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1. NOT TO REPEAT, BUT TO RENEW

"And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind"

Romans 12:2

"Only the self that is willing to dare change can think creatively"

Charles Morris — *The Open Self*

Three facts dominate the world-situation today. The first of these is that the very spirit and character of our Western society and our purportedly "Christian" civilization have been and are being challenged. They are challenged in an obvious and relentless manner by the impact of the Communist ideology and the actual expansion of the Soviet-dominated nations. They are likewise challenged by all forms of economic and scientific materialism in our own country, by the enormous spread of crime, insanity, sickness, collective hysteria, political corruption, juvenile delinquency — and as well by subtler dangers which are the very shadow of our democratic inheritance and our emphasis upon production-at-all-costs, physical wealth and technology as a cure-all.

The second fact is that in Asia, Africa and throughout the Americas, the rising tide of so-called colored peoples is beating against the citadel of the white and Christian attitude of superiority, challenging us to show proof that we have a valid and vital claim to world-leadership and that our conquest, oppression and often enslavement of these peoples was justified, at least in the long run, by the great value and significance of what we brought to them in the conquest.

The third fact is that the Western Christian world has shown no convincing ability and very little readiness to meet these two challenges, the most crucial ones which have confronted us since the spread of Islam in the seventh century and the Mogul invasions in the thirteenth.

We have fought back, when attacked by Communism in Korea, on a side-issue which an imaginative as well as realistic diplomacy might have solved. Suddenly aware of military weakness, we have rushed into rearmament. Our productive capacity and economic power, our engineering skill and our large reservoir of trained manpower may prove sufficient to cope in time with the military aspect of the Communist challenge. But it is only one aspect of the challenge. It leaves the far more basic and widespread challenge to the Christian civilization and way of life unanswered. It could even assist the forces which, from within the United States, are eating up the foundations of this civilization and this way of life. It places American generals and admirals at the head of joint Western forces; but does it make Christ and Christian values more real and more dynamic, in a way directed toward the solution of **the vast human problems of today** — more real to European peoples as well as to Hindus and the Chinese masses; more real **to us**, Americans?

It is customary for the U.S. to win wars. But what of the peace which follows? One can win a war by production and military might; but to win a peace another kind of power is necessary: the power of spiritual directives and effective purpose, the power generated by faith, vision, understanding and the inclusiveness of love. To win the peace is to win the hearts and the respect of men. It is to exemplify in one's behavior the essential values and ideals for which one consciously and purposefully stands, for which one fought. It is to be secure in self, because one is established in God — if one believes in God, as we say we do.

Today moral and spiritual insecurity are rampant in prosperous and immensely productive America. This is no doubt the main reason for the much publicized "return to religion", both in the case of a group of "intellectuals" and in that of the "common man"; but it is also the cause of ever-spreading alcoholism and schizophrenia, of stomach ulcers and the widespread use of barbiturates and tranquilizers. This moral and spiritual insecurity has developed a powerful psychosomatic impact. It leads to corruption and sex-crimes, to dope and brutality. There is much collective sickness in America and all over the Western world. There is a desperate need for healing — not merely of body, but far more of psyche, soul or mind. Thus many turn to God. They ask of Christ, the Divine Healer, a total cure, deliverance from totalitarian evil. They return eagerly, searchingly, to the church of their earlier days to find the way to Christ. **Will they find it there?**

Are the Christian Churches able and ready to heal the sickness of Western society by the power of the spirit and truly "in the Name" of Christ? Are they able and ready to assume leadership in meeting the challenges with which the Christian civilization is faced, from within as well as from without? Are they able and ready to make Christ real today, for humanity as it is today — real as the savior, healer and leader of modern man plagued with the ills, the conflicts, the fears, the problems which are his today? If they are, the proofs are neither evident nor convincing.

We have for centuries taken Christ and the inherent superiority of Christian ideals for granted. When the power of the Churches began to wane after the eighteenth century we transferred some of our pride to our democratic institutions, and more recently to "science" and to technological marvels. The superiority of these we have also been taking for granted; and for a while no one questioned our self-glorification. But now we have been put on the defensive. Christianity, which in the first centuries was able successfully to challenge the Roman Empire, is now the one to be challenged. Christianity is on the defensive as well as democracy, notwithstanding the apparent revival of religion and the spread of American influence. We can no longer take our superiority for granted in self-complacency, because no one else takes it for granted. We can no longer claim, as a matter of evidence, a privileged world-position as leaders of humanity, because in the eyes of those who challenge us to prove our claims, the validity of these claims rests almost entirely upon our enormous material productivity, wealth and engineering skill; **and these are not enough.** They are not enough for enduring leadership in the modern world rent by conflicting ideologies.

People in Asia, and even in Europe and Latin America, often desperately need food, tools and primary comforts; but they need **more**.

The issue is: Can we provide this "more"? Can we assume a leadership in ideas, a spiritual leadership? We must do it if we are not to fall, like the Roman Empire of old, into the hands of liberated slaves and "strange gods" from the vast expanse of the Mother of religions, Asia; if Christianity is not gradually to vanish, as did the religions of the Mediterranean world which once it absorbed and supplanted.

The challenge we must meet goes far deeper than to be merely "good Christians" in the usual taken-for-granted manner. What one takes for granted, that one loses spiritually. One does not create a new world, a new society, with values taken for granted; with images, idols, or ideas worn thin and pale by familiarity and an unquestioning, unthinking sense of superiority. One does not thus create a new world; but we **are** challenged to create a new world, or at least to try, and to lead in the attempt. Are we really trying? Are we **really** trying when we wend our way back to the old churches of our childhood where preachers tell the familiar stories, perhaps with great skill and oratory, perhaps in the genuine belief that if all the churches are full our nation and Western civilization will be saved? But this belief does not make of us leaders in the name of Christ, and creators of a new society!

The revival of old forms is not creation. Creative leadership is a dynamic process of projection of values. These values must have the freshness and mystery of a superconscious, God-inspired, spirit-releasing origin if they are to arouse and impel to action. They must be of the now. They must be warm with the feel and immediacy of personal experience if they are to convince and to transform — far more than merely to "reform". No one can be a spiritual leader who has not personally experienced the spirit, however faintly. Indeed in this day of challenge and wholesale denial of spiritual values, no one can be truly and dynamically a **Christian** leader who has not **experienced** in some measure the reality of the Christ.

One need not here take too literally the term experience. It is not essentially a matter of "having a vision" or "hearing a voice". What is meant is an intimate, direct, personal and transforming realization of what is actually and creatively at the core of those values and ideals which we consider basic in Christianity and in our Western civilization. In this realization thought and feeling are blended, and in their union they polarize some still higher faculty — some power that seems to "come down" into us, that illumines us and arouses in us a cool fire, a serene enthusiasm, a conscious individual will. Because this power has been so little experienced and because our conventional approach to the spirit, to God and Christ has made most minds rigid and easily frightened by any power which seems revolutionizing, Christianity has largely failed to provide men and women with the capacity for true spiritual leadership.

Spiritual leadership has the power to change the hearts and minds of men and women, to rebuild a society. Because there have been and are so few examples of such leadership our Western society has been found wanting and unable to give to modern humanity — restless, chaotic, **yet eagerly expectant and searching for basic values** — the message of the spirit which it was called upon to give by right of historical destiny.

If the Christ-power had been alive, vibrant, dynamic and creative in this society of ours and in our churches, we could already have given this message of the spirit to the hundreds of millions of men in India, China and Africa. If this Christ-power had been alive and creative in the Russian Church, there would have been no sweep of Marxist materialism in this intensely religious people. If the Christian root of our civilization had been active and pulsating in the "free world" we speak of, there would have been no chance for sons of ministers, like Fuchs, to become traitors; for brilliant intellectuals, like Jolliot-Curie in France and many similarly gifted men in America, to seek in Communism a channel for their creative energies and the exteriorization of their social hopes.

We claim that Christianity is the greatest revelation of God; that it is unique, and Christ the "one and only Son of God". We say that spirit is the ultimately determining factor in the universe; that individual freedom and the respect for inherent human rights, democratic institutions and the ideals of our Western civilization are values which no man who has known them can fail to hold sacred. But, if so, the only possible reason for the wide spread of materialistic and tyrannical ideologies among peoples who had accepted Christianity for many centuries — whether in Nazi Germany or Communist Russia — is that Christianity had lost its power in those countries; that nominal Christians had in large numbers ceased to be Christians in spiritual fact and in actual deeds, feelings and thoughts. Christianity is not challenged by some outside power; **every** weapon and technique used by Communism was originally produced by men of Christian countries, imbued with Christian values.

What happened to these values and to the men whose task it was, and is, to hold them as living standards? Have they lost their power to inspire and lead men to noble living, to think great thoughts and to emulate the example of great Christian men and women?

Any set of values and ideals ceases to be effective when the leaders of the people are no longer able to receive a creative inspiration from them. When this happens, and if from the people at large no new group arises to challenge these leaders - and, having taken their place, to re-attune the society to the original ideals — spiritual decadence ensues. Alas: our leaders have not been able or willing, in most cases, to receive a creative inspiration from the **traditionally formulated** Christian values. For many decades Christianity has not made history. It has produced, it is true, a number of very great individuals; it has held together many facets of our complex and competitive society which other wise might have exploded altogether. But the leadership of our society has not been expressed in terms of Christianity as a motivating, dynamic world-transforming power. The basic conflicts and problems of modern man have not summoned forth a new Image of Christ filled with intense creative power. Solutions to these problems have not been asked from a **living**

Christ but, when they have been asked of Christianity, from the Christ of an old tradition which took shape in the midst of a disintegrating Mediterranean society some nineteen centuries ago.

Now it is **we** who are members of a relatively disintegrating civilization — a new civilization, a new kind of disintegration, with new problems undreamt of in the days of the Apostles and their immediate followers who did give form to the long tradition of European Christianity. They it was who gave form to this tradition, not Jesus. In and through Jesus the Christ-impulse was released; but it was the men who followed after him who produced the formulations, the theology, the rituals. **They** embodied the Christ-impulse in a form and religion that answered the real needs of their times, that met the capacities of their converts, that used the thought-materials and cultural memories of the collectivities of which they were truly creative leaders.

Some six centuries later, after Imperial Rome fell and the Barbarians were established in Europe, the new Rome became a center for new solutions, a new creative release, a new integration — this, while Christendom was confronted with the tremendous sweep of Islam's challenge. Christianity, having then essentially to deal with Germanic peoples and the weary remains of the Roman world, was able to transform itself in order to meet the new conditions and new needs. St. Benedict offered one type of solution; Pope Gregory another. Both made spiritual, religious, cultural history.

Again six centuries passed. Christendom once more faced a deep challenge: a challenge again coming from the East. The Moguls and the Turks invaded most of the eastern half of Christendom; but this time Christianity, in its Byzantine aspect, had not the vitality necessary to absorb and convert the Asiatic conquerors. Instead, the Moguls left a deep imprint upon Russia; the democratic and vital Kiev-Russian culture disappeared and, soon after, Byzantium.

At the same time the Crusaders, who since 1100 A.D. had come into close contact with Near Eastern peoples, brought back to the West many vivifying ideas and spiritual seeds from the fountain-head of the Western spirit. A spiritual leavening began in France, but was soon arrested by the greed and tyranny of Kings and Popes (the massacres of the Albigenses, of the Templars, and so on). It spread nevertheless through the movement of Chivalry, and Christ-love blossomed forth in the great figure of St. Francis.

Another six-century period passed, marked by the rise of modern man's intellectual power, of science and of materialism. Gradually the rationalists and humanists gave birth to our democracy. Nevertheless they also gave birth, unwillingly and indirectly, yet consistently in terms of some of their basic premises, to a monster: the Communist State. And now, once more from the East, Christianity and democracy are relentlessly attacked, ideologically and politically, by a sweeping Power. This Power feeds upon the problems caused by the new economic and social conditions produced by the very achievements of the West — scientific, technological, intellectual achievements, but alas, divorced from the Christ-spirit, the Christ-love, the Christ-light. At the same time, the enormous increase in

the world's population has brought to the fore a virtually new human type, a new balance of power between the cultural-spiritual elite and the masses.

Faced by this potential world-crisis what did the elite, trained in Christian traditions, do last century to meet the challenge? They kept talking Christianity, yet acted in terms of greed, lust and the worship of Mammon. Christianity itself, in the collective persons of its churches and institutions, provided no new solutions to meet these new problems and the growing conflicts. Now these conflicts have crystallized and become concentrated in the virulent power of world-Communism. The challenge, to our leaders, of new social and economic horizons which might have been lighted by the dawn of a new era of humanity, has instead become the ruthless attack of a power of enslavement and tyranny, which denies all essential Christian values.

The attack, at this late stage, must be met by military force wherever necessary. But it should be obvious to any individual with the slightest awareness of spiritual values and historical facts, that the basic challenge itself will never be met adequately and with lasting success with physical weapons alone, whether tanks or atom bombs, or even by good administrators and theoretically excellent institutions. The challenge is, first and last, ideological and spiritual. It is the challenge to discover and to realize with the immediacy of personal feeling and spiritual conviction, values so stirring and **to us, men and women of today**, so inspiring and transfiguring, that on the basis of the experience of these values we **have** to go on and meet any opposing situation with that inner necessity and that creative strength which alone can insure spiritual victory and world-transforming leadership.

Some, even from among us, will no doubt say that the traditional values of Christianity have lost the power to arouse men of our intellectual and scientific age. But if there is a seeming truth in this, there is also a profound error. The formulations, the outer garbs and crystallized institutions through which the spiritual dynamics of the Christ-impulse have been channeled out for centuries, may well have lost their vitality and stirring power, their ability to inspire a world-transforming leadership. But **the Christ-impulse itself, as it radiated from Jesus**, has not lost its spiritual dynamics. Our task today, as Christians, is to re-attune ourselves to this Christ-impulse and to create the **new** forms and the **new** channels of release through which Christ will become a living Power of inspiration and transfiguration.

To do this in terms of the new needs of a new humanity is to do our day what the Apostles and Paul did in the first century A.D., what St. Benedict and Pope Gregory attempted in the sixth and seventh centuries and what St. Francis accomplished some six hundred years later. We must re-create the "vestures" of Christ. He is eternal and constant and His Power is alive and vibrant, creative and immense, today as of old. It is we, his nominal disciples, who are spiritually "dead" because we have shut our souls to the descent of the creative spirit that forever flows **from** the Father **through** the Son. It is upon us that has fallen the responsibility of bringing forth and releasing, in the name of Christ, a basic spiritual solution to the needs, problems and conflicts of our people. All other solutions —

economic, social, political — are derivative, because they are **implied** in the spiritual solution, if it is real and transfiguring.

Because the words "spirit" and "creative" constitute a constantly recurring theme in this book, it is imperative that the meaning given to them should be made clear at the outset. And if they are to carry a fresh conviction this meaning should be direct, simple, and experienceable. I shall thus define spirit as that which provides, at all times and in every conceivable place, **basic and transforming** answers to real human needs, and solutions to all vital human problems. Spirit forever seeks to reestablish the disturbed harmony of the cosmos, to re-integrate whatever has experienced any degree of disintegration. It is God in act, inasmuch as God is absolute Harmony and all encompassing Love.

In the same practical and concrete sense, the act of creation should be considered as the process through which is brought forth and dynamically emanated a basic and integrating solution which aims at solving some vital problem of humanity and, in a cosmic sense, of the universal whole. God creates perfectly; man, most imperfectly — unless man becomes truly an "agent" of God. But in both cases one can speak of creative activity. One **must** speak of it whenever one speaks of men as "sons of God". He who can meet the needs and problems of his environment at any time by discovering and imparting solutions able to stir, vitalize and mobilize into transforming action the imagination, the minds and the hearts of other human beings is, in a limited but real sense, a creative agent. He is a spiritually creative agent whenever, **through** him, the one universal creative power of spirit is released. This one universal creative power is forever seeking release through open, ready and able individuals, simply because new problems and needs constantly arise in human evolution. But few are the individuals able and willing.

This creative power is also a healing agent. True creative activity must be as well a healing activity, at least as to its ultimate results, if it has its source in the spirit. To heal is to arouse the organism from inertia and sloth, to remove obstacles to the healthy flow of the life-force, whether at the physiological or the psychological level, as well as to fill the sick with new vital substance. And this is why Jesus said that he came to bring a sword rather than peace, as we usually think of peace; that wherever he came, or his disciples would come, conflicts in families and groups would follow — or as the Gospel of Luke has it "division" (12 : 51-53). Every confrontation with the creative spirit brings about division among those who belong to a biological, tribal or social group; because, when faced by such a challenge of the spirit to transformation and self-renewal, some go forth as carriers of the "Good News" of rebirth and **re-creation**, while others refuse to stir and become the slaves of a past that, because of the new confrontation, becomes from then on obsolete and increasingly negative.

The spirit of God indeed works in strange and mysterious ways. The way of purgation and **catharsis** is the way of the Crucifixion. It is the necessary way wherever mental inertia and self-complacency, egocentricity and greed, a sense of guilt and a craving for power, have choked the circulatory systems of body and soul with toxins and scar tissues. But **crucifixion is actually a phase of creation**. That healing which is of the spirit must force crises upon the personality and upon society.

Crises, catharses and crucifixions are **tools** used by the Creative. The power of Christ is proclaimed from the Cross, as healing is latent in the catharsis, and the blossoming tree in the seed rent in twain by germinative processes.

The Kingdom of Heaven is the creative energy and the substance of all new beginnings at the very core of all endings. It is indeed the Creative Order, here and now, operating wherever there is metamorphosis and essential renewal. It is "within you", if you **let** it act within the conscious experience of your everyday dying to the past. It is the Resurrection within every Crucifixion assumed consciously and serenely. No man can experience, or even understand, the reality of the Kingdom of Heaven who "is not willing to dare change" — even if this change must mean death to the old.

This change must, however, be a conscious and deliberately sought-for transformation if it is to release the power of creative renewals out of crises of crucifixion. Man must bring to a clear focus within his own soul the energy of the Creative Order if he is to experience "Heaven" within and the Resurrection. Crucifixion is focalization, not death, for him who has understood the organic essence of the Creative Order. Where the arms of the Cross meet, there man finds his spiritual focus; there the mystic Rose of "divine Sonship" comes to bloom and "death" is overcome, simply because "life" is transcended.

Where there is life, there is also repetition and compulsive bondage to instinct and unconscious activity. The sequence of life and death keeps all nature bound to repetitive patterns of birth, growth, decay and death. But spirit, as it enters the realm of life, is the power to effect creative transformations. Life conforms and repeats; spirit transforms and renews. And the true message of Christ is the "Glad News" that spirit can win over life-and-death, in and through any man who is irrevocably attuned and self-dedicated to the way, the truth and the symbolical life of the divine Exemplar.

The Crucifixion is the core of this victory, because it is a manner of death that transforms the life-and-death sequence. It is a consciously accepted, deliberately assumed, fully understood process of transformation in which spirit, the power of the Creative, is brought to a clear and indestructible focus in the individual. The Cross is the symbol and the field of application of the dynamics of the creative spirit. The Cross is the Creative in the here and now of man immersed in the ocean of life-energies on this earth.

Because Christian men and women have, on the whole, failed to seek liberation from their blind subservience to the tides of life-and-death, because they have not dared to understand and accept the dynamics of the creative spirit, the Cross of Christ has been worshipped as a tragic symbol of suffering and expiation. It is, on the contrary, a hieroglyph of victory over **both** life and death, over repetition and conformity; but it can only have such a meaning when it is understood and experienced as the supreme catharsis through which all complete renewal in spirit and mind can become **real**, here and now.

The individual who calls himself a follower of Christ must gain such an understanding of the Cross if he is to wield the energy of the creative spirit, if he is to become a power for renewal in our present society. The Christian leader must attune his consciousness to this

creative spirit, as to a force of collective social transformation, if he is to lead humanity to new beginnings. And the seed for these new beginnings is here. It is the ancient and eternal Christ-seed.

