. God told David to go and say to him, "Thou hast mingled the love of a melodious bird with the love of Me; thy rank among the saints is lowered." On the other hand, some have loved God with such intensity that, while they were engaged in devotion, their houses have caught fire and they have not noticed it.

A sixth test is that worship becomes easy. A certain saint said, "During one space of thirty years I performed my night-devotions with great difficulty, but during a second space of thirty years they became a delight." When love to God is complete no joy is equal to the joy of worship.

The seventh test is that lovers of God will love those who obey Him . . . As the Koran says: "They are strenuous against the unbelievers and merciful to each other." The Prophet once asked God and said, "O Lord! who are Thy lovers?" and the answer came, "Those who cleave to Me as a child to its mother, take refuge in the remembrance of Me as a bird seeks the



shelter of its nest, and are as angry at the sight of sin as an angry lion who fears nothing."

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCERNING SELF-EXAMINATION AND THE RECOLLECTION OF GOD

KNOW, O brother, that in the Koran God hath said, "We will set up a just balance on the day of resurrection, and no soul shall be wronged in anything." Whosoever has wrought a grain of good or ill shall then behold it. In the Koran it is also written, "Let every soul see what it sends on before it for the day of account." It was a saying of the Caliph Omar's, "Call yourselves to account before ye be called to account"; and God says, "O ye believers, be patient and strive against your natural desires, and maintain the strife manfully." The saints have always understood that they have come into this world to carry on a spiritual traffic, the resulting gain or loss of which is heaven or hell. They have, therefore, always kept a jealous eye upon the flesh, which, like a treacherous partner in business, may cause them great loss. He, therefore, is a wise man who, after his morning prayer, spends a whole hour in making a spiritual reckoning, and says to his soul, "O my soul, thou hast only one life; no single moment that has passed can be recovered, for in the counsel of God the number of breaths allotted thee is fixed, and cannot be increased. When life is over no further spiritual traffic, is possible for thee; therefore what thou dost, do now; treat this day as if thy life had been already

spent, and this were an extra day granted thee by the special favour of the Almighty, What can be greater folly than to lose it?"

At the resurrection a man will find all the hours of his life arranged like a long series of treasure-chests. The door of one will be opened, and it will be seen to be full of light: it represents an hour which he spent in doing good. His heart will be filled with such joy that even a fraction of it would make the inhabitants of hell forget the fire. The door of a second will be opened; it is pitch-dark within, and from it issues such an evil odour as will cause every one to hold his nose: it represents an hour which he spent in ill-doing, and he will suffer such terror that a fraction of it would embitter Paradise for the blessed. The door of a third treasure-chest will be opened; it will be seen to, be empty and neither light nor dark within: this represents the hour in which he did neither good nor evil. Then he will feel remorse and confusion like that of a man who has been the possessor of a great treasure and wasted it or let it slip from his grasp. Thus the whole, series of the hours of his life will be displayed, one by one, to his gaze. Therefore a man should, say to his soul every morning, "God has given thee twenty-four treasures; take heed lest thou lose any one of them., for thou wilt not be able to endure the regret that will follow such loss."

The saints have said, "Even suppose God, should forgive thee, after a wasted life, thou wilt not attain to the ranks of the righteous and must deplore thy loss;

therefore keep a strict, watch over thy tongue, thine eye, and each of thy seven members, for each of these is, as it, were, a possible gate to hell. Say to thy flesh, 'If thou art rebellious, verily I will punish thee'; for, though the flesh is headstrong, it is capable of receiving instruction, and can be tamed by austerity." Such, then, is the aim of self-examination, and the Prophet had said, "Happy is he who does now that which will benefit him after death."

We come now to the recollection of God. This consists in a man's remembering that God observes all his acts and thoughts. People only see the outward, while God sees both the outer and the inner man. He who really believes this will have both his outer and inner being well disciplined. If he disbelieve it, he is an infidel, and if, while believing it, he acts contrary to that belief, he is guilty of the grossest. presumption. One day a negro came to the Prophet and said, "O Prophet of God! I have committed much sin. Will my repentance be accepted, or not?" The Prophet said "Yes." Then the negro said, "O Prophet of God, all the time I was committing sin, did God really behold it?" "Yes," was the answer. The negro uttered a cry and fell lifeless. Till a man is thoroughly convinced of the fact that he is always under God's observation it is impossible for him to act rightly.