All seeds must experience germination. All new beginnings in the creative spontaneity of the spirit must emerge out of the center of the Cross, where the Love of God flows as a power of healing and of victory. Christianity must germinate anew, because a new "spring" is near. The sun of God is releasing renewed light and renewed warmth; but will Christianity as we know it today prove itself a fertile seed? Will it, **can** it, take the leadership in the creative process and consciously, deliberately, assume the crisis of the Crucifixion?

Only he who has experienced the Transfiguration can truly make of the Cross the place of creative victory. We must seek therefore, in humility and with courage, in clarity of mind and with faith of soul, the way to the Transfiguration, that we may meet, as Jesus did, our supreme crisis and make of it the altar of our victory.

2. THE ESSENCE AND THE SUBSTANCE

"For the letter killeth, but the spirit quickeneth".

II Corinthians 3 : 6

"For the letter killeth, but the spirit quickeneth".

John 4:24

In any great religion two basic factors can be distinguished: what the Founder taught, and the results of the impact which his life and personality made upon his disciples.

The teaching of the Founder may or may not have been accurately or completely recorded, and various types of misinterpretation may have altered these teachings. This indeed produces much uncertainty as to what the God-illuminated personage meant and wanted to convey to his often unprepared and not too steady disciples and followers. But if this factor often leads to misunderstanding, the second factor is even more likely to introduce deviations from the spiritual impulse which the divine Exemplar set in motion.

The disciple has to make the personality and the life-events of his Master vividly real to those who come after the latter's passing. Especially where the teachings are not easily accepted because of their moral and spiritual elevation or their mental profundity, the need for a dramatization of the Master's personality and life becomes imperative. Only this dramatization, this appeal to the collective imagination and sense of wonder of the people at large, can arouse the emotional fervor and the dynamics of faith required to send thousands of followers into the rugged or even tragic paths of apostolicism. Only this can make people feel that the new religion meets their human needs. This dramatization is thus a necessary part of the great spiritual impulse which is at the root of the religion, seen as a historical fact; yet between it and the simpler, more direct, more essentially and timelessly true message of the divine Teacher a very deep tension, and often a radical conflict, always tend to develop.

In the case of Christianity these two factors are particularly distinct from each other; and this condition has had far-reaching results. It developed from the fact that the recorded teachings of Jesus are few and the period of his personal impact upon his generation was very brief. Above all, the dramatic and spectacular character of his life and death together with the puzzling, yet stirring, vistas which this life opened up to those who believed were such as to make some very definite kind of interpretation necessary. Jesus' ethical teachings were simple, but required a complete re-orientation of the disciple's consciousness and emotional life. They alone would presumably not have been enough of a driving force to conquer the world; they would not have seemed to be convincing or sufficient answers to the crucial problems confronting the heterogeneous, uprooted and confused population of the Roman Empire.

Yet Christianity won and spread over the Mediterranean world. It won largely, no doubt, through the dramatic power of the presentation which the Apostles, and especially Paul, produced out of the immediacy and poignant intensity of their own experience. Christianity triumphed as a new Mystery-religion based upon the events of the life of Christ Jesus — events transformed into the substance of a **mythos** of singular beauty and power, and interpreted as a symbol of universal significance, but also of immediate validity as possible solutions to the psychological conflicts of a disintegrating society.

The great religious movement represented by the many distinct, yet basically related "Mystery-cults" of pre-Christian centuries had made familiar to the East-Mediterranean peoples the figure of a dying savior, of a god torn or quartered by his enemies and mysteriously resuscitated after a descent into the underworld. The drama of the death and resurrection of an incarnate god had assuredly very ancient roots — historical roots reaching at least down to the often called "vitalistic ages" when agricultural civilizations spread out along the banks of great rivers, whether the Yellow River in China, the Indus in India, the Euphrates in Mesopotamia or the Nile in Egypt. The power of these roots flowed through early Christianity, and no one can understand the full meaning of Christianity without realizing what this vast movement of the Mystery-religions sprang from, what it accomplished and the way in which historical Christianity added to it, transformed it and finally absorbed it.

The agricultural societies which drew their life-blood from the above-mentioned rivers were predominantly occupied with the raising of crops and cattle — thus, with the process of multiplication of life, with the yearly cycle of seed-reproduction, with the return of the seasons and the periodical rise and fall of the great streams which accentuated and gave substance to the earthly rhythm of fertility. This basic preoccupation led to the need for the establishment of the calendar; thus, for the study of the movements of the sun and the moon, which became the celestial symbols of the male and female polarities of the one Life-force. Constellations of stars through which the sun, oscillating northward then southward in the sky, sped in its yearly journey, became the cosmic bodies of Creative Hierarchies of celestial Beings, beneficent or inimical according to the seasons during which the sun traveled through them. Eclipses became portents of evil. The regular cycles of recurrence of the conjunctions between the larger planets, Jupiter and Saturn, became associated with the growth of empires and with the success or failure of the enterprises of kings. Thus archaic man discovered his ability to ascertain the best conditions possible in which seeds might be sown, cattle bred, and tribes increased by means of war.

In time these practical and realistic preoccupations were raised to a higher level, a religious and mystical level. What in earlier periods, during the third millennium B. C., had presumably been a purely concrete problem of physical group-preservation, was now translated at a higher, earth-transcending and psychological level. The yearly pageant of sun, moon and stars was thus interpreted as a complex and dramatic symbol of psycho-spiritual events and processes which **could** occur within human souls.

These inner processes could, yet needed not, occur. Just as the gardens of Mesopotamia and Egypt were dependent for their existence upon irrigation, so the growth and blossoming forth of the human soul depended upon a spiritual kind of watering and cultivation. The soul needed a Gardener for its unfoldment from the state of seed-potentiality to that of plant-actuality. This spiritual Gardener had to canalize the Waters of the great River into the potential Garden of the personality. Then the Desert of the earthly human being would become green with life; Birds and Bees would be attracted to it; the mystic Lotus of the spirit-revealing soul would open; and the Seed of Immortality would be formed, insuring Life Eternal.

Anyone familiar with the mystical writings of Eastern peoples, ancient or modern, will recall the constant use of the allegories to which I am referring. Anyone even superficially familiar with the religions of Egypt, Crete and the Mystery-cults of Greece, must have some remembrance of the Osiris and the Dionysos **mythos**, of the "Solar Myth" which nineteenth century ethnologists and historians repeatedly stressed, of the twelve Labors of Hercules (and their association with the twelve Constellations), etc. These **mythos** not only made an indelible impression upon the Egyptian, Cretan and Babylonian mind, but constituted the **inner religion** — the mystic life — of rationalistic Greece. The Orphic Mysteries, the Eleusinian Mysteries, the cults of Cybele, Persophone and Dionysos, were basic factors in the religious life of the Hellenic world which extended from Persia to Spain. And the "**Christ mythos**" is a direct descendant of the spiritual lineage of the ancient Mysteries.

Indeed the "pagan" festivals which marked the important moments of the cycle of the year in all "vitalistic" religions have their remarkably close equivalents at a new level in the yearly festivals of Christianity, especially of course in the more ritualistic Churches. A mass of documents, particularly treatises written by Syrian Christians during the age of the Crusades, shows the direct relationship between the ancient traditions of the Mystery-religions, Pythagoreanism, Eastern and Egyptian Alchemy, and much of the Catholic ritual.

In this sense Christianity can be, and has often been called a new synthesis and revitalization of the Mystery-religions of the East-Mediterranean world. But what made it a "revitalization" of this ancient tradition? What made it supplant, while absorbing, these archaic Hellenistic cults? One great new fact: **A man, Jesus, had actually embodied in his personal life, the mythos of the birth, death and resurrection of the god.**

A man! A living actuality — and not merely a symbolic drama, an allegory based upon the cyclic motions of the sun and created by the visionary minds of a few priests and initiates! It is true that at Eleusis and elsewhere the participants in the Mystery came to identify themselves, in inner excitement and emotional ecstasy, with the dying and resurrecting god or goddess. Yet it is doubtful whether they actually believed that the god had lived, concretely and physically, as a purely human person, striving and suffering in human ways. The Apostles, however, testified to the humanity of Jesus. And it is the **humanity** of Jesus, perhaps more than the divinity of Christ, which stirred the imagination

and the fervor of the Mediterranean peoples, confused by so many gods and their crumbling cults.

Another factor of great significance made of Christianity a new kind of Mystery-religion: it was no longer a secret religion, presumably reserved for a relatively small elite. It sounded an open, universal call for the allegiance of every man and woman everywhere, without any distinction as to racial, social or religious background. It did so at least as it was proclaimed by Paul through the Roman Empire, and it seems clear that Jesus had indeed meant the teaching of the gospel to be universal and for all peoples and nations of the earth.

That Jesus, a man, lived the fullness of the Mystery-drama and actually reached the divine condition of immortality **in a "risen" body**; and that, **as a result**, the Mystery had henceforth become altogether concrete as a potentiality open to all, as a "seed"-potentiality which could grow into a "full-grown-tree" — these were the two world-stirring facts with which Christianity challenged the Greco-Latin society.

The third and inescapable fact was that if the seed-potentiality was within every individual ("the Kingdom of Heaven is within you . . . is like to a grain of mustard seed . . ."), then no man, who understood or felt in the least the tremendous and revolutionary implications of this revelation, **could afford not to do something about it**. Jesus not only revealed the existence of the "seed" but he also taught, as the perfect Gardener, how the seed could and should be cultivated if it was to produce abundant fruit.

His teachings, in this respect, constitute the ethical part of his message — the doctrine of love, goodwill, peace — the Golden Rule. The major formulation of it is found in the Sermon on the Mount. Live fully the teachings in this Sermon and you will reach the other mount, the Mount of Transfiguration, on the summit of which the divine Christ and the human Jesus are not only understood to be one, but are **seen** by the disciple as one for a brief moment of revelation. This is the keystone of the new Mystery, the central fact of Christianity. The Crucifixion and the Resurrection derive from it. The Transfiguration made the Crucifixion **inevitable**, considering the nature of the society of those times. It made the Resurrection **possible**.

To say these things, however, is not to follow the traditional presentation which the Churches have made of the Christian Mystery. From the point of view of these Churches and of official Christian theology, I have failed to include the most characteristic and probably most important element. This element is the doctrine of the Redemption of Sin through the power of Christ's Vicarious Atonement. It is this doctrine which has given to historical Christianity its most popular and most emphasized feature.

Did Jesus teach such a doctrine? There is no evidence that he did during his public ministry. How could he have done so publicly before the event of Calvary upon which it rests!

At most what he could have done was to say the words which the Gospel of Matthew attributes to him at the close of the Last Supper scene: "For this is my blood of the new

testament, which is shed for many **for the remission of sins.**" However, the italicized words are not in the Gospel of Mark, which otherwise repeats Matthew's version; and the sentence in Luke's version: "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed *for you*", has quite a different meaning, while John does not mention the matter at all in his beautiful description of the passover meal. It is therefore highly probable that the words "for the remission of sins" were a later addition made to back up a doctrine which some of the Apostles, and Paul even more, had evolved **out of their own personal response** to the startling and dramatic events of the Crucifixion and the reappearance of Christ in His "risen body".

Back of the idea of the "remission of sins" through the blood of a sacrificial victim can be seen clearly the Jewish heritage of the Apostles. The Hebrew religion had indeed stressed the concept — and even more the **feeling** — of guilt and original sin. It had resounded with the vehement accusations and pleas of the Prophets of the Lord to a people that repeatedly had transgressed the divine Law and fallen into the "worship of strange gods". Hebrew history is a story of division, defeat and subjugation, with only a brief period of glory. The yearning for a return of this glory stirred Jewish imagination, and the expectation for a Messiah who would be Avenger, Redeemer and Savior as well as King in a new Messianic Kingdom was an intense feature of the collective mind of the Apostles.

It is easy to understand psychologically how such a deep-rooted psychic Image and collective yearning came to be incorporated into the narrative of the Last Supper. This scene was obviously the only time and place at which Jesus could conceivably have suggested to his followers that his death, which was to follow immediately, would have the meaning of a sacrifice. The disciples naturally interpreted the statement, and later spoke of it, as an atonement, in the Hebrew traditional sense of the sacrifice of a lamb at the spring equinox celebration, when the sun enters the zodiacal sign of the Ram.

When Christianity began to be interpreted as a new Mystery-religion, especially through the apostolic zeal of Paul, it was indeed easy to incorporate into the new Mystery this doctrine of an Atonement planned by God as a means to neutralize and "redeem" the Fall of Man in the Original Sin. It was easy because the old Mysteries had for centuries included "sacred feasts" at which the initiates celebrated, by a ritual meal (a communion), their mystic participation in the springtide of the resurrected life of the earth.

It is the picture of such a sacred passover meal which we see emerging from John's narrative. But it seemed necessary to Paul, and to at least some of the Apostles, that an even more poignantly dramatic element be incorporated into such a Mystery-ritual, that is, the emotional element of salvation, felt as an intensely personal experience of freedom from the "body of corruption" — of freedom through death, a death mysteriously transformed into a supernatural kind of immortality.

Thus the Crucifixion - the divine Sacrifice — became the central event in the ritual of the Christ-life. It became the divine Act, **par excellence**. The "love of God" was seen operating primarily in and through that Act. God's love consisted in this: that He offered His one and only Son to save man from the Original Sin. Death became the demonstration of this love, rather than life; the negation of a negation (the obliteration of sin) took the place of a creative affirmation in the mind and soul of the typical Christian.

The Mystery-religions of the East-Mediterranean world were fundamentally **religions of life**. Death was merely a crisis directed toward more life. The seed died in the soil during germination, not to "save" the elements of that soil from an original sin, but in order that, by integrating the chemicals of the earth into a new plant from which would come many more seeds, life might be produced "more abundantly". Germination is a necessary event in the life of the seed, but it is not the central fact; the central fact is that, **in the seed, the potency of immortal life and cyclic rebirth is focused**.

The old Mystery-religions glorified this central fact, and sought to make every participant **feel and experience its reality at the psychic-spiritual human level**. They used the biological fact as a symbol; but more, they used the representation of it as a "magical" means to induce the participant in the Mystery to identify himself with the creative process of life at any level; indeed, to **be** Life in a focused, individualized and creative expression.

In the Christian Mystery-religion there is also an identification with Christ, the crucified and resurrected divine Being. But what is different is the **psychological motive** for the identification. Paul's passionate aspiration is to be free from sin, to be crucified ("for he that is dead is freed from sin") so that having died in the likeness of Jesus' death he "shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Romans 6:5). His yearning for redemption and salvation derives from a vivid and unrelenting sense of guilt perhaps caused or heightened by the memory of his earlier years during which he persecuted Christ's followers.

Such an attitude, intensely personal and poignant, was unknown to men of the Greek and Egyptian civilizations; but it won to Christianity the fervent and passionate allegiance of

the men of the disintegrating Hellenic Society. Christianity spread as the religion of "the Fall and Redemption of man", with Christ as the unique and mysterious means to the Redemption; and this "Image of Christ" has dominated European Christianity and its worldwide expansion. Yet such an "Image" could not be drawn directly from Jesus' words, at least as we have them! It constitutes an interpretation of the events of his life. More precisely, it was the result of the impact of this life upon some of his followers. It depicts the way these followers made the events of Christ's life **answer their personal problems and, by extension, the problems of men of their time and of their type.**

If one attempts to separate this interpretation by Jesus' early Jewish followers from the Christianity which, from medieval Rome, dominated the whole of Europe, what remains is (1) the ethical and spiritual teachings of Jesus; then (2) the great drama of the life of Jesus as the incarnate Christ. This drama retains its character and meaning as a symbolic ritual of divine manifestation and work; but it loses the tragic and somber emotional atmosphere which thoroughly pervaded medieval Christianity and is still evident in most traditional Churches today.

Freed from this psychological gloom, this life-negation and this yearning for vicarious salvation, the life of Christ Jesus appears as the substance of a new Mystery-religion. What makes this Mystery-religion new and distinct from the old Hellenic Mysteries is the great revelation which Jesus brought to humanity - the revelation of a love which is God's very essence, a love which can conquer the world because it is universal and "celestial", because it is a transfigured expression of life.

Jesus' God is a God who is **love**, as the God of the pre-Christian Mysteries was a God who was life. The ancient Image of the universal Waters of Life flowing from the celestial sun became transfigured into the radiant Image of the divine love of God pouring itself upon all men, giving to all the power of the Holy Spirit. It poured out into the world **from** the Father-Creator, and **through** the Son, Christ.

By means of such a transfiguration Jesus transformed the very substance of the Mystery-religions. He gave to the Mystery-religions a new quality, a new purpose, a new realization of the meaning of immortality. He gave them a new morality, a new spiritual tone. And this tone made history. He who can change the basic Image which the men of a civilization make of God and of life always makes history. But the change Jesus made was fundamental. It raised the consciousness, or perhaps even more the feeling nature of humanity, from one level to another. This "raising of level" was obviously more a potentiality than an actuality, for the Western world witnessed relatively few instances of its tangible results during the last nineteen centuries. Yet it can truly be said to have marked the spiritual beginning - the "seed"-beginning — of a new era.

The spirit of this era had already been manifest to a considerable degree in the reform of Buddhism which took place in Northern India about a century before Jesus' time (Mahayana Buddhism). But Jesus not only spoke and taught the Mystery, he performed it. **He acted out Christ.** He was Christ acting, God-in-act. Through this Mystery-performance,

which was his life he released into humanity a divine power, the Christ-impulse. And this Christ-impulse definitely ushered in a new era of human evolution. It set in motion a new rhythm of spirit. It made divine love human and established this love as a foundation in the earth, as the source of a new human cycle, as a "living Breath" that will not fade away for many thousands of years.

This "living Breath", this Christ-impulse, is as real, as vital today as it ever was since the Baptism and the Transfiguration; and the words of Christ Jesus still are channels through which radiate the love of God - "seed ideas" potent with the birthing of many a future civilization. These two factors **are** essential Christianity. All else is interpretation and formulation. All else constitutes particular historical answers to the historical needs of particular societies.

To say this does not make these historical answers less valid or less real; but it shows that they belong to a different level of truth and reality. Each new cycle of civilization demands a new interpretation and formulation. Each particular phase of these cycles is bound to emphasize certain characteristic aspects of the basic interpretation. All are necessary which prove historically significant and morally or spiritually transforming for the society which calls for them. But they are "historical" values, not "essential" values. And the doctrines of the Atonement and of the Redemption of Sin are not essential Christian values. They are interpretations, even though they were no doubt necessary and inevitable in Paul's time as vehicles for the establishment of Christianity, as "carrier-waves" for the great theme of divine love.

What is essential in Christianity is the teaching of divine love and all-human brotherhood; the teaching of God as the All-Father, as the Creative Principle that abides not only in and beyond the cosmic sky but also in the "Heaven" that is immanent in every individual, that is the "Kingdom within". What is essential is the Mystery that God descends toward man, as man ascends toward God; and that both **can** be united in the eternal and universal Christ Jesus, Who can be "everyman" — you and I, now or in some distant era, according to our readiness, faith and courage. In this Mystery reside the source of the worth and dignity of every man and the fact that in every man the potentiality of true individual responsibility, freedom and creativity is inherent. And this is the essence of democracy.

In such an essential Christianity there is still room for the idea of "salvation", because where there is love there also is the will to save whoever is "lost" and to heal whoever is sick. But salvation can be interpreted in various ways and at several levels. Above all, the **feeling-quality** and **the means essentially used** in the process of salvation and of healing can be very different.

Every civilization features some characteristic human traits, positive and negative. As it glorifies some mental faculties or life-attitudes, it has likewise to deal with the "shadow" of these virtues. Where there is a deep and helpless collective sense of guilt and "father complex", there, to the emotional and immature personality, salvation appears possible only in terms of some external and vicarious atonement. Deliverance from an entitized and concretely oppressive evil seems beyond all individual effort; only the tangible and realistic sacrifice of a divine Being appears powerful and efficacious enough to overcome fate.

The conditions and needs of humanity however change. The Image of God which has fired the imagination of multitudes for centuries becomes pale and empty of spiritual meaning in the eyes of succeeding generations. A new Image becomes necessary. As it takes form in the minds of the few who have vision, then spreads over the many, it becomes the new focus through which flow new vitality, new inspiration, and the power to transfigure, to save and to heal — the power of divine light and divine love.

These "Images of God" are the very souls of civilization; from them, not only religion and ethics, but all aspects of culture are derived — as a plant derives from its original seed. European Christianity worshipped at the feet of the crucified Savior whose death redeemed from a remote Original Sin which men were obviously powerless to eradicate. Now, Christianity should refocus its faith and its allegiance around a new Image of God the Father — an Image of radiant creativity — and a new Image of Christ, the Transfigured Christ, whose **life** heals and whose **illuminated love** saves from all shadows and all psychological conflicts. If this is done, effectively **and soon**, we would indeed see "a new heaven and a new earth"; and there would be joy and peace among men.

This is the challenge to us who live in the transition between two eras. We must build new Images and give to essential Christianity a new formulation. The radical social and human changes which have occurred on earth since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution demand such a creative effort from us all — not more production and more

machines, not bigger and better weapons or stronger medical drugs, but new Images of God, of life, of man. A new Christianity can be recrystallized around these Images and once more feel and radiate the creative vitality and the power of mind and soul which stem from the spirit, and only from the spirit.

3. TO BECOME "MORE-THAN-MAN"

"And another said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."
Luke 9 : 61, 62

Whosoever acts by, for, and as the spirit, does so in order to provide basic answers to the "need of the times". Because of this the way to a realization of the spirit is, at any time, the way **from** and **through** the need **to** the solution of this need. It is often a tragic way, but it is **the** human way.

By experiencing the need in the poignant immediacy of one's own life, yet **not** being overwhelmed or defeated by it, the individualized and conscious person who seeks consistently to establish his attunement to the rhythm of the creative spirit will, in time, find the answers to this need. In and through these answers he will come to experience also the spirit, from which come all solutions to essential needs; he will witness the active reality of the spirit and the healing Presence of Christ. He will know God, the Creator, through his experience of the creative spirit, as spirit creates in and through him whatever the "need of the times" requires.

However, these needs, whether of society as a whole or of a single person, must be real and essential needs, if one can rightly expect them to evoke an answer from the spirit. Thus the first problem is how to discriminate between these real needs and the superficial desires or demands of the bodily, emotional and intellectual life. The "new Image of God" which we seek to evoke and condense into objectivity in this century of ours will be a spirit-born Image only if it answers to the essential needs of modern man. If we feel emotionally that we need "redemption" from our tragic sense of guilt and failure, then God may have to take the form of the Redeemer. If we are physically hungry, deprived of necessities and yearning for physical comfort and abundance, then we may conjure up the Image of God as the supreme Producer. Yet these may not be the Images with the most essential value today, because the needs which these Images evoke may not be needs of the most supreme and most central significance, their generalized appeal, past or present, notwithstanding.

What then are the essential needs of modern man and of our modern society? Are they the much publicized needs for personal "normality", for more material goods and more gadgets, for greater intellectual achievements and more specialized techniques?

No, these are not the most essential needs of modern man, however imperative they do seem to be in our age of wars and of emotional and financial insecurity. They are not our

most essential needs because it should be clear to anyone acquainted with the history of past civilizations which have risen and fallen that these things, which seem so needed today, **of themselves** do not bring what they claim to bring to the peoples who so eagerly strive for them. The search for security and peace at all costs defeats its own end and leads, at best, to an inert contentment and stagnation, soon followed by inner disintegration. Material achievements pursued for their own sake cast a mental shadow upon the inner life; and the great intellectual triumphs which are not geared to, and impelled by, a spiritual purpose eventually turn destructive of bodily health and of the natural harmony of the personality. Thus a society in which the pursuit of material and intellectual achievements is valued above all else in time faces moral and spiritual collapse.

These are facts of the spiritual history of humanity; and these facts confront us today with tragic acuity. Yet most of us are blind to them, for if we dared to face them with fully opened eyes, mind and soul we would have to do something about them.

We would have to act in a new way — the Way that Christ has shown. We would have to think differently on the basis of a new approach to truth — the Truth that Christ lived. We would have to transform our life and live with one single great purpose: to experience, in however small a degree, the Transfiguration — **our** transfiguration.

So to live, to think and to feel is very difficult; it takes extraordinary courage, intellectual honesty, and faith or purity. It is very difficult because the collective achievements of our civilization are great — as was great the wealth of the man who asked of Jesus what he should do to gain eternal life, and yet was loath to "sell his possessions" (Matt. 19:21-23).

Modern man is facing a similar situation. His material and intellectual achievements have been most remarkable, particularly during the last 500 years. We are impressed by their greatness. Indeed every schoolboy is trained to consider them as uniquely great. He is also made to take for granted their value and the absolute character of this value. **Anyone who takes the greatness of his achievements for granted courts spiritual disaster.** Anyone who stops inquiring into the value and the purpose of the achievements which establish his claim to greatness becomes, sooner or later, a slave to dogmas and fanaticism. When faced with a serious challenge, such a man, or nation, tends to become hysterical with subconscious fears or to seek refuge in drugs or insanity.

Material achievements mean principally the ability to produce goods, to release and make available physical energy, to control and train forces of nature to serve the will of man. These accomplishments require intellectual skill and the specialized use of the mind. Our Western society has demonstrated these skills masterfully. It has invented myriads of refined techniques and complex tools. It has multiplied itself immensely and stamped its character upon the whole globe. This is human greatness. But it is real and spiritual greatness only **provided** man and his civilization have an equally great and significant purpose in achieving these material and intellectual feats.

Value and purpose: these constitute the primary issues. What is modern man's scale of values? What does he value most? What inherent and fundamental purpose does our society make its characteristic way of life and achievements serve? How significant and valid is this purpose and how true to the spirit of Christ and to the essential destiny of man? And what does our society hold the essential destiny of man to be?

It is upon the answers to these questions that the fate of our Western civilization depends. And we have to give answers now — clear and definite answers — whether or not we like to do so. We must give answers because we are being challenged. We must give answers which are true to the spiritual destiny of man, or we must fade out of history as so many civilizations have done before. To refuse to give positive answers is merely to give a negative answer, for it is to deny man's supreme power, which is the power to establish a purpose and to give a conscious, self-determined value and meaning to his activity and his very existence on earth.

What then is man's purpose and essential "truth" for him consciously to realize, deliberately to accept, and perseveringly to work for and manifest? To this question Christ answers: **to become more than man**. Not merely a normal man, a mature and cultured person, but more-than-man; that is, a being in whom "human nature" is not only relatively perfected, but **integrated with a divine essence**, and in some cases with a divine entity. The essential truth and reality of man is that he is, potentially, a divine human being. God descends to meet man, as man ascends to reach God. The "soul" is the Holy Place where the union of heaven and earth occurs. Out of this union is born the "more-than-man", the "Christed" man. He is born in a new realm or dimension of being and consciousness, according to a new rhythm of existence. His activities are no longer altogether subject to the blind compulsions of "life" and life-instincts; they manifest a new quality — and, as a secondary result, new powers. This man indeed partakes, in however small a measure, in the creative activity of God, Creator and Father. Hesitantly at first, he finds himself belonging to a new order, the Creative Order, which is "heaven". Though living on earth and in a body of earthly substances, he is "in heaven", and heaven is within him.

This state of integration of God and human nature in the "more-than-man" is, for all but a few men here and there, still very much in the future. We may call it the next stage in human evolution, if we seek to conform to the picture outlined by Western science. But the **motive power** of this evolution is to be found, from the point of view of Christianity and of all great religious traditions, not in chance or in the principle of adaptation to the environment, but in a progressive "descent" of the spirit. The present state of man evolves into the future condition of the more-than-man, **because** this future comes to meet the present. The future always draws the present to itself and away from the past. The future takes form and incarnates in the present; otherwise the inertia of past habits and the memory of past failures would pull the present backward to the past and no progress would be possible.

This is the essential meaning of a divine Incarnation. The incarnate Christ dwells among ordinary men of the everyday present to reveal to them what they should, and eventually will, be in the future. Christ, as Jesus walking among men, summons these men to their future state of more-than-man. He is man's future become flesh and blood; and only by assimilating (i.e. becoming similar to) this future can man become more-than-man in the image and likeness of the God-man.

This is the true meaning of the Redemption. The future "redeems" man's present from the somber weight of his past errors and the shadow of his "sins". Christ liberates men from their haunting memories, their sense of guilt, and from their ancestral ways and attitudes of mind which have become deep ruts thwarting any swift advance on the way to the meeting with God. He reveals to them the fact that there **is** a meeting ahead. This meeting and union with God is the "truth" of man. Granted it is a truth which today yet remains to be demonstrated by "normal" man; but the demonstration is possible. Jesus, transfigured by Christ, Christ incarnated as Jesus — this is the demonstration. This establishes in a concrete livable manner man's one and only essential purpose. All other are secondary, however necessary they may have been and may yet be "on the way" — the way of which Jesus was, and is, for us, the Exemplar.

Our Western society, though Christian in name, has not geared its energies, its "heart's desire", its basic sense of value to this driving purpose of human transfiguration. The ideal which it actually worships, in intention and in substance, is not the more-than-man, the Christed man, but rather the "bigger and better man", the man able to demonstrate material or intellectual power and prestige, the socially successful person. The difference between these two human ideals is essential. In both cases, it is true, the goal desired and striven for implies expansion — a becoming more. But the **levels** at which the process of expansion operates differ utterly in each case.

At the level of "life" and life-instincts, expansion is sought in terms of an increase in circumference. Life wants to conquer space. It needs always, or feels that it needs, more life-space — the *lebens-raum* of German geopolitics. When faced by a crisis, life as such always imagines that the crisis can be solved by absorbing other lives and stretching over more space. More and more should accrue to me: this is life's policy of expansion, its way of becoming greater.

"Spirit", on the other hand, moves onward by transferring the center of being from one level to the next. Symbolically, this has been defined as a "vertical" expansion and as reaching greater height, in contrast to life's striving after greater width or circumference. Yet growth at the level of spirit is rather to be considered as expansion in what we may call a "fourth-dimension" of being.

Such a dimension is characterized by a typical process of **inter-penetration**: that is, one becomes not only what one "is", but also, through an internal process of communication with others and identification in consciousness, **more than oneself**. This, however, does not mean the absorption of others, but instead an intimate sharing with others. One

becomes "one with" other beings, one with a "communion" of beings; and ultimately one with God Who is the Harmony, Wholeness and Perfection of all, as well as the Source and Foundation of all.

The substance of this process of expansion in the spiritual fourth-dimension is . . . "love". It is the love of Christ, the divine love which He proclaimed as the "new commandment", the distinguishing mark of his disciples everywhere, **if** true to His trust. This love is the signature of man's unfoldment toward the more-than-man. Only through divine love can there be a change of level, a metamorphosis of ego into soul, and of the values of the realm of "life" into those of the realm of "spirit". Such a transfer of values is the key to essential Christianity.

This realm or level of spirit is the kingdom of heaven. "The kingdom of heaven is **within you**" said Jesus. It is within every individual who has been willing and able to transfer the center of his being — his desires and his thoughts — from the level of "life" to that of "spirit". Man, in order to become more-than-man, must accept the rhythm of spirit, the rhythm of the creative, of divine light and love. And to accept this rhythm is to accept "the way, the truth and the life" of Him who came, at the dawn of our Western society, as the Source and Exemplar of man's future.

Our Western society has not actually accepted this way in its collective heart and mind in spite of its protestation of faith in Christ. Only a few individuals, here and there, have responded to the summons and have deliberately, doggedly, lovingly trodden the path lit by the light of the Christ-purpose: becoming more-than-man. The vast majority have continued to seek for solutions, as well as for enjoyment and for an ever-eluding security, in the realm of "life" and of space-conquest. Men, eager to be normal people and social successes, have striven ambitiously and often ferociously to expand the circumference of their bodies or their intellects and their possessions by absorbing and digesting space and, in that space, their "neighbors". Thus there has been no end to greed and war, maiming competition and soul-stunting want, lust and crime, sickness and insanity. And there will be, there **can** be, no end to these tragic features of the realm of "life", because life is unconscious instinct and compulsive craving; life seeks to be and to remain itself, bigger and better, but **not** to overcome itself by becoming more-than-itself.

It is true that this search for the more-than-oneself does manifest occasionally among living organisms; but where it manifests, there spirit is at work. There a creative mutation appears and the kingdom of heaven finds anchorage. There divine love is foreshadowed, and in the momentary stilling of the beats of "life" a presentiment of the Christ is revealed. Only in man can the presentiment become actuality; for in man only, creative spirit can be expressed in a **focused** manifestation. As this occurs, man begins to be more-than-man, and not merely a bigger man proud of his immense productivity, his amazing intellectual skill, his control over natural forces, yet frantic with seemingly insoluble problems which poison his mind and cripple his body!

Productivity for the sake of being "bigger" is a goal that has value and significance only at the level of "life". It parallels the enormous power of reproduction found in the earlier forms of life on earth: the myriads of seeds, most of which never take root or grow to full tree-stature; the multitudes of potential fish which, if left to grow without being eaten up by bigger fish, would soon pack the seas solidly. This is proliferation, not creation. Life, and all that is in bondage to life, proliferates by unconscious instinct, driven by a compulsive urge to self-multiplication, stubbornly seeking safety and self-perpetuation through sheer numbers.

Modern man's productivity is very much of that order, especially under the stress of war or even competition. Food and munitions must reach across oceans; but the oceans are infested with enemy submarines. So, produce, produce . . . more ships, more wheat, more tanks! Even if sixty percent are sunk, forty percent will reach their destination. Likewise, what does it matter to the tree if but one seed takes root out of tens of thousands which fall upon the ground? The species must be preserved at any cost — so, more seeds, more seeds!

This is the rhythm of life's proliferations. And man today so proudly boasting of his millions of machines, his assembly-lines, his printing presses turning out millions of aimless and spiritually empty newspapers, magazines, books and treatises — yes, also of his colleges turning out tens of thousands of certified graduates by the year — man is indeed a slave to the rhythm of life's proliferations. All he has done is to add to his sexual reproductive organs another kind of reproductive mechanism issuing forth from his brain. Indeed, both reproductive activities are over-active! The human population of our globe has increased considerably, as man's mechanical-intellectual production also increased. More goods, yes, but more people to use them — a vicious circle! Where does it end? Like the wage-price spiral of inflation, it can only end in crisis.

Modern man is facing this crisis now. There is no solution which will really solve, at the level of "life", the multitude of problems arising from it. The only lasting and essential solution can be found by allowing the creative power of the spirit to act in our midst. This way of **spirit** is indeed the truly human way. The way of **life** is actually, for man, a prenatal or at least pre-individual way — the way of vegetable or animal man. Man becomes human, in reality and in "truth", only when he is on his way to becoming more-than-man. In this lies the essentially dynamic character of man; man is a transition, a movement toward that which, while retaining the human character and form, is nevertheless **more** than merely man.

It is for this reason that mere "production" cannot be the fulfillment of man; man can only reveal and demonstrate the truth of man in terms of creation. Man is truly man only when God speaks and acts **through** him; when the individualized person is, not merely potentially but in terms of actual deeds, a "son" of God. The son is invested with the powers and attributes of the father when he comes of age. It is this "coming of age" of man, this assuming of the inherited power of divine creativity by man, which is today the essential need of humanity; it is not only the need of a few special individuals, but the collective need of our society and our civilization.

The Christian civilization which we claim as ours is struggling against a spreading ideology which refers all social-political values to the "forces of production" and to the control of these forces by one social group or another. For this Marxist outlook we who are vocal in our protestations of Christianity should substitute a clear and concentrated effort to regenerate our civilization by **a vivid and dynamic experience of relationship with the creative forces of the universe.**

There are such creative forces active throughout the universe. They are gradually and consistently transforming the universe in order to make it more than it is. And what is meant by this "more" is a higher, rather than a larger universe; or more exactly, a universe coming ever closer to its divine Archetype through a periodic and cyclic **change of level**, and not a universe expanding in infinite space like a balloon.

Likewise, there are creative forces which are latent within every man and every human community. These forces we can experience, but we do not experience them while becoming fatter or more spread out in space; we do not experience them by eating more, or loading up our brains with more data and more technical devices. Indeed we drug our inherent creativity when we gobble up our neighbors by means of aggressive competition and imperialism. Creative forces are spirit in operation; they are God-in-act. And the basis of God's action is essential love, the will to wholeness and to harmony. God, spirit, creative forces, the process of human metamorphosis from the level of "life" and material-intellectual productivity to the level of "spirit" and creativity — these are all related terms. We need to make these terms real and potent in our personal experience. We need to incorporate them in our personality. We need to build a new civilization, with them as a dynamic center.

How can we work toward such an end? First, by believing with utter conviction that this end is not only possible, but ultimately inevitable; and this means by changing our mental pictures of the universe, of man, of the essential purpose of society, of God and man's relationship to God. A radical (i.e. from the root up) change of mind is demanded of us as the price of survival. This "change of mind" alone can provide a realistic and steady foundation for faith — faith in the creative action of the spirit, faith in the immanence and effective "Fatherhood" of God, the Creator.

To assume that faith in a redeeming Savior can of itself bring about a world at peace and a humanity "true" to God's idea of Man: this has been the tragic error of European Christianity. Such a belief naturally has been popular because it is the easy way out of man's basic problems; because it seems to make it unnecessary for man to welcome and to experience a "radical" change of mind. But only this change of mind can be counted as a direct and true creative experience. It is to it, no doubt, that Jesus referred when he, and presumably before him, John the Baptist, summoned men to metanoia — the Greek term badly translated as "repentance".

The essential "metanoia" is not an emotional repentance from so-called "sins" or transgressions against a traditional law. It is a "going beyond" (meta) our mental attitude. It is a transfer of the center of our attention and of our individualized consciousness from the level of the ego, filled with the urges and desires of "life", to the level of the soul, warm with the expectancy of the "birth of Christ" at the core of our harmonized being. It is man on his way to becoming more-than-man; man experiencing a deep, total catharsis (purgation, metamorphosis).

The way of crisis and catharsis is the way of the Cross. But more than this, it is the way that begins at the Mount of Transfiguration. The Crucifixion leads to the Resurrection **only because** there has been a Transfiguration. To seek for a crucifixion without having been able to experience at least a partial transfiguration or **metanoia**, is to indulge in a kind of spiritual masochism. This has indeed been prevalent in Medieval Christianity. Why? Because anything is **easier** than to experience a radical change of mind and to transfer one's center of consciousness from one level to another; anything — including martyrdom.

The "faith that moves mountains", the "faith of a grain of mustard seed" is a transforming, a creative faith. The topography of the ego, with its mountains of pride and inertia, must be transformed; the latent divine essence in the soul, the God-seed, must be awakened as a creative power. Only then can man build "new worlds" — his own new personality, and a society in which his children may find a decent "social climate" conducive to the unfoldment of their own creative powers. Humanity today needs that faith far more poignantly than it needs more machines and more goods. But **who** is able to arouse it, in our deeply confused and largely aimless generation afraid of using the very word "faith"?

The basic need here is for modern man to reconsider entirely his idea of creativity. Creativity is the keyword; but we must understand well what it implies and not mistake the

tinsel of personal self-indulgence and self-exteriorization for the pure gold of true creative activity.

To be creative is to let the creative spirit, God's power, perform **through** oneself. This is possible only on the basis of: **(1)** a sense of individual selfhood and responsibility; **(2)** a positive attitude toward life and society implying a feeling of dedication to God and to the essential good of humanity; **(3)** a willingness to share and to love; and **(4)** a constant readiness to accept crises as processes of metamorphosis, together with faith in the inevitability of eventual rebirth at the level of the creative spirit and mind.