A certain sheikh once had a disciple whom he favoured above his other disciples, thus exciting their envy. One day the sheikh gave each of them a fowl and told each to go and kill it in a place where no one

could see him. Accordingly each killed his fowl in some retired spot and brought it back, with the exception of the sheikh's favourite disciple, who brought his back alive, saying, "I have found no such place, for God sees everywhere." The sheikh said to the others, "You see now this youth's real rank; he has attained to the constant remembrance of God."

When Zuleikha tempted Joseph she cast a cloth over the face of the idol she used to worship. Joseph said to her, "O Zuleikha, thou art ashamed before a block of stone, and should I not be ashamed before Him who created the seven heavens and the earth?" A man once came to the saint Junaid and said, "I cannot keep my eyes from casting lascivious looks. How shall I do so?" "By remembering," Junaid answered, "that God sees you much more clearly than you see any one else." In the traditions it is written that God has said, "Paradise is for those who intend to commit some sin and then remember that My eye is upon them and forbear." Abdullah Ibn Dinar relates, "Once I was walking with the Caliph Omar near Mecca when we met a shepherd's slave-boy driving his flock. Omar said to him, "Sell me a sheep." The boy answered, "They are not mine, but my master's." Then, to try him, Omar said, "Well, you can tell him that a wolf carried one off, and he will know nothing about it." "No, he won't," said the boy, "but God will." Omar then wept, and, sending for the boy's master, purchased him and set him free, exclaiming, "For this saying thou art free in this world and shalt be free in the next."

There are two degrees of this recollection of God. The first degree is that of those saints whose thoughts are altogether absorbed in the contemplation of the majesty of God, and have no room in their hearts for anything else at all. This is the lower degree of recollection, for when a man's heart is fixed, and his limbs are so controlled by his heart that they abstain from even lawful actions, he has no need of any device or safeguard against sins. It was to this kind of recollection that the Prophet referred when he said, "He who rises in the morning with only God in his mind, God shall look after him, both in this world and the next."

Some of these recollectors of God are so absorbed in the thought of Him that, if people speak to them they do not hear, or walk in front of them they do not see, but stumble as if they collided with a wall. A certain saint relates as follows: "One day I passed by a place where archers were having a shooting-match. Some way off a man was sitting alone. I approached him and attempted to engage him in talk, but he replied, "The remembrance of God is better than talk." I said, "Are you not lonely?" "No," he answered, "God and two angels are with me." Pointing to the archers, I asked, Which of these has carried off the prize?" "That one," was his reply, "to whom God has allotted it." Then I inquired, "Where does this road come from?" Upon which, lifting up his eyes to heaven, he rose and departed, saying, "O Lord! many of Thy creatures hold one back from the remembrance of Thee!"

The saint Shibli one day went to see the Sufi Thaury; he found him sitting so still in contemplation that not a hair of his body moved. He; asked him, "From whom didst thou learn to practise such fixity of contemplation?" Thaury answered, "From a cat which I saw waiting at a mouse-hole in an attitude of even greater fixity than this." Ibn Hanif relates: "I was informed that in the city of Sur a sheikh and his disciple were always sitting lost in the recollection of God. I went there and found them both sitting with their faces turned in the direction of Mecca. I saluted them thrice, but they gave no answer. I said, 'I adjure you, by God, to return my salutation.' The Youth raised his head and replied, 'O Ibn Hanif! The world lasts but for a little time, and of this little time only a little is remaining. Thou art hindering us by requiring us to return thy salutation.' He then bent his head again and was silent. I was hungry and thirsty at the time, but the sight of those two quite carried me out of myself. I remained standing and prayed with them the afternoon and evening prayer. I then asked them for some spiritual advice. The younger replied, 'O Ibn Hanif, we are afflicted; we do not possess that tongue which gives advice.' I remained standing there three days and nights; no word passed between us and none of us slept. Then I said within myself, 'I will adjure them by God to give me some counsel.' The younger, divining my thoughts, again raised his head: 'Go, and: seek such a man, the visitation of whom wilt bring God to thy remembrance and infix His fear in thy heart, and he will give thee that counsel which is conveyed by silence and not by speech.'"