These basic qualifications are actually implied in the message of the Christ. He gave this message to a society which needed it as much as we need it today. Yet our need today is different because the collective mind of our society has developed in new directions and modern man is obsessed by new problems. Our need for creativity has acquired a particular character by virtue of our newly won ability to think intellectually and to produce an ever more abundant crop of machines and wares. Such an ability can mean, and does to some extent mean, the use of the creative power. It does so insofar as the original **source** of the creative, transforming activity is concerned, that is, the man who had the vision, the dynamic urge and inner "genius" to transform man's environment or to heal heretofore incurable diseases.

On the other hand, the products of the activity (the machines, the ever-multiplied gadgets and means to make life "easier" and knowledge more "popular") and even more the social climate and the collective mentality which these products are in turn producing tend increasingly to destroy the creativity of man. They enslave man who gave them birth. It is a subtle kind of enslavement; yet, because its very subtlety often makes it unrecognizable, a most dangerous one. The worst bondage is a bondage which makes man unable to want to become free, as well as unaware that he is bound. And the worst enemy of creativity is the pseudo-creativity which assumes the mask of "inventiveness", and is merely the ability to produce endless variations on a traditional theme. This ability is an intellectual kind of proliferation and self-multiplication **along set grooves of thought**. It cannot be considered as the true creativity of the spirit.

The inevitable results of such an intellectual production, and what is more mass-production, are wholesale **automatism and conformity to a collective norm**. These two factors dominating our modern society are the worst possible obstacles to the creative life — and to real spirituality. At the end of the process over which they rule stands the man-robot, the "**mass-mensch**" turned into an automatic performer of psychologically meaningless and utterly un-creative actions, forever repeated in an atmosphere of inhuman tension, noise and strain. Such a type of partially de-humanized human being unconsciously calls for a totalitarian state, whether or not he rebels against its crushing controls once it is established. Such a human type cannot be the foundation of a true democracy, in the spiritual and creative sense of the term.

Democracy, as Walt Whitman sung of it and as Jefferson and Lincoln envisioned it, postulates inwardly free individuals; men who are "free" because they are able **to stand up as individuals with the positiveness, spontaneity and creativeness of the spirit within**. They are men who, to quote Lincoln, refuse to be masters of slaves because they refuse to be slaves of any masters; individuals who are established in their own selves, and whose essential goal is not to absorb other men or the properties of other men, but to unite with other individuals in an attitude of personal companionship and of sharing of value.

To be an individual, to produce in terms of a spiritual purpose born of a creative vision, to share value and the results of achievements with all one's "neighbors", and through such sharing which is true love in action, to build in cooperation a spiritual community of values and culture — these are the foundations of a real democracy. These are also the social premises of essential Christianity. They are the standards for the evaluation of anything that our Western society, or any society calling itself democratic or Christian, has brought forth.

It is by comparing with these standards the actual facts of our daily living and the concrete realities of our civilization that we can see how acute and crucial modern man's needs are. And there is no solution or consolation to be found in that other fact: that totalitarian societies, ancient or modern, present an even worse picture; especially if we consider that the main totalitarian society of our day has become what it is by adopting an ideology, social techniques, and the machinery originally produced by **our very own** Western and nominally Christian civilization! The need indeed, is with us and we must face it. It is the need for an altogether different and basic approach to man, to society and to the creative forces of the universe whose fountainhead is God, the Creator — the forever creating Creator. This approach is not essentially new or unfamiliar. It is Jesus' approach. It is the way to Christhood; but this way should be translated in terms of the needs of modern man if it is to be fully convincing to him.

Jesus did not face a people turned into near-automatons in factories and offices, haunted by the urge to produce more and always more, their minds distracted by propaganda, advertisements, screen-glamour, and "knowledge made easy" in ten short lessons, money back guaranteed if you are not satisfied! The kind of conformity to the norm Jesus had to deal with was what remained of a set tribal culture and ritualistic religion — something very different from the intellectual and emotional standardization of the city-bred man and woman of today. Jesus faced and sought to transfigure customs and values rigid with age. The man of spirit today deals with new achievements, with new and still chaotic ways of life, with the pseudo-individualism of the man who will fight to death for his right to have an opinion . . . which he has passively absorbed from his habitual newspaper and magazine, his radio or TV program.

Seemingly the typical modern man has a choice of opinions and points of view. But, spiritually speaking, what counts most is not the fact of the choice being there, but the fact of a different order, that men **able to choose as individuals** are, or are not, present in the society. Men able and willing to assume, as individuals, the responsibility for their choices

regardless of the pressures of a collective norm are necessary if there is to be a real democracy and a dynamic Christianity. No man can ever be the conscious agent of the spirit and thus partake in the creative activity of God, except as an individual. No man can receive the Visitation of the spirit as an **indistinct** part of a crowd, as a *mass-mensch*. God speaks only to individuals who are distinct, whose light shines and reveals them to God. To this all great religions have testified. Jesus enjoined his disciples to "be separate", to leave father and mother and to follow him, the incarnate Christ. He enjoined them to take up their Cross, symbol of the individualization of spirit and of the social results of this individualization, and to dare to be positive and utterly dedicated agents through whom the Holy Spirit would focus itself and irradiate society.

This requires positiveness and courage. The way of Christ, which is as well the way of any true spiritual democracy, demands of individuals the courage to be what they are as individuals; to evaluate clearly what is essential and what is non-essential, and to gaze without illusion or sentimental attachment at the shifting scenes of the world of "life", both in their own psychic natures and in the natures of loved ones and adversaries. The way of Christ demands of the individual that he assume the responsibility of being an origin, a "source" — which often means the responsibility of washing away the pollutions and refuses of many a "city" built upon the banks of the river born of this source.

Jesus' life was a poem of courage and inner steadiness; an example of responsibility assumed and discharged to the bitterest end. It remains forever a protest against the "normality" of religious shams and easy, often all too easy, social adjustments. Jesus did not tell his followers that they should be happy and socially adjusted man, that they should study techniques and intellectual skills of their day and become normal according to the collective standards of their tribal society. They were told to respect the Law and the Prophets so as to give offense to no one; they were told to render to Caesar what belonged to Caesar, for the same reason. **But** Jesus demanded of his disciples above all else that they leave behind all family and tribal attachments, all that belonged to the "tribal order" which binds to the blind compulsions of "life" lived as an end in itself, all hypocritical virtues and outer show of respectability or devotion.

He sent them into the world asking of them that they trust in nothing but God; that they rely entirely upon the spontaneous flow of the spirit when confronted with problems and adversaries. The contagious radiance of love was to be their only armor. They were to have no security, no set pattern of dogmas, only the power of their faith and of the vividness of their own experience. "Take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you". (Matt. 10 : 19-20).

We have heard these words of Jesus again and again. But words such as these have very little weight today among the men who educate children, try to cure the sick, police city streets, or sit at executives' desks and in governmental councils, here or abroad. Modern man's essential attitude toward the creative forces of the universe, however one wishes to define or picture these, is altogether different from, and indeed antagonistic to, that held by Jesus. The picture of the successful and normal individual, mass-produced, worshipful of intellect, science and techniques, bound by second-hand opinions or controlled by economic or political expediency, by the search for security and sexual gratification, is certainly not the picture that Jesus today would want to see impressed upon our new generations. Yet this is the picture that is being impressed — the Churches assenting, more or less reluctantly.

There is no room for creativeness in such a type of individual. There is even no real spontaneity and personal positiveness. The emotional responses to life of our youth and of most supposedly mature grown-ups are based on a passive acceptance of standards and fashions established by the movies, by radio and TV, by the magazines and their advertisers. How are these standards established? These various social instrumentalities and their owners are controlled in their policies by the urge to make ever more money by always producing more. This leads in most cases to a definite lowering of collective values and standards so as to reach the "lowest common denominator" of human interests or passions. But no one protests very seriously. In the name of literal freedom and in the fear of establishing precedents for "thought-control", the process of lowering of values goes on. Whatever brakes some religious or cultural groups try to apply to it take the form of

completely illogical and inconsistent appeals for "decency" or "preservation of morals". These appeals affect only the least important aspects of the problem. They never reach, or even have any real desire of reaching, the basic cause of the social, cultural, religious problems which stare us in the face.

Our society is reaching a state of acute crisis because, instead of placing our trust and faith in creative values and in a direct, spontaneous relationship with the creative spirit, we have come to rely almost exclusively upon our intellect, its analyses and "know-how", and upon machines and the productive ability of machines. We are facing a crisis because we have lost the more natural and spontaneous expressions of sharing in a love that is vibrant and deep, even if personal and strictly human. We are afraid of love, as we are afraid of God; we dare not speak of either, lest we be thought silly and old-fashioned. And we are afraid of any crisis, because we have lost a clear or convincing sense of what inner metamorphosis and rebirth **could** mean, so thorough has been the modern "debunking" of all ancient and steady spiritual ideals and religious models!

We have to regain the belief in our ability to become more-than-men. We have to become aflame with a new emotion of purposefulness, a new urge to be Christ-like and to transform society by, first of all, transforming our inner selves and our taken-for-granted sense of value and purpose.

All our efforts at transforming the environment of man, **from the outside and by the intellect and its products**, have brought us to a precipice or landed us in a vicious circle. We are being overcome by the shadow-side of our greatest and most prized achievements.

The one basic cause is, I must repeat, that we have betrayed both the creative power within, the God within, and the love that Christ came to release into the world. We have lost creative vision, and so the "people perish". We seek to be "bigger and better" men, spread out over more space and "fatter" from having absorbed all we could grab for ourselves, rather than determining, with courage, emotional positiveness and will, to become more-than-men. And we dare not trust in love. Our collective need is great indeed. Only individuals can solve it who are ready to stand alone; individuals who are ready, willingly and consciously, to assume the responsibilities facing any creative person through whom spirit acts as a ray of light and, if need be, fire; individuals ready to be an oasis of inner peace and a spontaneous outflow of love in the desert of dry intellectuality and social compromise.

The task is awesome; but if it is not attempted, our civilization will be increasingly deviated from its original and true purpose and destiny. It will probably defeat its enemies outwardly, sooner or later; but it will be defeated inwardly, whenever its values and its ideals collapse into meaninglessness and futility, as did those of the Greco-Roman society. When man becomes hypnotized by the problem of how to keep the circumference of his personality or society intact, strong and superficially adorned, he gradually loses the realization of, and even faith in the power at the **center**. In his worship of an extroverted normality and of externalized social and economic success, man comes to deny that which

can only be found at the core of personality (the divine creative Self) and of society (the divine release of vision and power that has ensouled his civilization). Such a worship is the very root of "materialism"; and there might be no recovery from this blight, this "sin against the Holy Ghost" — against the creative spirit, which it is man's essential destiny to bring to an effective focus on this earth.

Yet I, for one, believe it is not too late. A radical cure is possible. Healing forces are at work even in the midst of our mounting national and international crises. Not in spite of the crises, **but** because of them. A total crisis means, either death, or spiritual victory and rebirth. A total crisis **can** mean a total "catharsis" — release, dissolution, then reintegration. Reintegration demands a new focus for integration. Essentially there is only one basic focus for integration: a new Image of God, and of man in relation to God. This new Image is modern man's greatest need.

4. THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

"And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father which is in heaven"

Matthew 23 : 9

In order to envision and to formulate a new Image of God, man must pass, in most cases, through a crisis of denial in which he questions the validity of **any** God-Idea. During the last centuries of our Western civilization, we have witnessed progressive phases of such a crisis. The humanism of the early Renaissance, the intellectual deism of the eighteenth century, the materialism and atheism of the nineteenth, have been phases in a vast movement of revolt against religion. They have led to the historical materialism of Marx, the "Descent of Man" evolutionism of Darwin and his over-zealous followers, to Nietzsche's superman-worship, to Communist statism, to Freudian and behavioristic psychologies, and to a host of related systems and technical procedures all of which lead to a denial of God and of the divinity latent in man.

This revolt against religion was inevitable, for it was conditioned by the narrow dogmatism or the power of oppression of Churches often influenced by political power and wealth; Churches upholding an Image of God which in some cases had lost all essential likeness to the divine Image of the Father as it emerges from the direct and simple words of Jesus. Indeed, in every civilization, humanism, atheism and the fight against rigidly organized and dogmatic religion constitute an antithesis to the original thesis proclaimed by the "Prophet" or "divine Manifestation" whose life had been the creative Source of that civilization. But this antithesis is not only a rebellion against what has become an oppressively dogmatic God Idea capitalized upon by a priesthood entrenched in its privileges; it is also a positive statement. It seeks to make man positive. It seeks to give to man a purely human dignity and a dynamic value. It wants to free men from what has become spiritual bondage.

The psychological purpose of a vivid faith in any Image of God is that, by striving to grow into the likeness of it, man will walk eagerly and courageously toward the condition of more-than-man. If however the Idea which man is given of God incites him to settle hopelessly at the level of human evolution where he is operating — or worse still, causes him to fall back in dejection and despair of soul — then, the religion which upheld such an Image of God has condemned itself. It has betrayed the essential task and function of religion, which is to hold before men a vision of God whose very power and radiance impel them to become God-like.

To be God-like does **not** mean to be a negative or passive type of man. The positiveness of divine being does not build itself up on the negation of human values and strength. God is not glorified by man's sinfulness and lack of independence or character as a man. Man must be positively human in order to meet God within his soul; but this soul must

reach up to God, must love God, and not be bound to matter and the energies of matter. Man must **want** to meet God. He must **image himself forth divine**, realizing however that, in the relationship of God to man, God is the active pole, the bestower, the full; while man is the receptive pole, the ultimately transfigured vessel whose emptiness becomes filled with the creativity of spirit. Man becomes more-than-man by receiving and assimilating the power and substance of the divine.

It is the character of this relationship between God and man which is the touchstone of an individual's spirituality, as well as of the spirituality of a society and its religion and culture. An "Image of God" includes, or at least implies, an "Image of man" and a specific attitude toward the relationship between God and man, and between man and God. These three factors are truly inseparable. If one of them becomes perverted or deviated all three lose their creative efficacy and their essential meaning.

They do become perverted whenever religion establishes an impassable spiritual barrier between man and God, and man ceases to believe profoundly and vitally in the possibility of the Marriage of God and man within his individual soul. It is only through such a "Marriage", in which God is the positive transforming pole, that man can become more-than-man. It is only through a "Transfiguration" process that man can fulfill his true being. The whole problem of the "spiritual life" is the problem of how to induce this transfiguration of individual man.

Once this problem ceases to be the central feature of religion and the living core of its teachings, a movement of revolt against religion and the living core of its teachings becomes historically inevitable. If religious teachers can no longer show convincingly and by the power of example the way of becoming more-than-man, men **sooner or later** must seek to become "bigger men" — the only way then left for man to increase and expand. If man can no longer consider the Marriage of God and man an actual, workable, all-arousing possibility, then man must seek to become master over material forces; and such a mastery means for the man who is merely human a more or less subtle bondage. Man must eventually choose between being transfigured by God and being able to transform material elements for his self-aggrandizement. In the first case, he becomes more-than-man; in the second, a bigger man. Bigness, in the end, leads to self-destruction — witness the atom bomb and the many ways in which man are systematically destroying themselves, bodies and psyches, in the search for "bigness" at all costs!

Men today have very little choice, generally speaking, because religion has failed them; because the Image of God that Jesus held up is blurred, or overlaid with deceptive shapes where it is taught at all, and forgotten elsewhere. As a result the Image of man has become perverted by generations of agnostics, atheists, materialists, or by utterly confused individuals knocking at every door displaying the sign "spirituality" in search of an answer, a way, a living faith. Men **have had to** glorify man and man's intellectual-technical mastery over matter. They have had to turn their backs upon a fallacious, over-transcendent or deteriorated Image of God which brought them no promise of becoming more-than-man in

a dynamic, real and creative sense. They have obeyed the inner call for activity and creativeness in the only way left them by the traditional rulers of their spiritual lives. Where God can no longer be seen as potentially descending into every human soul actively seeking to meet Him, there man descends into matter to gain a sense of power and creative activity. He must make himself a god in matter, whenever he loses faith in the possibility of his transfiguration by the light and power of divinity.

This very descent of man's consciousness into the world of matter leads some individuals to encounter in the very darkness of the "human, merely human" soil, the **Root** that pulsates with the hidden life of the God-in-the-depths. God is immanent as well as transcendent. Only individualized men who have been able to affirm through all earthly storms and in the midst of the most extreme natural decay "I am" **can**, if they take a further step that leads into a new dimension of consciousness, feel and touch the being of God-in-the-depths. They then come to know the Father; for the Father is "below" as He is "above". He is at the center of the earth, as well as in the immense expanse of sky. "Heaven" is wherever there is center, and creativity radiating from center. Heaven is not a place in space; it is **the space of the Creative Order**. Man meets God within his soul, when he has become ready to assume the responsibility of the true creative activity, the essence of which is "love" — the love which forever answers all human needs, whatever they may be, whatever the cost to the self and the self's pride.

Only that man can meet God who has been able to act, within the limits and at the level of man's present evolutionary capacities, as God acts. This "as" establishes the relationship of filiation between man and God. God becomes actually man's Father when man acts as His son. There cannot be such a thing as a passive likeness to God, for God — however one conceives Him, or even It — is the essential, the ultimate of creativity. Though He is absolute stillness and peace, He is stillness and peace at the core of all activity. He is positive to whatever there is; but in God's positiveness, all that is receptive in relation to Him **is also positive to its own self!** Even evil, which of itself is negation, becomes in God a positive factor; it contributes to the absolute positiveness of God.

In a like manner, any historical movement of revolt against religion, negative as it may appear to be, can be seen as a deep and "tragic" attempt by man to experience within his positiveness — within the dynamic and creative statement "I am" — the Father. He **had** to experience it there in the depths of the "I", not only because his religion had removed God-in-the-heights to so remote a realm of transcendence and mystery that no meeting between man and God seemed possible, but in a deeper sense, because until man is able to summon within his individualized self the consciousness and power of being a positive, creative agent, he is not ready to know himself as a "son" of God. And no man can know the Father, as such, unless he knows himself as His son.

"Knowing" here should be understood in the Biblical sense of **experiencing the core of a being** — indeed, the creative core. It is not mere acquaintance, but interpenetration. True knowledge is always gained through complete attunement to, or identification with, the

essence of whatever is known. And, as the essence of any being is activity of a particular kind, to know a being is to act in unison with this being. To know God is thus to act as God; but, obviously, only within the limits of man's possibilities.

The limits, however, are not what matters most, but rather the quality of the activity. Spirit is never a matter of more or less; it is quality of activity, not quantity. God acts divinely in a three-dimensional world as well as in a universe of infinitely many dimensions. When He acts in this three-dimensional world **He acts as man**.

This is the great promise, the great "fact" of the spiritual life. When God acts as man, **it could be You**. Can you accept the challenge of this thought? This is the challenge of true Christianity. The challenge is implied in these simple words which so many millions have repeated yet so few have "known": Our Father. In older religions God was nearly always given a name, even if, as in later Hebrew practice, this name was not to be spoken aloud. God, or the many gods, were conceived as powerful spiritual Beings with whom man had to establish a relationship through more or less external acts of worship or obedience, and in primitive cults, through strictly magical practices and rituals of propitiation. Jesus however did not, as far as we know, give a name to God. He spoke of Him as "my Father", as "**our** Father".

Many Christians think of the Father as a Being enthroned in a heavenly "House" with "many mansions"; but actually all that is strictly implied in the words "our Father" is that **we are His sons!** The term refers essentially **to us**, humans. It does not tell anything concerning the Being whom we call Father, except that there is a Being to whom we are related through a creative process. Someone has created us, has summoned us forth into existence. We are the demonstration of the function or activity of fatherhood. Without children there could be no father; there could be an un-creative God, but not God as Father. By not giving a name to God, Jesus presumably sought to draw our attention toward the creative activity of God rather than toward God as **a** Being.

All we know of God is that He is That from which we stem, as sons from a father. We know His Fatherhood (a creative activity) simply because we are His sons (the results of this activity). To say therefore that God is our Father means essentially but one thing: that we have a divine creative Source. However, something else is added: the motive for this fathering activity is "love". **God created us, His sons, out of boundless love.**

This simple statement is the core of Jesus' message; all else is derived from it. There is a divine creative activity whose motive-power is divine love. Men carry in their true essential selves the characteristic features of this activity; and if they can act with the same motive-power as does their Father, if they can act out divine love, then they will be "like their Father". To be God-like is thus to be creative under the impulse of divine love. Love one another, **as I love you and as the Father loves me**, said Jesus; then your actions will be creative in a divine way. They will be the Father's actions indeed, because they will be **divine Fatherhood in action through you, His son**; and as this happens, you will in turn become a "father".

The essential point in this, I repeat, is that Jesus wanted to focus our attention not upon the existence of a Being in an external Heaven but upon **the operation of an activity**, a creative power — "divine Fatherhood" — the cause and purpose of which is "divine love". This love-activity is directed toward man, for man issues forth from it. But it is not only directed toward man; it is latent in man.

Alas, man's attention has been so long turned toward other things and interests that he has forgotten the very existence of this divine love-activity at his core. His actions no longer have the character of divine Fatherhood, God's creativity; nor do they arise out of "divine love". For this reason, because this Fatherhood is not operating in him, man is not even aware of being the result of such a creative activity. He does not "know" or experience himself as a son of God; and lacking this, he lacks everything that pertains to the realm of the spirit.

Jesus came to men to demonstrate this "knowing" of divine sonship; to exemplify the way that can lead men to a realization of the love-creativity that is the substance of divine Fatherhood; to teach the elementary steps confronting every man who, having become ever so little aware of the stirrings of this love-creativity within the core of his nature, begins to burn with the urge to be God-like, to be man in the likeness of God, the Creator, the All-Father.

Jesus knew himself as son of God. He had experienced the creativity and the love-purpose of God at the very source of his own personal being, nay more as the very source and the constant sustainment of his humanity. He had removed all obstacles to the flow of this ever-renewed Fatherhood of God, these "living waters" that well up from the center of every **un-deviated and un-obstructed human life**. He was pervaded through and through by this divine inheritance, substance of his substance. He was pure love-creativity at work, pure Fatherhood is action. For this reason, he was the perfect son; and being a perfect son he became the father of many sons. This indeed is the proof of effective sonship, to become the father of many sons. For Jesus it meant to carry on the descent of God, to extend the activity of the Fatherhood until all men would "know" themselves as sons, and act thereafter also as fathers of still more sons.

Christian doctrines speak constantly of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man; but it does not seem clear to those who make such utterances that fatherhood is always an activity, a power; and that no son can be a true son unless this power is also active within him. The power is always in every man, latent though it be. All that we can really "know" of our divine Father is His power — until we "come of age" and use this power consciously for the one purpose of divine love. Then we are the Father. "I and my Father are one". Not one in essence, perhaps, in most cases; but one in activity. The keynote of the whole message of Jesus is activity — oneness with the Father by acting out individually the power of Fatherhood. **Act as God** and God will be you; because God is activity, yet activity of a unique kind — activity that is utterly motivated and controlled by divine Love.

This divine love is essentially a **will to harmony**, a harmony which leaves out nothing and no one. By the activity of that love all discords are fused into an all-inclusive harmony. This love is divine healing; it is that which **makes whole** all that lives, suffers, thinks and aspires. Love is the motive of all divine creation; creativity (Fatherhood) is the power. Man's task is so to develop the intensity of the **motive** of love that the **power** of creativity, the Holy Spirit, spontaneously flows outward from the center of his being toward all discords and all sickness.

The spirit is "holy" because it is the power that re-establishes — or seeks to re-establish — harmony everywhere, because it makes everything that had become separate and beset by conflicts, **whole**. The entire process of Creation is a divine activity aiming at reestablishing universal harmony — the harmony between unity and multiplicity, between the one Center and the many centers, indeed between God and individual souls. This harmony is forever broken, forever re-established, because God is Motion. God **is**; souls **are**. But they are in Him and out of Him; and He is in them, as the seed is in the plant issuing from it. There are souls because God's essential attribute is creativity. He is always and forever Fatherhood at work, a perpetual outpouring of creative energy.

This is how Jesus must have "known" Him; this is why he could only speak of Him as "Father". One can hardly give a defining name to an immense flow of power within which one is immersed. Fatherhood is a power, as light is power. The visionary young Pharaoh, Akhnaton, hymned the Sun-disc, Aton, as the divine Source of Light and Life. The Gnostic followers of Jesus also composed hymns to the Fatherhood of the One Father. But Jesus very simply states the fact that he and the Father are one. "I am He". He who is utterly a giver of light need not sing paeans to the light. He **is** light. He "knows" light simply by being light, by acting out the power that gives illumination.

This is the central truth of dynamic Christianity, a Christianity which still could transfigure the world, if it had first experienced the Transfiguration in the persons of its leaders and of at least some of its members. But such an experience means that all the progressive steps that lead to it have been taken. And no one reaches the goal who has not had the faith and the courage to accept the responsibility of acting out the power of the Fatherhood — the power of the creativity in love. Such a courage and faith are not easily

summoned by men at our present stage of human evolution. As long as men are still dominated by the compulsive blindness of instincts and emotional desires, it is difficult for them to imagine themselves as agents of God, entrusted with creative power; or, if they have sufficient imagination, they very often lack the motive-power of divine love and compassion for all.

Nevertheless, Jesus believed that men **could** have the faith, the courage and the imagination. He sought to remove from men's souls and minds the dogmatic obstacles, the fears, the timidity that stand in the way of the realization of divine Sonship. He proclaimed the ascendancy of conscious and divine love over unconscious life-impulses. He gave his disciples his promise that they could act as he acted and perform still "greater things" if only they acted "in the name of Christ" and with the power of the Holy Spirit — the power of the Fatherhood adjusted to the new conditions of man's existence.

This promise was not exclusively directed to the twelve Apostles. We can consider these twelve as **prototypes** (i.e. first typical manifestations) of men seeking to become "disciples of Christ"; just as Jesus was the prototype of the new man, the Christ-man, the man in whom divine Sonship had become completely focused, individualized, incorporated and efficacious on earth. But there have been thousands and there will be millions of disciples of Christ, each more or less unfolding his growth in spirit along one of the twelve basic approaches from man to God represented by the twelve original disciples. And there have been men since Jesus who have become one with Christ in their transfiguration. Jesus was the "First Born", but not the one and only "Son". Divine Sonship is "one", but of sons there must be many. The Mastery is one, but there are many "Masters".

When the Church stresses the idea that Jesus Christ is the "only begotten", it chooses to interpret the Greek term **monogenes** in a narrow way. This term means rather "singly begotten" or better still, "created in a single act of creation". Christ, the Son, is a direct, immediate creation of the Father in spirit, while men are indirect and gradual creations produced in the dark matrix of life on earth, and requiring a "divine intervention" — the manifestation of the Christ, as an Exemplar and Guide — to be able to reach the stage of divine Sonship.

Christ shows the Way; men must follow Him. Christ is the Way; men must "live in" Christ, must "put on Christ" as St. Paul said. Nevertheless they, and only they, can do the walking and the living. The goal is the same, as the source of divine Fatherhood is one source, and all powers are one Power. Spirit is always, at any time and under any one of its multitudinous aspects, this one Power of the Fatherhood of God.

Men who have become individuals, emerged from the binding norm of earth-bound mankind, can only live truly spiritual lives as they become **positively oriented toward the spirit**. Through this positiveness of approach they make it possible for the spirit likewise to act positively toward them. They thus become "inspired"; they receive the Holy Spirit that Christ promised to those who would become in truth and reality His disciples.

But Jesus also said: "Ask and it shall be given you". The great principle of the spiritual life is that it is man's asking which conditions God's giving. It is the way an individual asks, the quality of the asking and the formulation given to the request which establish the conditions under which the Holy Spirit can descend into the man. Spirit answers the need; but it is the characteristics of the need and the conscious recognition by the individual person of his own need which shape the form of Spirit's answer.

This explains the value and importance of prayer, of one type or another. To pray is to formulate one's individual need. There must be a formulation if there is to be an answer — at least insofar as values relative to growth in spirit are concerned — for these values must be consciously apprehended by the individual person; only in the sphere of life and mere life-preservation can there be automatic answers to man's needs.

The would-be disciple of Christ must pray. He must thus positively orient himself to Spirit and to the Father. He must acknowledge the Father so that the Father may acknowledge him — and eventually entrust him with the power of the Fatherhood. For this reason Jesus gave a Prayer to his disciples. It is the prototype of all similar prayers in which man, on his way to the transfiguration, acknowledges God as his Father, asks for what he needs on his path to discipleship, and ultimately anticipates the final experience of the Fatherhood, the "vision of God".

To call this Prayer the "Lord's Prayer" is however the result of a profound misunderstanding of what is meant by the "Lord" in the Old Testament, as we shall presently see. It is Jesus' Prayer, a prayer for disciples on the way to the Christ-man state, offered to them as guidance and as a focal point for daily meditation by the first among men to attain, as man, perfect union with Christ.

The Prayer consists of a preliminary statement of recognition and orientation: "Our Father, Which art in heaven"; then, of three threefold statements, making in all ten sections — 10, the perfect number of the Creative, for it is not only a culmination or seed (as symbolized by number 9), but it is that plus a new beginning at a higher level, a new creative impulse.

The words of this Prayer are so well known that it seems unnecessary to repeat them; and yet for centuries Christian men, women and children have said them myriads of times, either by rote and without real intent or with the literal minds and the merely devotional feeling of "creatures", not of potential "sons" — even though the Prayer was to "our Father"! Words, words, and no creative spirit **within** the utterance of these words, dulled by meaningless repetition! Men, Christians in name only, have failed to understand that if Jesus prayed with us all to God as "our Father" it was because he wanted to oppose the idea of an essential gap between men and God, and to affirm man's essential oneness in substance, quality and power with the Father. The leaders and teachers of Christianity have failed to see that Heaven is not a distant place away from here and now, but an order of being, a quality of activity, and the space of God's Will through all conceivable dimensions of length, breath and depth. They have been afraid or unwilling to realize that the Name, the Kingdom, the Will, had to be established not in a social-collective, religious-political sense, but primarily in a psychological sense, that is, **in us as individuals**.

***"Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."***

The "Name" is the certification of direct ancestry and thus of consubstantiality from seed to seed; one bears the name of one's father. The "Kingdom" is the inheritance, the patrimony. The "Will" is the sum-total of all the self-defining abilities and traits of character. These three factors are to be established **in us** if we are calling God with sufficient faith and intensity of realization. "Our Father". If He is our Father, His Name, His Kingdom, His Will are **potentially** in us, men born of the earth. All that is needed in order to see this threefold potential become an actuality here and now, where we are acting, is that the Father consecrates us as His sons by entrusting us with the power of the Fatherhood.

This trust is the only true "Initiation"; it is the transfer of the power of the Fatherhood by the Father upon the son who has "come of age". All that men require in order to become wielders of the power and agents of God is, in truth and reality, to come of age as essential beings. This does not mean that men will become "creators" in the all-inclusive and absolute sense in which God is Creator. But the power of the Fatherhood that emanates in any world-cycle from the one Father-Creator can operate in and through man as man comes of age; that is, as man becomes fully individualized and, being transfigured by the light and love of

divine Sonship, experiences himself as a son of God and a carrier of this power of the Fatherhood.

Man must first come of age as a spiritual being; this is the one condition. And this coming of age implies a gradual development of those powers and faculties which belong to the "creative order", Heaven. They are the Christ-powers, in contradistinction to the faculties and abilities of the "earth order" which ordinary men today prize so enormously, yet which bind man to the earth, to materiality and mortality, to the blind compulsions of life or the negative light of the ego. And the essential one among these Christ-powers is Christ-love (agape) active compassion, or true charity (from *charis*, meaning divine Grace.)

Yet for man, at this relatively early stage of human evolution, to come spiritually of age is a very arduous task, filled with danger. The main danger is what psychologists today call "infantilism"; that is, the inability to free oneself from a state of emotional and mental, even of physical-social, dependence upon the parents. It is the danger of seeking to replace, at a purely personal level, a negative "father-image" in one's early life experience by an unsteady devotion to some transcendental "heavenly Father", who is then only a shadowy figure, the bearer of an unresolved "father-complex", as modern psychologists would say. The child must learn to operate on his own; he must thus "leave behind" the father, mother and all binding family attachments; also he should examine critically all traditional ideas, preconceptions and prejudices which his mind absorbed during childhood and adolescence. But he should always beware lest in leaving behind the realities of the "earth" he does not merely escape into the illusions of a "pseudo-heaven" — a heaven which, because it is not **creative**, is not the heaven of which Jesus spoke in dynamic terms.

In other words man must emerge from the binding matrix of the past, live as a mature individual in the present, and aim consciously toward the future — toward his future as a son of God. This process of emergence is what has often been called the "Path". It is the "Way, the Truth and the Life" which Jesus demonstrated as a divine Performer of the ritual process of metamorphosis of earthly man into Christ-man. As man walks upon this Path he actually becomes a "disciple of Christ". If man reaches his goal, he experiences the Transfiguration; he is a son of God. The light and love of the Fatherhood are completely focused **within** and through his individual being.

***"Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses as we
forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil."***

The second part of the great Prayer Jesus taught to his disciples refers to the three essential needs of man on this arduous Path. First, man must be sustained in his quest

toward the future. Secondly, man must experience and act out compassionate love. Thirdly, man must find the strength to free himself from the pull of the past.

However, the term translated as "daily bread" in Jesus' Prayer actually means "bread for the morrow"; it refers to that power of sustainment which does not merely feed the everyday life, but is directed toward the creation of ever new tomorrows. It is creative futureward substance, **not** mere earth-chemicals for the body.

The forgiving of our trespasses as we forgive others signifies that on the path of discipleship to Christ, the great principle is **mutuality**. The Golden Rule is an expression of this principle; and here, in the Prayer, we see the Love which is compassion and "forgiveness" presented as an ever greater expression of mutuality linking the divine and the human. Man must love and forgive; then God's love and forgiveness vivify him in spirit. And in this mutual activity the disciple communes with Christ, and the substance of God's gift (the "bread for tomorrow") is **leavened** by the Spirit.

The overcoming of temptation and deliverance from evil point to the constant need there is for the individual to struggle against the down-pull of the past — or in modern scientific terminology the entropy of the material universe whose energy constantly "runs down". The accuracy of the translation has been questioned by many people who object to the idea that God could "lead" us into temptation; yet there may be a deep significance in this phrase "lead us not . . .", as we see that Jesus, after the Baptism, was also "led by the spirit into the wilderness".

The basic idea is no doubt that no one can be entrusted with the power of the Fatherhood until his organism of body, soul and mind has proven able to withstand the "fire" of the creative spirit. Every engine must likewise be tested for its ability to deliver power without being shattered by the energy released. Moreover, every person approaching his spiritual goal arouses, by this very fact, the accumulated power (the total inertia) of his past; he sees himself as what he has been, as a dark, negative ego; he meets his "Shadow" as concretized evil; and the tendency to recoil in horror, remorse and utter despondency from this confrontation is indeed, in some cases, overpowering. A divine intervention is thus needed to draw man away from the past by revealing to his inner eyes what he can be, what he must become, because he is essentially that — God's son.

This, then, gives significance to the little word "for" in the Prayer — "**for thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory forever. Amen.**" God's intervention delivers the disciple from evil "for" in this act of intervention God appears to him as his Father. It is this very "vision of God" which is the Deliverer — **provided** the disciple and would-be son of God does not shrink in awe from the vision of the Father, Who holds in His hands the power of the disciple's very Self, his status as a "son". All great mystics have spoken guardedly of this "vision of God", in one form or another; every son must meet his Father face to face to receive the power of the Fatherhood.

First the disciple experiences the ineffable light-substance, the "cosmic consciousness", the oneness of all in the four-dimensional space of the "creative order", the **Kingdom** of

Heaven. Then, he senses, pulsating through it all, the **Power** of God, the Fatherhood, in incessant activity. Lastly he envisions God's **Glory** — the very Selfhood of the Father. And he receives the "word of power", the AMEN, which is his own spiritual NAME, the key that unlocks for him the knowledge of how to use the power of the Fatherhood, and also the work to be done, which is the purpose of his illumined and "Christed" Soul.

The power must be used. It must be used consciously and purposefully by man, as a son and an agent of the Creator-Father. All the tragedies and the crises of human evolution have but one single purpose: to make individuals able to use this creative power on the basis of divine love and in the wisdom of the Creator.

Without individuals who have mastered such a use of the power of the Fatherhood, God the Creator would not see His "Plan of Creation" fulfilled; for it is only within and through the organisms of the many sons of God, during long eras of time, that this fulfillment of God's Plan can be reached. The Christ-men are the mystic vessels in which the mysterious trans-substantiation of matter into divine energy can be performed. Their sublime Company carries on the divine creative-regenerative Great Work after the turning point of the great cycle of God's creative activity has been reached. They are God-the-Many; He, the Creator "in the Beginning", is God-the-One. They are the Brotherhood of the Sons; He is the Father.

Through all there is, was and ever will be, the one power of the Fatherhood pulsates. It is one power, and it is many energies. Its names are legion; its properties are countless. It is spirit, yet it is also formative mind; and it is life. It is vast and diffuse through endless cosmic spaces; yet it is focused within the Soul of the transfigured individual. Where it is thus focused, there sons of God arise. With love and in wisdom they wield the power of the Fatherhood.

This is the goal. No man is so low that some day he may not reach it, be it after eons of suffering and travail of soul. No man is so high that he may not falter on the way, even in sight of the very goal. The Path is dangerous; many fall by the wayside as "casualties" of the process. Yet the goal **can** be reached. To this Jesus, the man, testified — and others after him. His promise is with us. And the Holy Spirit is with us, if we **let** it fill our confused and distracted egos.

It is possible. To know that this is possible; to know that this is possible through Christ, the Archetype of divine Sonship; to know that the Way, the Truth and the Life which prove that it is possible are still with us, even though they be obstructed by dogmas and covered by monstrous avalanches of human pride and greed — such "knowing" can make Christianity real and dynamic; a transforming force in a world desperately in need of creative vision and of the actual experience of spirit; a powerful affirmation of divine purpose where there is today only the negation of spirit or the frantic negation of the negation.

In this affirmation, which is strength and which is peace, modern man can meet all challenges. In this affirmation, man stands with the Father; and through His power and in His love "all things are possible".

5. AT THE CENTER IS SOUL

"Before Abraham was, I am."

John 5 : 48

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Matthew 5 : 48

The Fatherhood of God implies the Brotherhood of men who are His sons. The image of divine Sonship is the inevitable sequence to the image of God's Fatherhood. And if we seek to illumine and to renew the image of the Fatherhood, it also follows that we must revivify and dynamize anew the image of divine Sonship, so basic in Christian faith; for the latter is even closer to us. Indeed it is the very core of our essential being. Yet we are blind to this inner fact; and we shrink in disbelief and fear from acknowledging **that** which is the foundation of the divine in us — the God-seed.

"That" is the soul. It is the soul that is destined, sooner or later, to reach "perfection". It is the soul that, in due course of evolution and unfoldment, will experience God as Father and, in this experience, will know itself a "son" of the Father. We cannot understand the meaning of perfection and divine Sonship unless we understand what the soul is, whence it comes, how it unfolds its powers and ceaselessly renews itself from level to level of realization on this way to perfection.

In this world of matter-bent awareness and duality, of conflicts and pain, to understand what anything pertaining to the divine in man requires as well a knowledge, and often a tragic experience, of what it is **not**. The soul is not that part of us, modern men and women, which is full of fears and psychological complexes; it is not the ego with which we identify ourselves when we say "I am Mr. or Mrs. So-and-so" — the ego which gets angry, depressed, lustful, greedy and embittered or tyrannical on the slightest pretext. Neither is the soul our intellectual mind trained in our academic institutions of learning — the mind which worships sense-data, quantitative measurements, technique and all that produces material success and social respectability through conformity to a norm which bears but a remote likeness to the ideal of man which Jesus lived by and incorporated.