Such is the "recollection" of the saints which consists in being entirely absorbed in the contemplation of God. The second degree of the recollection of God is that of "the companions of the right hand." These are aware that God knows all about them, and feel abashed in His presence, yet they are not carried out of themselves by the thought of His majesty, but remain clearly conscious of themselves and the world. Their condition is like that of a man who should be suddenly surprised in a state of nakedness and should hastily cover himself, while the other class resemble one who suddenly finds himself in the presence of the King and is confused and awestruck. The former subject every project which enters their minds to a thorough scrutiny, for at the Last Day three questions will be asked respecting every action: the first, "Why did you do this?" the second, "In what way did you do this?" the third, "For what purpose did you do this?" The first will be asked because a man should act from divine and not merely Satanic or fleshly impulse. If this question is satisfactorily answered, the second will test in what way the action was done, wisely, or carelessly and negligently, and the third, whether it was done simply to please God, or to gain the approval of men. If a man understands the meaning of these questions he will be very watchful over the state of his heart, and how he entertains thoughts which are likely to end in action. Rightly to discriminate among such thoughts is a very difficult and delicate matter, and he who is not capable of it should attach himself to some spiritual director, intercourse with whom may illuminate his

heart. He should avoid with the utmost care the merely worldly learned man who is an agent of Satan. God said to David, "O David! ask no questions of the learned man who is intoxicated with love of the world, for he will rob thee of My love," and the Prophet said: "God, loves that man who is keen to discern in doubtful things, and who suffers not his reason to be swayed by the assaults of passion." Reason and discrimination are closely connected, and he in whom reason does not rule passion will not be keen to discriminate.

Besides such cautious discrimination before acting a man should call himself strictly to account for his past actions. Every evening he should examine his heart as to what he has done to see whether he has gained or lost in his spiritual capital. This is the more necessary as the heart is like a treacherous business partner, always ready to cajole and deceive; sometimes it presents its own selfishness under the guise of obedience to God, so that a man supposes he has gained, whereas he has really lost.

A certain saint named Amiya, sixty years of age, counted up the days of his life. He found they amounted to twenty-one thousand six hundred days. He said to himself, "Alas! if I have committed one sin every day, how can I escape from the load of twenty-one thousand six hundred sins?" He uttered a cry and fell to the ground; when they came to raise him they found him dead. But most people are heedless, and never think of calling themselves to account. If for



every sin a man committed he placed a stone in an empty house, he would soon find that house full of stones; if his recording angels demanded wages of him for writing down his sins, all his money would soon be gone. People count on their rosaries with self-satisfaction the numbers of times they have recited the name of God, but they keep no rosary for reckoning the numberless idle words they speak. Therefore the Caliph Omar said, "Weigh well your words and deeds before they be weighed at the Judgment." He himself before retiring for the night, used to strike his feet with a scourge and exclaim, "What hast thou done to-day?" Abu Talha was once praying in a palm-grove, when the sight of a beautiful bird which flew out of it caused him to make a mistake in counting the number of prostrations he had made. To punish himself for his inattention, he gave the palm-grove away. Such saints knew that their sensual nature was prone to go astray, therefore they kept a strict watch over it, and punished it for each transgression.

If a man finds himself sluggish and averse. from austerity and self-discipline he should consort with one who is a proficient in such practices so as to catch the contagion of his enthusiasm. One saint used to say, "When I grow lukewarm in self-discipline, I look at Muhammad Ibn Wasi, and the sight of him rekindles my fervour for at least a week." If one cannot find such a pattern of austerity close at hand, then it is a good thing to study the lives of the saints; he should also exhort his soul somewhat in the

following way: "O my soul! thou thinkest thyself intelligent and art angry at being called a fool, and yet what else art thou, after all? Thou preparest clothing to shield thee from the cold of winter, yet makest no preparation for the after-life. Thy state is like that of a man who in mid-winter should say, 'I will wear no warm clothing, but trust to God's mercy to shield me from the cold. He forgets that God, at the same time that He created cold, showed man the way to make clothing to protect himself from it, and provided the material for that clothing. Remember this also, O soul, that thy punishment hereafter will not be because God is angry with thy disobedience; and say not, 'How can my sin hurt God?' It is thy lusts themselves which will have kindled the flames of a hell within thee; just as, from eating unwholesome food, disease is caused in a man's body, and not because his doctor is vexed with him for disobeying his orders.