If I speak of "my" soul and of "having" a soul, I acknowledge by these statements that my consciousness of self, my sense of identity, is not an expression of centrality of being and integration. If "I" **have** a soul, then I **am not** soul and this I is not the true Self. Such an I cannot experience God as Father but only as a kind of remote foster-Father, at best a Father by adoption. Only the soul can experience God as Father because only the soul can unfold into the condition of perfection "even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." All else in man can only attain vicarious, shadowy and often considerably distorted

experiences — or rather emotional "feelings" and intellectual glimpses — of God, the All-Father.

The problem for men and women of our day, even though we have absorbed the images and general concepts of Christianity since childhood, is to distinguish between the shadow and the reality. We can make such a distinction intellectually and out of book knowledge; but unless we come to understand and feel, in moments of crisis and inner intensity, that what we have so far considered as "I" cannot be the real core of selfhood, unless we sense that what we imagined in idealistic moments as "our" soul cannot really be the potent seed of the divine in us, our intellectual knowing will not be sufficient to transform our consciousness and our lives.

Only through these poignant realizations of what the soul is not can we begin to feel, inescapably and with inner certainty, that there is within us an as yet secret soul-reality; and that we are That. We **are** soul. We are in potentiality "sons of God"; but **only in potentiality!** As the grub is the potentiality of the butterfly, so every man is the grub of "more-than-man".

How can the grub have faith in its potentiality of butterfly-being? This is the difficulty. The grub must have "faith" lest it cling so stubbornly to its grubhood for fear of losing itself, that the process of metamorphosis may actually be thwarted or stunted. Faith, creative faith, is the power to imagine vividly the actual next step in one's inner evolution, and the ability to desire what has thus been "imaged forth" **to the exclusion of all else.**

Such a transforming faith can hardly be experienced, however, unless there is first of all a deep dissatisfaction in the grub-man with his grubhood — a "divine discontent" caused by the inner pressure of the spirit-led evolutionary process operating within the organism, as well as by a sense of futility in, and perhaps acute suffering from, the experiences of the grub state.

Thus there must be "crises"; there must be what the Bible describes as "temptations in the wilderness". However, all great crises of transformation involve serious risks. In the confusion of the "critical state" between two stages or levels of inner evolution, man may not be able to "imagine" vividly enough, and above all not correctly enough, his unfamiliar future status. His "desires" may be and usually are divided. He wants the future condition, or he "would like" to find himself in it; yet much in him hesitates, refuses or is powerless to leave the old ruts of thinking, feeling, behaving. However unsatisfactory these are, they are known and familiar.

Man in such a "critical state" requires help; and only God, or personages who act as God's Agents, can give this assistance. Indeed in the last analysis, the only true and efficacious assistance which can be given is, symbolically speaking, for one who embodies the next step in evolution to come to meet the man struggling toward that next step. The "future" meets the "present" as this present is striving to let go of the "past". This makes it possible for the present to become the future because the future state of evolution, having

been **imaged out clearly and attractively impersonated, has been felt as an utterly desirable goal.**

The reality of the soul must be vividly pictured, then exemplified, to the man who is enthralled by the intellect and centered in the ego — a false and unsteady structure of selfhood built **in reaction to** the pressures of society and the confusing demands of the instincts. This soul-reality has to be "pictured", because man today is a thinking, conscious being, greatly disturbed or frightened by whatever he cannot visualize as more or less consistent with his past thinking. Man must have his mind reoriented toward the soul by another mind that is "soul-wise", that is an instrumentality of the soul. This is the first step. And it is the step exemplified by John the Baptist, the "Voice crying in the wilderness" of a society which has lost all vivid sense of what the soul is; the Herald who, cycle after cycle, sounds the great Call for Renewal of the ego-mind, the **metanoia** (of which "repentance" is at best only a phase).

But this is not enough. Following this, the soul must "become flesh". The future status of man must be concretely demonstrated and exemplified for men who still belong to and rely upon the past and its scale of values. This is the Incarnation. The Principle of divine Sonship (Christ, the Son) transfigures Jesus who has become more-than-man; and in the transfigured Jesus men can vividly see their own future state as souls. They can see — **provided** they do not fall asleep, unable to stand the sight of the Glory, or turn their backs in confusion and fear. Having seen, they may remember and become what they have seen — unless they forget! Men forget because they have not really understood; because their minds had not been sufficiently prepared; because the metamorphosis is too great a challenge and the ego refuses to surrender to the soul its fictitious claims, its temporary privileges and its psychological "police-force" while the soul struggles at its own level of unfoldment to become the "Inner Ruler" of the whole man.

How can we today define and picture the soul, so that men now living may be stirred into recognizing and accepting this soul as the central, controlling and creative reality enfolding the total personality? How can we induce men's minds to serve the purpose of the soul, instead of giving strength to the dictatorship of the ego or following, passively and unquestioningly, the collective mentality of a materialistic society?

What makes the attempt difficult is that the very word, soul, has been given a variety of meanings, most of which are vague or emotional, confusing and unreal. Minds trained in the Christian tradition turn to the Bible if they feel the urge to seek for knowledge about the soul; and indeed the Bible contains a profound knowledge of what the soul is and how, in and through human evolution, it reaches the state of perfection. Yet this knowledge is nowhere presented in easily comprehended intellectual terms such as modern minds are accustomed to. It has to be extracted from the words, the events, the personalities which the Bible presents to us. Its true significance can only be extracted if the Bible as a whole is understood to record, in symbolical terms, the entire process of evolution of the soul. The narrated events have, it is true, an actual historical foundation; but the narrative itself and

its contents are meant to impart knowledge about the soul. And this is true of the Sacred Books of all great religions.

All "sacred" knowledge about the soul has always been, and to some extent at least must always be given in and through symbols or parables, simply because the soul must be understood in terms of action as well as, and even more than, in terms of thought or feeling. The minds of men interpret these symbols according to the need of the times, according to the level of evolution man has reached socially and individually. Thus interpretations differ. The needs of men living in this twentieth century differ from those of men of the first or of the sixteenth century because of all that has happened to humanity in the interval. It is true that what constitutes divine reality for man does not change; Christ, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end of the great Cycle of existence, does not change. But man is constantly evolving somewhere between this beginning and this end. Man's conscious orientation to Christ and to the inner fact of the soul must therefore inevitably change.

We can assimilate as livingness of knowledge only that to which we are oriented through our actual life-experience. And modern man's experience with vast problems of integration and complex thought processes calls for a reformulation of ancient symbols, for a more conscious, more inclusive and less emotional statement of the meaning, the evolution and the future destiny of the soul.

We are today at the beginning of a new era; not only an "atomic" era but an era of rebirth of the spirit that has become imprisoned in the stones of prejudice, in dogma and ruts in thinking. Man has released the nuclear "fire" kept in latency by the "binding force" of the atom; but his task will not be completed unless he succeeds in releasing as well the dynamic power of soul-transformation that is imprisoned in the stony citadels of traditional religious interpretations all over the earth. Fire must be released out of the stone! The soul must be revealed in its total ascent from the condition of "living soul" to the state of divine Sonship — the soul in you, the soul in me, and as well the soul in Jesus, the Exemplar and Guide for this present humanity.

All things in the universe are made for the soul; all things are ultimately to be transformed by the soul. You and I **are** souls; and we are moving toward our eventual divine state however drastic the crises, however bitter the seeming failures, however long the process of evolution.

But whence did we come? What can we envision of this divine state? And where do we stand, most of us, today, on the way between past and future?

It is the answer to these crucial questions that we must seek in the Sacred Book of Christianity. "Ask and ye shall receive", we are told. But what one receives is conditioned by the manner of the asking. When man feels himself drowning, every cell of his being, every strand of his will asks for air to breathe. So should we ask for the Truth of the soul if the "Holy Spirit" is to illumine out-understanding.

The "Living Soul"

The world in which man is said to live is a material world. Man appears in it in a material body composed of a myriad of material cells and organs. Through the senses of this body he comes in contact with a multitude of material objects and entities. All human activities necessitate some changes in material arrangements or conditions in which a multiplicity of elements are involved. Matter is, indeed, inevitably an expression of multiplicity; it is a collective term always referring to many things and to many conditions which are moving and changing incessantly. This seemingly endless series of changes is what we call, in terms of our sense experiences and of our organic feelings, "time".

All great religions tell us, however, that this world of matter, of multiplicity, of change and time, is not the only realm of being. There is also a realm of spirit in which God timelessly and changelessly **is**; a realm of unity. Religious philosophy presents the unity of spirit and the multiplicity of matter as opposites, and establishes a sharp contrast between the material world and the realm of spirit, the "Kingdom of God".

Yet this opposition and contrast can only be relative. Spirit and matter cannot be completely apart from each other or unrelated to each other, otherwise we would have two absolutes, spirit and matter. And the absolute "duality" of spirit and matter would of itself deny any reality to the "unity" of spirit! There must be, therefore, and indeed we know by inner and outer experience that there is, a power and activity which somehow bring

together spirit-unity and matter-multiplicity. This power and this activity are experienced by man first of all as "life".

Life is the power of the unity of spirit acting in the midst of a multiplicity of material elements. Through this activity of the power of spirit the myriads of material atoms, molecules and cells in a living body are brought to a condition of interrelationship, interdependence and integration — the condition of "organic unity", the state of living. In all living organisms we can see the power of organic integration pervading the field in which the immensely many molecules and cells are moving, changing, being born and dying, according to a common rhythm of unfoldment. Life in the most general and broadest sense of the term is thus that which establishes an enduring relationship between spirit and matter, unity and multiplicity.

We have thus a philosophical-religious trinity: spirit, life and matter. But the most significant fact, a fact which can easily be and has been forgotten, is that "life" cannot be considered as being independent of "spirit". It is an expression of spirit, a power of spirit, in the world of material multiplicity. Life means integration and integration means: to bring to a condition of wholeness.

Wholeness is unity in manifestation.

A living organism is an integrated whole of cells. The organism occupies a certain space and within this space, acting through the whole of it and radiating from it, is an energy which we call life, or the life-force. The space in which a living organism is extended can thus be considered as a "field of force" broadly similar to the electromagnetic field surrounding a magnet. The energy of life circulates through this field, holding all cells within definite patterns of relationship, somewhat as the "lines of force" of an electromagnetic field compel small particles of iron to organize themselves into set geometrical patterns.

The patterns of organic life are both extremely complex and dynamic. The life-force is essentially one, or unitarian, because it is an expression of the power of unity, spirit. Yet this one life-force becomes differentiated into an immense variety of secondary energies animating and sustaining the vast variety of life-processes in which definite groups and types of cells participate, and through which these cells experience ceaseless, yet ordered and periodic, transformations.

Where there is integrated activity there must always be some kind of central focus from and through which the energy that produces integration — life — radiates, and to which it returns. This focus or core of the integrative activity of life is what is called, in Genesis, the "living soul" (**Nephesh hayyak** in Hebrew). It is the focal point for the operations of the "breath of life" with which God invests man at a certain stage of the Creation.

Much of the confusion about the meaning of the term, soul, comes from the fact that it is used with reference to **several levels of integration**. Nevertheless "soul", in all cases where the term is significantly and validly used, and not in a merely colloquial sense, has

the same basic meaning; it is the focus through and from which the energy of integration operates. It is the core of all integrative processes in the universe. If we speak of the "Soul of the world", this too is a legitimate use of the term, because according to all religious philosophies the world in which we live is a "universe", an integrated whole; and wherever there is an integrated whole there is a dynamic core of integration, a "soul". We may likewise speak, in terms of social integration, of the soul of a community, the soul of a nation, because such collectivities constitute integrated wholes of social activity and consciousness.

There are three basic levels of integration as far as man is concerned. At each of these levels there is "soul". We can say that there are three souls, or else three aspects of the one soul. If we think of soul as a **focus** for the release of energy (the energy of integration) it is more practical and precise to speak of three souls; the energy is one, but there are three separate yet related foci. Thus religious teachings nearly always have mentioned several souls and given to each a different name; and the Bible is no exception if its teachings are clearly interpreted.

If it is true that where there is integration there is soul, it is also true that where there is soul there is consciousness. Because soul exists at different levels, so also there are different types of consciousness, the lowest of which appears to us today as almost complete unconsciousness. One should nevertheless speak of consciousness whenever some degree or kind of more or less steady relationship is established between spirit and matter, unity and multiplicity. As we can speak of "living soul", so we can also speak of life-consciousness; and instinct is one aspect of this life-consciousness.

There is, however, another aspect which can be called "intuition". Just as "instinct" is life-consciousness oriented toward the problems of life in a material body (above all, the maintenance and reproduction of this body), so "intuition" is essentially life-consciousness oriented toward a realization and strengthening of the connection between life and spirit (the source of the energies of life). Intuition is thus intent upon solving the problems of the "living soul" seeking to maintain itself as a steady focus for the release of the integrative power of life, and for a clear visualization of unity, and thus of God.

Man, as "living soul", is facing in two directions. Indeed the soul always faces in two directions, for it is the core of the process of integration of two opposites. Thus the "living soul" identifies itself, in one direction, with the repetitive, compulsive, ruthless and relentless rhythms of the life-force, as this life-force churns the material particles of the human body and sustains its organic functions. In this aspect, it is an instinctual soul colored by the characteristics of matter and constantly modified by the changing processes of life in the body; indeed, it appears much more as an ever-changing **reflection** of whatever life-function dominates the organism at any moment than as one soul. But in its intuitive awareness of spirit as unity, the "living soul" faces in another direction, that is, spiritward.

In this aspect the "living soul" is also mirror-like in nature; but what it seeks to reflect is unity. It strives to orient itself to what it dimly grasps as **the One**, much as the leaves of a plant turn toward the light of the sun. The One, God, is felt by the intuition as the original Source of the power of life, just as the sun-disc in the sky is seen as the source of light. To the **heliotropism** of the plant (its "turning toward light") we can parallel the **theotropism** of the simple, yet pure and child-like primitive man, whose "living soul" turns toward God (**theos**). This "theotropism" is the devotion of creature to Creator, of the reflection in the mirror of organic life to the divine origin, "the Almighty God".

The consciousness of man, at the level of development where the "living soul" operates exclusively, is therefore a combination of instinct and intuition, of compulsive instincts and almost equally compulsive intuitions of spirit. What instinct dictates must be obeyed; likewise what intuition reveals is a divine command, the validity of which is self-evident. The command is "heard"; God is "seen". The experience cannot be denied. What is heard and seen must be acted upon; and, **at first**, there is no opposition between what intuition and what instinct command. This stage constitutes the "Golden Age", the Age of Innocence, the Age of "Adam" before the dualism Adam-Eve appears.

However, the fact that the One God finds Himself **reflected** in a great number of "living souls" gives rise to a new situation. These **many** soul-centers are not, like the myriads of material particles in chaos, opposite in trend and characteristics to the One God. There is no fundamental contrast or antagonism between the One God and the many "living souls" of men. The difference between "one" and "many" therefore takes on a new meaning. To the **unity** of God, the **plurality** of souls responds; but the response is at first mostly unconscious.

The "Individual Soul"

The relation unity-to-plurality must be understood in this context as essentially distinct from the relation unity-to-multiplicity, provided we mean by the term "plurality" **a collective status**, most simply expressed by the pronoun "we".

Wherever several entities can **say** "we", two basic factors must be present in them: first, the awareness of being one of several units; then, the realization that these several units are related to one another because they have some element in common. Without this common "something" there cannot be any feeling of "we". **We** is the plural of **I**. "We" presupposes "I", but also that which unifies, potentially if not actually, the several "I"s. The unifying common factor may be a community of life-origin, as in the case of children of the same parents; or a common experience important enough to gather into a "group" those who have had it; or a community of purpose, as when people join as partners to establish a business, a new religion, a new community with commonly shared goals. But common factor there **must** be.

Matter can be called an expression of "multiplicity" because, in the condition of pure matter, the material units or particles share nothing; they exist in a state of almost (but not quite) absolute separateness, indifference to each other, and inertia (i.e. resistance to change and thus to the very idea or feeling of "purpose"). But the "living souls" are in a condition of "plurality" or community because they have, and are aware of having, a common origin; a common energy — the life-force — sustains them, and they have common basic experiences in the life-sphere.

Once we deal with souls we deal, moreover, not only with life-energies, but with a more or less unified condition of consciousness. The more the soul turns away from the ever-changing variety of material cravings and organic impulses and the more it orients itself in intuition to the One God, the more also the life-consciousness of the soul comes to partake of the characteristics of God, that is, of unity. But the more the soul becomes conscious of unity and the more clearly it seeks to adjust its consciousness to the light of God, the more does it also tend to become God-like; and as God is "the One", the more therefore the "living soul" feels itself to be **a** one. Then a new process of integration begins.

As this feeling of being "**a** one" increases in intensity and maintains itself, a sense of exaltation and of being "set apart" inevitably takes hold of the consciousness of the man having this experience. Yet fear also enters the "living soul", for the sense of elation is matched by an equally vivid sense of isolation. Then follows an ever-renewed experience of conflict, as the energies of life-instincts reassert themselves and pull the consciousness away from the realization of unity and toss it upon the heaving sea of passions.

Man **reacts** in many ways to this experience of seeing himself as a one, an individual "I". He reacts to elation, to fear, to conflicts.

He seeks to repeat the exalting experience, to rationalize and attenuate his fear, to protect his consciousness from the devastating sense of isolation, by drawing to himself

other men who have become entranced and awed by what he told them of his experience. He seeks to hide or in some manner to compensate for the conflicts which tend to tear down his consciousness of integration. Or he tries to accept calmly and to rationalize his living in two spheres of consciousness. All these reactions transform his life-consciousness and refer it, positively or negatively, to a new center of integration — **the individual soul**.

The story of Moses, of the Exodus and of the gradual reorganization of the "Elect People" in the Promised Land, deals symbolically — even if on the basis of the historical evolution of a people — with this all-important change of level of integration. And the essential point which the Biblical narrative reveals and stresses is that, then as always, the initiative is with God.

It is God Who calls forth Moses, once He finds the latter ready; and Moses' hesitation and fears tell plainly how unready he really felt himself to be when confronted with the challenge of the I AM THAT I AM; that is, with the challenge to act in the realm of human passions and materialistic powers (the symbolical Egypt) **as an agent of the I AM**, as a leader in a process of human transformation (or soul "mutation").

This process is the process of individualization. As he experiences it, man, the "living soul", comes to realize himself as an "individual soul", and gradually shifts his attention and the focus of his energies from one level of integration to another. At the first level, life rules supreme; at the second, **mind** is the formative power which coordinates and organizes the results of human experiences in the life-sphere into an individual mind-ego. Human beings thus become able to consider themselves as individualized selves, each self proclaiming, either proudly or hesitantly, passionately or guiltily, "I am".

The "individual soul", by the mere fact of being a soul, is fundamentally a focus for the integrative power whose Source is God. However, a difficult situation inevitably appears when the principle of divine unity begins to be active in many souls, many human **centers** of unity. These human centers or selves, in order to realize themselves more clearly and definitely as "ones", must inevitably develop separative tendencies, tendencies which not only aim to make each man different from other men and unique as a self, but which also work against man's recognition of God, **the One**, as the Source of that power in man which makes each individual human organism **a** one.

These separative tendencies are inherent in the activity of the mind; for the mind in every man seeks to coordinate, organize and give meaning to his experiences and feelings as if they were **exclusively his own**. Some experiences must indeed appear to be unique when they establish a profound difference between one man and another, especially the experience which a man has who "sees God" for the first time and becomes an Agent of God, a leader in a new evolutionary phase of human history.

The experience of God, direct or indirect; the newly found ability to lead, to be victorious over foes in a spectacular way; the ability to prophesy and to heal; the apparent fact that one is a mouthpiece for the One God and a worker of miracles or a creative genius

— all these experiences single out a man here, and a man there, as a "special" one, related in a particular manner, an intimate manner, to **the** One.