"Shame upon thee, O soul, for thy overweening love of the world! If thou dost not believe in heaven or hell, at any rate thou believes in death, which will snatch from thee all worldly delights and cause thee to feel the pangs of separation from them, which will be intenser just in proportion as thou hast attached thyself to them. Why art thou mad after the world? If the whole of it, from East to West, were thine and worshipped thee, yet it would all, in a brief space, turn to dust along with thyself, and oblivion would blot out thy name, as those of ancient kings before thee. But now, seeing thou hast only a very small fragment of the world, and that a defiled one, wilt

thou be so mad as to barter eternal joy for it, a precious jewel for a broken cup of earthenware, and make thyself the laughingstock of all around thee?"

# Bahai

Excerpts From:

## The Promulgation of Universal Peace

By Abdu'l Baha

Your duty is of another kind, for you are informed of the mysteries of God. Your eyes are illumined; your ears are quickened with hearing. You must, therefore, look toward each other and then toward mankind with the utmost love and kindness. You have no excuse to bring before God if you fail to live according to His command, for you are informed of that which constitutes the good pleasure of God. You have heard His commandments and precepts. You must, therefore, be kind to all men; you must even treat your enemies as your friends. You must consider your evil-wishers as your well-wishers. Those who are not agreeable toward you must be regarded as those who are congenial and pleasant so that, perchance, this darkness of disagreement and conflict may disappear from amongst men and the light of the divine may shine forth, so that the Orient may be illumined and the Occident filled with fragrance, nay, so that the East and West may embrace each other in love and deal with one another in sympathy and affection. Until man reaches this high station, the

world of humanity shall not find rest, and eternal felicity shall not be attained. But if man lives up to these divine commandments, this world of earth shall be transformed into the world of heaven, and this material sphere shall be converted into a paradise of glory. It is my hope that you may become successful in this high calling so that like brilliant lamps you may cast light upon the world of humanity and quicken and stir the body of existence like unto a spirit of life. This is eternal glory. This is everlasting felicity. This is immortal life. This is heavenly attainment. This is being created in the image and likeness of God. And unto this I call you, praying to God to strengthen and bless you.

## Abdu'l Baha in London

ON September 10th, the first Sunday after Abdu'l-Baha's arrival in England, he spoke from the City Temple pulpit to the evening congregation at the special desire of the Pastor, the Reverend R. J. Campbell.

Though Abdu'l-Baha's coming had not been advertised the Church was filled to its utmost capacity. Few that were there will ever forget the sight of that venerable figure clad in his Eastern garb, ascending the pulpit stairs to address a public gathering for the first time in his life. That this should be at a Christian place of worship in the West has its own deep significance. Mr. Campbell introduced the

visitor with a few simple words in the course of which he said: "We, as the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is to us and will always be the Light of the World, view with sympathy and respect every movement of the Spirit of God in the experience of mankind, and therefore we give greeting to &Abdu'l-Baha in the name of all who share the spirit of our Master, and are trying to live their lives in that Spirit. The Baha'i Movement is very closely akin to, I think I might say is identical with, the spiritual purpose of Christianity."

Before Abdu'l-Baha left the Church, he wrote in the old Bible used by generations of preachers, the following words in his own native Persian, the translation being added as follows:

## **Inscription in the Old Bible**

Written by Abdu'l-Baha in Persian

THIS book is the Holy Book of God, of celestial Inspiration. It is the Bible of Salvation, the Noble Gospel. It is the mystery of the Kingdom and its light. It is the Divine Bounty, the sign of the guidance of God.

# Selfishness and Self-Will

The Path to Selflessness in World Religions

By Marilyn Hughes

*The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation!*

<http://outofbodytravel.org>



Author, Marilyn Hughes

NEAR DEATH AND OUT-OF-BODY EXPERIENCES: Years ago, I had met with Christ in a Near Death Experience. He had shared with me the secret to our existence on earth. "It is the goal of human existence," He had said, "to go from selfishness to selflessness."

That directive has remained with me since that time and this book is the result of further out-of-body travels wherein He came to me and directed me to gather those sacred texts that show us how to accomplish this vital task of our human existence.

In the texts to follow are the secrets to this marvelous and praiseworthy task. Contained within them are instructions on going from selfishness and self-will to selflessness.