The mind of this special person may at first so directly feel the presence of God as the source of his unique position among men, that he feels awed and humbled by the experience. But if the experience does not repeat itself, if it is seen in retrospect by one who perhaps failed in fulfilling God's trust and succumbed to his instinctual passions, it may cause not only intense elation but **pride**. The Agent of the I AM THAT I AM then comes to say "I am" in a proud, boastful, arrogant tone.

Moreover, as other men witness the influence he has on the community and the way his personality expands in power, riches and authority, these other men become envious. They too want to expand, to have women and wealth, to command others; and naturally so, because **the very nature of life** is to expand, increase and multiply. These envious ones, not having the experience of God, try then **to simulate its effects**. They act as the God-inspired leader acted; they speak in a mysterious, exalted voice; they "put on the mask", so to speak, of the Prophet. In time, by such mimicry they form an hereditary aristocracy, whether of rulers or of priests, in which the "ghost" of an original God-experience — the memory of it in the collective mind of a people, a family, a special group — is worshipped.

On the other hand, because the masses of men at first find it so difficult to raise themselves from the level of unconscious life-urges and appetites to that of the true "individual soul" experience of God, such direct and true experiences have to be **preserved**. These experiences have to be preserved in a more or less readily understandable form as models, as ideal examples, as revelations of what the **next step** in soul-evolution for humanity at large will be.

It is on the foundations of such preserved memories of experiences of God and of spiritual reality, by a very few individuals who are heralds of new phases of soul-development, that organized societies, organized religions and definite cultural-ethical patterns are built. The "spiritual" settles down into the "social"; it is given a precise and communicable **form** by human minds who are particularly well fitted to organize and to manage social, religious, political, cultural activities for generations to come. "Society", its patterns and its laws, represent an intermediary stage between "life" and the "individual soul".

It is essentially in this intermediary realm of society — which includes organized religion, rituals, culture and political rule — that the ego makes its appearance and develops. The **ego** (using this term in its current psychological sense) is a social factor, inasmuch as it takes form on the basis of the young child's reactions to his family and environment; and it comes to maturity as a result of the youth's progressive adaptation or lack of adaptation to social processes. The ego fulfills itself through the experience of "place and function" in society, or in rebellion against what society presents to its growth.

However, such an analysis of the principle of formation and the nature of the ego leaves the psychological picture incomplete. From the point of view of the soul, the ego has

another meaning. The ego develops or **nucleates** around the effort of the soul to pass from the condition of "living soul" to that of "individual soul". Something of the soul is in the ego. The soul reaches individualization through the experiences of the ego. The ego is an outpost of the soul, feeling its way into and responding to the "social sphere" and the mental patterns of this sphere.

It can and usually does happen that the soul finds itself so involved in the ego and the experiences of the social-cultural sphere that it becomes caught in the endless whirls of activity of a complex society and a highly evolved intellect, just as the "living soul" in its earliest stages found itself caught in the maelstrom of instinctual life-energies. In this case the soul can be said to have become "socialized" rather than "individualized". **The means** — the social-cultural experiences — have been **substituted for the end**.

All the ideals, concepts and patterns of society (including all that refers to culture and organized religion) are, from the point of view of the spirit and of God's purpose of Creation, **means to an end**. The end is to make of the "living soul" a fully conscious, self-determined, responsible and mature "individual soul", aware of its part in the divine-cosmic pattern of universal unfoldment (evolution) and completely positive to (i.e., able to **use and direct**) the energies of life and of the human mind, while remaining sensitive and responsive to God's directives.

Society and all its institutions exist for the sake of the soul. Everything in the social-cultural sphere has been inspired, directly or indirectly, by the need of the evolving soul and God's response to that need. Every culture is originally born out of a divine Revelation; every great social, artistic, religious, ethical symbol or ideal can be traced to some kind of vision or experience which an individual singled out by God had, and which he formulated for men of his day and more especially for men of days yet to come.

Alas, when God speaks to the soul, the soul may meet the experience with fear or withdrawal, with ego-inflation or possessive greed. The stage of ego-unfoldment is most dangerous and involves a constant paradox; while the mind of man, which gives communicable form to and perpetuates the highest vision and revelations, always tends to imprison the essence of great experiences in rigid intellectual systems which kill the spirit and worship the letter. Thus the **parallel evolutions** of man's ego and of human society, each conditioning the other, proceed through seemingly endless cycles of conflicts and tragedies. The binding structures of ego-ruled minds and of rigid societies must be destroyed time after time, and the accumulated results of life-perversions, intellectual fallacies and ego-deviations — the mass of human "sins" — have to be cleansed, wiped away and "redeemed".

The path of individualization is a "tragic" path but it must be followed. Man could not conceivably perform his part in the great drama of world-integration which began in the Divine Creation unless he became a pure, true, free, unconditioned and self-determined "I am". The Promethean fire of individual selfhood must be released in man if he is to reach the goal of soul-perfection. It is the means to man's divinity as a son of God; but the means

can become destructive of the end. The ego of man may become a slave to the energies of the matter-bent instincts and to the ambitions (or the dogmas) of the social order. Then the individualizing soul, which blindly identified itself with the ego, must free itself and regather its energies to itself.

The way of tragedy and "sin" can lead through suffering and inner torment to a fundamental catharsis of the ego; then to the illumination and, at long last, the transfiguration of the "individual soul" once it has succeeded in "detaching" its consciousness and its will from the social-cultural order as well as from the instinctual life-sphere. However, man, darkened by a sense of guilt, oppressed by the weight of past failures and torn by mental conflicts, cannot follow unaided this path of regeneration to a completely successful conclusion. A divine power is released to guide and to heal him. This power manifests in the normal course of evolution first as guiding Will; then as Wisdom. And finally it is experienced in the fullness of its essential nature as divine Love-charity.

God comes to meet man. He comes into the realm of division and of sin where the ego struggles in blind rebellion or in hopeless servitude to the "Egypt" of the body. He comes to the many egos of men as the Integrator, the Lawgiver and the Sustainer. He comes to them as "life" comes in the beginnings of earth-evolution to the myriads of scattered material particles of "the deep", to bring them a **pattern of integration** and the magnetic power that draws all separate entities into a harmonic whole. But while God's integrative power in the realm of organic life is compulsive and unconscious (as what we call instinct), when God manifests to a multitude of human egos He appears to them in their conscious, or at least semiconscious, state. They hear His Voice; a few dare to meet Him face to face; men learn to experience God's will to integration and to develop their own energies in attunement to this will — though in most cases only after numerous set-backs.

Within every conscious and individualized soul that has become aware ever so dimly of the integrative power of God's Purpose and Activity, God's Wisdom and God's Love, a triune realization of the soul's divine nature as Will, Wisdom and Love gradually takes form. The "individual soul" discovers, within yet beyond itself, the "divine soul".

The "Divine Soul"

If the "living soul" can be compared to the foundations of the human temple, and the "individual soul" to the rising structure above the ground, the "divine soul" is the meeting of God and the congregation of men within the illumined building. The "divine soul" is not **form** as much as it is **contents**. The individual is the container; God is the contents. But the contents, once held by the container, acquire a "name". They acquire a particular destiny or function. **God Himself individualizes within and as man**. And this is the meaning of the Incarnation.

God reveals Himself as Father when the "individual soul" realizes itself as a "son" of God, **the One**. In this moment of meeting, a direct line of descent is established between the One and a one. The very essence of divine unity enters the soul. It enters the soul as creative power, as the Fatherhood. Man becomes a "son" in actuality and in creative power as he receives the Fatherhood from the Father, the one "Initiator".

As this occurs, man **comes of age in spirit**. He becomes a full citizen of the Kingdom of God able gradually to wield, on his own responsibility, the transforming power of spirit. He becomes in actuality what he **potentially** was, a "divine soul".

As "divine soul", man is not only an Agent of God; he is above all the "image and likeness" of the Father. He is a particular **aspect of God**. In him the **fact** of "divine Sonship" is established, for all to see who have eyes to see. Not only does God speak through him, as the Lord of Israel spoke through Moses; he **is** God's Voice and he is, as well, the Word that is spoken.

There is one Voice; but the Word is many, because God, the One, must meet the individual needs of each "individual soul". One power of utterance; but many utterances. The Son, Christ, is one; but the "divine souls", the Christed individuals who have experienced their transfiguration on their own Mount of Transfiguration become, in time, many.

Yet the prototype of all "divine souls" in which Christ, **the one** Son, comes to birth is Jesus. Jesus is **the First** — at least insofar as our present human cycle is concerned. But there will be many who will come after him; some have no doubt come already. We may think of St. Francis of Assisi as one of them; but we should realize that "only the like can know the like."

The divine company of the true and creative "sons of God" is the one Brotherhood of the Perfect. They are known to each other by their common "likeness" to the Father. The "blood of Christ" is the substance of these souls. They constitute a Communion, a divine Host, in which each is **a** one and yet **the One** in expression.

Christ, the Son, is their oneness; Christ-love, the quality of this **oneness**. They are in Christ and Christ is in them, as the number one is in all numbers. All numbers are expressions of "one". They are "one" in varied aspects, in various degrees of relationship to unity, performing in varied places and at various times, the works of unity.

This goal of Perfection seems almost infinitely remote from the average man and woman of today. Yet it is only as we can orient ourselves toward such a consummation that we can be received and take our place, consciously, in the spiritual vanguard of humanity. If we do so, we must do it as souls and not as egos, however "good", devoted or productive of great works the ego might be! For the initiative is with the individual soul. Yet the ego can always block the meeting with the Divine in us by presenting endless objections, doubts and evasions. The initiative is with the soul, because it is the core of our being from which radiates the integrative power of spirit. It is the individual soul alone that can discover in a positive manner the Divine within and through its innermost center of emptiness; and this discovery makes it possible for the soul to partake in the Mastery, in the Fatherhood of God.

Alas, official Christianity throughout its long history has taught that an absolute distinction exists between the human being, the "creature", and God, the "Creator"; that Jesus alone was Christ, the one and only Son of God; that true creativity — the use of the power of the Fatherhood — is a goal utterly beyond man's reach. In so doing official Christianity has actually strengthened the schism inside of human beings in the process of gradual "individualization". It has been willing to consider only that transitional phase of the process during which the soul-energy, enmeshed in the web of the ego-structures, strives to gain its freedom from matter's pulls and life's conditionings and to be drawn back, as it were, to its original source, the "individual soul". This may be the phase most familiar today to human beings at the stage of ego development.

But to think of the whole process in terms of this one phase is to misunderstand its meaning.

Because it has been so misunderstood, the main emphasis has been placed, following the Hebrew tradition, on failure and sin — on a negative condition to be overcome, yet which man, as creature, could not alone overcome. We have been made to believe that something went wrong with God's Plan and that only a Divine Sacrifice could have repaired the essential harm and restored to man the opportunity that he originally and generically lost. We have been told that this process of sin and salvation has to be repeated in every man's life because "human nature" itself had been poisoned; that every individual reflectively experiences in his own human nature the original sin and can also experience, likewise reflectively, the Christ Salvation **if** he "believes" one-pointedly and totally in the latter, thus consenting, as it were, to the descent of the divine Grace; nay more, invoking it through prayer.

There is, no doubt, some element of truth in all these theological assertions. But does it really make sense to believe that something has basically gone wrong with God's Plan? Is not this belief based on an incomplete and naive or childish understanding of the entire process and "purpose" of Creation?

To a child it may seem that all that matters to parents is that they give birth to children so that they can enjoy their company; and if the children go astray, then the parents sacrifice themselves to save them and bring them back to the home, so that the "one big family" may experience happiness, prosperity, and so on for generations without end. But this is really a "tribal" concept, a concept completely conditioned by the ideals of the stage of human evolution at which "life" and its energies dominate almost entirely the consciousness and feeling of man.

Now, however, a higher stage of soul evolution is gradually being reached by at least the vanguard of mankind. Man, in his new-won ability to evoke and handle the tremendous energies locked in the atom, and in his recent dependence upon rigorous thinking and scientific procedures, is demanding of religion — if he accepts at all its validity! — a new picture of the Creative Process. Man's relationship to the creative-transforming energies of the universe must be given a significant and enthusiasm-arousing place in the pattern of universal evolution. It is only if this is really done that ours and future generations will be able to overcome the over-intellectual approach of rationalistic deism, or of a "modern" liberal Christianity which actually confuses spirituality with ethics, and the ego-mind with the "illuminated" mind responsive to the slow unfoldment of the "divine soul" within.

The "salvation" needed by the men of our civilization by, for and of the ego, is the renewal of faith in the reality of the divine; for the ego, when faced by its deepest crisis, is in grave danger of giving up the fight toward reaching a vital understanding and gaining a convincing "concrete" experience of what stands beyond itself. The struggle to keep **wanting** to remain an individual, and yet wanting it in such a way that this individuality **can** allow itself to be "transfigured" by the downflow of the divine, often leads to the verge of despair or to utter weariness and consequent inertia — a catatonia of the consciousness. Our intellectual elite, particularly in Europe, knows such a danger well; and atheistic Existentialism is no valid solution, no more than was Stoicism in the days of the dying Roman Empire.

The only spiritual solution ultimately valid and effectual is the "incarnation" of "divine souls" who can present to us, at any level at which we may be operating as egos, a **concretized image of our future**. Man's future state of existence, on earth and not in some transcendent heaven, must be made to appear so real, so intensely **desirable**, and (relatively) so **possible** — even if hardships are to be expected along the way — that individual egos will be aroused into taking at least the first steps toward that new status. Only this intense desire, this concretely based faith in the actuality and possibility (for us) of the divine state can overcome, in the most crucial moment of crisis, the utter weariness, despondency and inertia of the ego-mind. And if the divine state cannot be made absolutely more desirable than any and all objects of desire, it must at least be made to appear as the core and ultimate reality to be reached **through and beyond** the fulfillment of all other desires. The God-man, the Avatar, is a "charmer" of individuals. Like Krishna, he plays his

flute and all Nature stands still in wonder and in love. Like Jesus, he calls, and man follows him with rapt consciousness all the way to a liberating death.

At the mental level, thinking man must also be able to contemplate a picture of the universal World-Process and of the Divine which not only makes sense but "charms" him; which draws his fullest and deepest intellectual as well as intuitional assent. Man cannot live significantly and healthfully in an environment which has become to him utterly meaningless and chaotic. He must be able to interpret his world in terms of a kind of order, beauty and harmony which enables him to give a — **positive** significance and value **to where he stands and to the next step he is to take.**

The old concepts of Creation, "God's Plan of Salvation", Atonement and the like do **not** give a **positive** meaning able to arouse the enthusiasm of the thinking man of today. His belief in those great traditional Images — valid for men at a certain level at all — comes into sharp conflict with all that his ego-mind feels valuable. Indeed, modern man lives in a condition of latent, if not overt, schizophrenia. Thus a new "descent of the divine" is necessary to repotentialize men who are spiritually exhausted and can only think of evading the issue through sensual excitement, playing with ever new gadgets or space-travel.

Such a "descent" may have occurred recently; it may be with us now; or it may be ahead of us. But we shall **not** experience it — we would not be able to recognize it if confronted with it! — **until** our ego-mind has become "illuminated" by a new sense of values, usually after some harrowing crisis. It is as a help, however small, toward such an "illumination" that the traditional concepts of soul and of the Creation, of sin, evolution and redemption are being questioned here, and that an attempt is being made to reformulate, clarify and whenever possible to "repotentialize" them for the men and women of our traditionally Christian civilization.

6. CREATION AND EVOLUTION

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end."

Rev. 21 : 6

Consider the yearly cycle of vegetation in the fields. When autumn comes to a close, we find in the soil two end-results of the activity which brought to life in the spring an abundance of green plants and flowers. On the one hand we observe the decay of the fallen leaves and of all but a few tough stems (the "ghosts" of the past); on the other hand, if we look carefully through the decaying humus, we will discover the seeds that dropped to the ground as the plants which had produced them began to die.

Seen in this simplified form we can say that the close of the cycle of yearly vegetable life produces essentially two things: seeds and decaying leaves. The leaves mix with the minerals in the soil to form humus; and the seeds will germinate in time, unless their hard envelopes fail to protect them and they too decay under rain and snow or are destroyed by other living entities. The seeds will bring forth a more abundant vegetation; the decayed leaves, once returned to the soil, will be reabsorbed into this new vegetation as chemical raw material. Symbolically understood these two ways of vegetable life — the way of the seed and the way of leaves — are profoundly and universally significant. They illustrate the path of the soul and the highway of material elements in the total human being. These two lines of unfoldment lead, respectively, to what we might symbolically call the Brotherhood of the Seed (the Company of Perfected Souls of the "last Day"), and to chaos ("the Deep").

From the point of view of a superficial observer — for instance, an aviator flying above the field — the earth is barren of vegetation during the winter; perhaps a mantle of white snow covers the soil. There is nothing (i.e., no thing) to be seen except the bare soil or snow expanse. Then spring comes and the miracle occurs. Out of this outer nothing green shoots emerge and new vegetation covers the soil. Yet the new green things do not actually come "out of nothing". They represent the result of a new process of integration: the integration of seed and of chemical elements left over from the preceding year's vegetation, plus water and warmth that come from the sky — the universal realm. In this process of reintegration the seeds are the **active** and positive factors; the loose particles of soil, the **passive** factors. And the source of creative energy is the sun, whose warm rays set in motion the whole process.

Because we see this process operating year after year in the life-sphere on the surface of the earth, and because it reveals a basic pattern inherent in all the operations of life, it has been used for thousands of years by spiritual teachers of all races as a symbol of the still vaster cosmic Movement which gives rise to countless universes in the realm of time and space. By considering the pattern and the meaning of the yearly process of rebirth of

vegetation, we can indeed obtain a basic clue to the nature of the factors which enter into the process of universal Creation, and as well to the purpose of Creation.

The Emergence and Fulfillment of Cyclic Time

When we try to think of **the** Creation of the universe according to the old religious traditions, we find ourselves confronted with the seemingly unanswerable question: What is or was there "before" anything is? If time "begins", it must likewise "end". Yet can we actually imagine a state of being, and even more **a** Being, beyond time? We may imagine conditions in which the sequence of moments of time is immensely slowed down or accelerated. We may conceive of a consciousness able to see at once all the past and to foresee the pattern of future developments, as a gardener foresees the oak while looking at an acorn. But all this is not "beyond time"! It refers only to a different relationship of consciousness to time.

However, to the religiously oriented mind — and it is essentially to this kind of mind that this book is addressed — the problem usually seems quite solvable; and the solution is somehow hidden in the word "God". What this word covers or symbolizes is the actually inconceivable state which somehow **has to** be postulated beyond time if the concept of a "creation" of the universe by God at a certain time (however remote it may be) is to make any sense at all. "God" therefore represents *a priori* a condition of all-inclusive, but also of utterly transcendent, formless, changeless, timeless unity. Yet while God and the universe of forms, of change and time, are two contrasting concepts, they are evidently somehow related to each other, for religions tell us that God "created" the universe. What then is the relationship of God to the universe?

If we indisputably knew the nature of this relationship, we should be able to understand the motive, method and purpose of the process of Creation. Unfortunately religions and metaphysics have differed widely in interpreting this relationship of God to the universe. This need not surprise us; for all that man, immersed in the world of time and of ever-changing forms of existence, can say basically of the postulated condition or realm of God's unity is that it has **not** the characteristics of our world. Thus God is described in the more mystical types of religion, and likewise in transcendental metaphysics where the "Absolute" is spoken of, in a strictly negative sense: i.e., time**less**, change**less**, **unconditioned**.

What is timeless cannot of course have any beginning or end. But can one **actually think of time itself** as beginning or ending? This is very doubtful. One can only think in any real sense of the beginning of a **particular manifestation** of time — that is, the beginning of a "cycle" of time, a wholeness of time.

This can be at least partly illustrated at the everyday level of life by the fact that the activity of the human body does not end when a person falls asleep. Some phases of this activity stop and become latent; nevertheless there is activity in the body. What takes place is a process of division within the total person: the mind and soul seem to withdraw, either

into a condition of suspended latent activity or into a transcendent realm of activity (of which some dreams are perhaps the more or less confused and distorted memory), while the cells and organs of the body keep on with their chemical and rhythmic activity in a somewhat modified manner. When the person awakens, the two levels of the total personality become reintegrated.

In this obviously limited illustration the processes of division (as sleep occurs) and reintegration (on reawaking) are extremely relative or superficial. At death a much more complete division occurs, which represents more adequately the end of a manifestation of time; but time itself does not end. More generally speaking, the terms "beginning" and "end" **belong to** the realm of time. They refer to some transformation of what time is or represents — a transformation in relation to God's or the Absolute's timelessness.

There cannot be any beginning or end in God's timeless condition of absolute unity, for that would be a logical absurdity; yet we can say that the relationship between God's timelessness and the time-space universe changes. It changes cyclically; and what we call "beginning and end" constitute **two critical phases of this relationship between God's timelessness and time** — between God's unity and the multiplicity which we witness in the world of things and also of individualized souls.

However when we speak of God relating Himself to matter we must not conceive God as being "here" and the multitudes of material particles of individual souls as being "there"! Neither should we think of God's timelessness as existing **before** the beginning of time or **after** the end of time; for that would make no sense at all. God's timelessness has often been described figuratively as "the Eternal Now"; it is and its acts **in and through** time, not **outside** of time. Likewise God's changeless "being" is and acts in and through man's and matter's "becoming", not outside of it.

"Being" **includes** "becoming"; the ultimate One encompasses the Many, somewhat as the many thoughts of a man are "within" his one mind. The thoughts are within the mind; yet if the man does not think a particular type or sequence of thoughts, these thoughts are not thereby "outside" of the man's mind but they are rather outside of the man's **field of attention**. The man is not consciously and actively **related** to them; the thoughts are latent, yet they are in the mind just the same. In a similar sense matter is timelessly within God's mind and being; but if God does not "think" of matter and does not focus His attention upon matter, then no universe, no time, no thing can exist.

Difficult though it be to conceive it, we have to state that God is the timeless Harmony of all that we can only experience as seeming opposites: being and becoming; timelessness (or eternity) and time; changeless unity and everchanging multiplicity. As we belong to the realm, of change and multiplicity, we can only dimly sense these polarizations of God's absolute essence **through** our realization of time and cycles — "as through a glass, darkly." Therefore we see them spread out, as it were, in cyclic time, somewhat as a ray of sunlight is spread out in colored space when passing through a prism. What **is** within God as a

timeless, perfect, harmonic relationship of elements, to us **becomes** a changing relationship between an ideal concept of unity and our experience of multiplicity.

When we speak of the beginning of Creation we have in mind that moment in which God **seems to us** to have focused His attention upon the realm of matter. "Beginning", we might say, is the moment of entrance of God's Spirit into the world of time. "End" is the moment in which the perfected soul, having accomplished the divine purpose of the Creation, sees itself established in the timeless unity of God.

Beginning and end are the **alpha** and **omega** of the active relationship between God and the realm of multiplicity — of matter and of individual souls. Time itself can be best conceived as the working out of this relatedness of the all-encompassing One to the Many. It is "spun" out of the timelessness of God — somewhat as compassion wells out of a loving heart while the scene of a disaster is gradually surveyed. Time is the warp of God's activity; therefore, to us who are taking form and evolving along the circular threads of this warp, time, when properly experienced, should reveal the unity and the continuity of God's activity.

The Creative Process CAN Be Understood

The universe is born out of the divine realization that a change in the state of relationship between unity and multiplicity is needed. The **realization of the need** produces a **desire for action**; this desire becomes a thought, as the attention of the One is focused upon the problem of how to act upon the Many. Thought and purpose blend in the imagining of a solution, a **plan of action**.

This "plan" has essentially one purpose: to bring all the Many into a more integral and more harmonic relationship to the One. It is a plan of integration. To create is, essentially, to integrate many unrelated elements into a condition of unity by means of some kind of form, structure or pattern of relationship.

There is actually no mystery in the process of creation as we, human souls and minds, know it in the world of life on earth. It is a process which does not occur all at once; it has a number of characteristic phases. It is these phases which, as we shall presently see, are symbolized in the Biblical "Seven Days" of Creation.

Creation implies transformation and, above all, a new relationship between a subject (a thinking and imagining individual) and the materials which confront him. However, if we want to think of a **divine Creator** — a Creator Who cannot be conceived as being absolutely apart from the materials of His Creation if He is truly all-encompassing Unity and timeless Being — the ordinary idea of the Creation seems to break down. It breaks down because the mind finds it difficult to think of the relationship between time and the timelessness of God. In the attempt to avoid the difficulty, the irrational idea of "Creation out of nothing" (*ex nihilo*) has been stressed and popularized as an easy way out; yet it actually is an intellectual evasion.

That the relationship of God to the universe of matter and souls must be beyond the category of strict human rationality is quite evident; but the kind of irrationality implied in the concept of "Creation out of nothing" has unfortunately far-reaching psychological and spiritual results. It establishes at the very root of all religious conceptions and beliefs a miraculous event or "Mystery"; and this concept is bound to have an immense influence in moulding the minds of men. It fosters a negative attitude in man toward all creative processes. It simply dismisses the subject of creative activity as incomprehensible to man, and as absolutely beyond man's scope of possible activity.

Yet if man is, potentially at least, the image and likeness of God, the Creator-Father, and if the idea of "divine Sonship" is applicable to every "individual soul" that is able to reach the perfection of evolution, it should be obvious that man, as son of the Father, must learn to use the power of the Fatherhood and act creatively as the Father acts — at least at whatever level man **can** act. Any interpretation of the Creation which makes the creative process essentially incomprehensible and absolutely foreign to man has therefore a **negative effect** upon the evolution of the soul toward perfection.

Truly, Creation will never be fully understood by men's minds as long as man thinks only in concepts and words conditioned by the realm of multiplicity. But the soul of man is originally and essentially rooted in God's unity; and as the "individual soul", freed from the matter-conditioned structures of the ego, becomes fully repolarized in the process of integration at the level of divine consciousness, it must find itself open to the influx of the "Spirit of truth and understanding", **released** from the Father **through** the Son. Thereby it becomes so illumined that it should grasp, at least partially, the meaning and structure of the creative process as it operates everywhere. Indeed Jesus promised his disciples this very illumination, this Pentecostal gift of understanding!

Such an understanding refers to the metaphysical, yet ever-active, relationship between God's timeless unity and the realm of time, change and multiplicity. But again let us not make the error of thinking of such a relationship as one between two factors external to each other. The Many are, as it were, **within** Unity. They are an **implied** challenge to its inclusiveness. Creation begins when that which is Unity passes from a state of pure subjectivity to one in which the Many are envisioned as being in need of attention. God thinks of matter and of souls (His potential "sons") as **distinct** from Him, yet still within Him. A state of polarization begins — "the heaven and the earth" of the first verse of Genesis. Multiplicity polarizes Unity. What is multiple appears as "past", as left-over from the past. But if there is past, there must be future; for in God all is Harmony of opposites. A particular cycle of time begins in the effort to bring the past up to a future condition of integral existence — a condition in which the results of the past will be "redeemed", i.e., transformed and transfigured by a more perfect, more divine consciousness of total Harmony in relatedness.

The **future** is the ideal goal of integration, the **past**, that which needs this integration; and the **present** is God acting "now" toward the realization of the ideal goal. The present is time in its aspect as God's compassion and love in action; it is God's timeless Harmony **acting Itself out in the creative moment of time**. Indeed God's Creative Act is now.

When we believe that God, the Father, created the universe once and for all in some distant past, we establish by this belief our remoteness from the Fatherhood and our incomprehension of its action. We think of "dead time", that is, of what has failed or is still left unfinished. "Live time" is the Now in which God the Father acts out His Fatherhood; it is the emergence of new solutions made necessary by new problems caused by ever-changing relationships between all forms of existence. Nothing need remain what it has been. For God nothing "has been", because as God's attention is turned toward anything it immediately "is"! As God considers the perfection of his "sons" at the close of a vast cycle, this perfection at once becomes linked in God's awareness with the simultaneous state of failure of many others who **might** have realized their divine sonship; and at once the call for a new universe sounds within God's infinite potential of endless solutions to endless problems; at once, "now", the new universe begins, at least in potentiality. The divine state is a state of

unceasing release of virgin potentialities. The Now is the point of emergence of these creative potentialities; it is the point of pure spontaneity and creativity.

However what has been released must inevitably flow down to "lower" levels of potential and become activity in relation to other forms of activity. It is in this inevitability of relatedness that time and cycles have their being. There must be cycles and we must learn their rhythms and meanings. But that cycles are inevitable is not tragic! Relatedness is the foundation of all existence, and God is the perfect, harmonic relatedness of all. What is tragic is to deny the always possible miracle of Creation; it is to deny the always present possibility of creative change. What has begun must follow its cyclic pattern; but anything might begin, now. "With God all things are possible." To deny this is to deny God. Atheism is another word for inertia.

The Creative Beginning

Any creative act begins a cycle. All life and all history are cyclic; that is, they follow a basic structural pattern of unfoldment, and they serve a "purpose", not in the too literal sense of this term, but in terms of being an answer to a need. The creative act in the Now is an answer to a past, and the unfoldment of this answer is time in the future tense; that is, time reaching toward the fulfillment of what was only potential in the beginning.

In the cycle of vegetation, the past is represented by the humus filled with the products of disintegration; and the future is the new vegetation, the many growing plants needed to give to the chemicalized remains of the past **a new chance** to experience unity-inaction within a living organism.

How will this new vegetation be produced? Not "out of nothing"! It rises out of the seeds which have survived the death of all things as the cycle ended — the seeds in the ground which have remained intact and integral (thus "immortal") as potential foci for future operations of the life-force of their own vegetable species. In the autumn the life within the many seeds withdraws, as it were, into the vast potentiality of life-characteristics (or qualities) to which we give the name of "species". The Many withdraw into the One. It is during this phase of withdrawal that "mutations" occur. And when the vernal sun summons forth the new life-surge, the "one life" within these same seeds is re-aroused; germination occurs; new vegetation appears in a new cycle.

This creative renewal of cyclic existence is symbolized in the first chapter of Genesis by the term **Elohim**, which we simply translate as "God". But the word is a plural noun! It could be said to mean "HE-the-gods". It is God in the creative aspect; or rather it represents the emergence of the Fatherhood of God (i.e. **EI**) from the condition of absolute potentiality and unity which we call the Father. The Fatherhood, **EI**, is one power, one stream of creative energy at its source; it is Spirit as a single transforming Will and Purpose. Yet the **Fatherhood** has to operate in and through a host of creative emanations or rays. Just as the life of a species renews itself in the springtime in one great act of germination, but an act performed by a multitude of seeds, so the Word that is "in the beginning" (John

1:1), though it be one utterance, is yet composed of many letters. The Voice that utters is God's Voice, but the many-lettered Word is **Elohim**, the Creative Host.

But, one might ask, why should the perfect Company of "divine souls" and "sons of God" at the end of the cycle, of which they constitute the spiritual harvest, return to the world of existence?

The failure to answer this question satisfactorily has weighed heavily upon Asia and especially Southern Buddhism. And yet what could be more simple to understand! The "divine souls" in reaching "perfection" and unity in God must inevitably partake of the infinite love of the Divine. How could they then utterly leave behind those beings who, during the long cycle in which they themselves reached perfection, fell by the wayside or followed the road which inevitably leads to the decay of the "leaves" of the cycle? How could the Compassionate Ones **forget** even the remains of men who once had been co-existent with them? Perhaps the failures of these men provided at times the very conditions which made possible the success of the Perfect Ones!

Some might say that these "divine souls" must already have worked out all their **karma**, as the widespread and so often misused phrase goes. But this is only a superficial viewpoint. The Perfect Ones cannot forget, because they have been totally pervaded by the condition of timelessness and all-inclusive unity. God cannot forget, even though, to us who are whirling along the wheels of time, it may seem as if He did forget, then once more, at Creation, He remembered again. Timeless God **cannot** forget; and He, as the Father, is in the multiune divine company ("seed-harvest" of cyclic time) as well as the very core of the creative activity of Elohim, source of the new creative stream of time-existence. Thus there can be no forgetting for the "divine soul" — and no being forgotten either.

Because God "remembers" in timeless all-inclusiveness, the "divine soul" that reaches perfection at the end of its cycle cannot merge into "non-existence" — which would mean being forgotten by God! Even if it experiences a period of "wintry" latency and "refreshment" in the vast ocean of potentiality — the ocean of spirit, the Virgin of all worlds — the "divine soul" is called back, as it were, by its ancient Name and the re-arousal of its soul-memory, as "once more" God's attention turns toward that which cyclic time has left unfulfilled — the "unfinished business" of the past.

It is this "turn of attention" which, in the vast world-cycle, is time's re-beginning. God sees Himself as His "sons", we might say. As this occurs one can no longer speak of Unity, pure and simple. Within God, **Elohim**, HE-the Gods, has re-emerged; multiplicity is now active and the cosmic Seed is stirring with the power of germination. Then as **Elohim**, having surveyed in spirit the field of the future Creation (the dark waters of "the earth"; Genesis 1:2), becomes aware of the problems posed by chaos, God releases the active **power of relatedness** which is the substance-energy of divine Love-Charity — which is "Light".

In this Light the solution of the problem of chaos is inherent. And this Light is the soul of "imagination". Light dissolves darkness — as soul-consciousness resolves the problems

which have their roots in "the deep" of unconsciousness, the psychological "humus" made of the disintegrating results of past failures. Likewise, true creative imagination resolves the inertia of the past and impregnates the Now with a vision of the future — with a purpose and a plan.

Indeed, the primary aspect of divine Fatherhood is creative imagination — the power to envision a solution to any need, plus the ability to plan effectively for the realization of the results which have been **visualized in mind**. Creative imagination is the power of Elohim. It blends with the Light which streams forth from the central principle of relatedness in God's essential being — the "Heart of God" — and these two forces in absolute union start the creative process in operation.

The Basic Pattern

The **"seven Days" of Creation set forth** in the first chapter of Genesis represent seven characteristic phases of the creative process of the universe. But the pattern revealed in the symbolical Biblical narrative is true of **all** creative processes everywhere and at every level. Creation, I repeat, is not a mysterious event which happened six thousand years or many trillions of years in the past. Creation is now. God is active now. The Biblical narrative applies to every situation in which the remains of the past are being transformed into a more integrated, more "ideal" condition of being in the future. Such a transformation is constant; to resist it is to resist the creative spirit of God-Elohim. To refuse to change futureward is to begin to die spiritually. And the basic power able to affect future-ward changes and metamorphoses is always imagination.

Creative imagination acts through the mind; but the creative Mind of God is to be clearly differentiated from the human mind. Nevertheless the essence of mind-activity is in both instances **a formative power**. Mind brings activity to a focus by means of a form. But the divine Mind focuses the vast, immense outpouring of God's creative imagination and God's love-charity, while the human mind is essentially the faculty of association — the ability to relate, generalize and abstract from the multiple data provided by the human senses.

The human mind generalizes from particulars, building theories and systems out of the results of experiences and experiments in the world of life and materiality. The divine Mind focuses the universal into particulars. As a crystal-clear lens condenses diffuse sunlight into the image of the sun-disc, so the divine Mind condenses the creative imagination and love of the Father (i.e., the diffuse universal power of the Fatherhood) into a multitude of precise "images and likenesses" of the Father, each a potential "son", a potentially perfect "divine soul".

This formative activity of the divine Mind unfolds through a sequence of six basic phases symbolized in the first chapter of Genesis by "Days". These "Days" represent six steps in the **involution** of the Spirit of God into the realm of archetypal forms and souls; and at the end of the sixth Day the perfect Archetype, Man, the image and likeness of the Father, is created as **a Form in God's Mind**. This perfect Form or Theme, Man, is then projected and impressed into materiality — somewhat as the blueprint of a house is used to build the house itself, the house made of clay, mortar and wood.

Thus man appears in the life-sphere as a "living soul" (cf. Genesis 2). The evolution of the soul begins; and this evolution takes place gradually in three characteristic periods which the Biblical narrative outlines: from Adam to Abraham, from Abraham to Moses, and from Moses to Jesus. Such an evolution should be understood as an ever closer "coming together" (a "covenant") between God and man. The soul evolves from the condition of "living soul" to that of "divine soul"; but God, in a symmetrical movement, gradually becomes more "involved" in man, until God and man become utterly one in Christ Jesus.

Through this Incarnation of God and Transfiguration of man the **possibility** opens for all truly individualized "sons of man" to become creative agents **through** Christ, to extend and multiply the creative activity of the Father into a Host of "sons of God". It is because of this possibility that man, even though he be as yet in a state of individual evolution far remote from his ultimate goal, must progressively become oriented and attuned to the creative process as it operates from God.

Truly creative experiences, however, do not come through the use of the merely human mind functioning as the associative intellect and directed by emotional impulses bent matterward by the gravitational force of selfish desires for power, wealth or fame. Man can never be truly creative except he becomes an agent for the divine Mind; except **Elohim**, HE-the-gods, creates through him.

What is created during the first six Days of Creation described in the first chapter of Genesis are, one must emphasize, **organizations of creative Thought**, and not material entities and bodies in the sense in which we use the term "material" today. At most one can think of these archetypal "organizations" of divine creative Thought as "models" for what will subsequently be produced in the life-sphere. They might be likened to the architect's blueprints, to the composer's musical score. In the perfect blueprints and score the finished products are completely defined down to the smallest detail; yet many of the actual performances of the symphonic score may be lamentably inadequate and often complete betrayals of the creator's intent and purpose; and many a contractor and builder fails to actualize in matter the ideal temple which the architect envisioned and fully formulated in his finished blueprints.

Every creative process leads to a number of failures or mere approximations of the Archetype in the creative Mind. The causes of such failures are complex and inherent in the character of the relationship between matter and the Creator. They are inherent in the nature of time and change, in the eternal polarization of unity and multiplicity. They are the reasons for the periodical need for universal re-integration.

All creative processes can be considered as the formulation and working out of a "project". God's project is the eventual production of a multiplicity of perfect souls in His image and likeness. Why these souls? Not for God's "glory" — for that would reduce God to very human proportions indeed! — but so that through the activity of these souls (His many "sons") the chaotic remains of the past might once more experience integration and unity, and the past be transmuted through the **present** cosmos into a divine **future**.

Man has been called the Temple of the Living God. But no **real** temple is built just to be "beautiful" or as a monument to the architect's fame. It is built **to do a work**. It is conceived and erected to gather people so that they may experience the Presence of God in a consecrated place, and thereby be progressively transformed into more-than-men.

Always and at any level what God creates is for the purposes of integration, then of transmutation or transfiguration. The "individual soul" is transfigured into the "divine soul", and the materials that were chaos in the beginning are refined, then transubstantiated into

divine energy; matter in the state of chaos being energy dis-animated and reduced to a condition of almost absolute inertia.

The Seven Days

1. The first phase of any true creative process refers essentially to the realization by the creator that there is a need which should be met. We may think of this need in a myriad of ways; at the human level a man may start a creative project to meet a psychological as well as a material need. If the artist creates "because he must", this simply means that the need is expressed in terms of a psychological compulsion. However, this compulsion may be used in some cases by creative Powers higher than man to actualize an Archetype in God's mind. The creator desires, or is inwardly forced, to answer the need. He mobilizes his energies (i.e., he "wills") in order to meet the challenge.

This is the first Day in Genesis 1. The "heaven and the earth" do **not** refer to material realities but to what God becomes aware of as His attention turns toward the dualistic realization of spirit-matter, subjective-objective polarities. The realization is entirely within God, the One. The One "thinks", as it were, of the Many. The Hebrew word *B'rashit* ("in the beginning") means etymologically "in the head", in the mind; or in another sense, "in seed". In the opening words of John's Gospel the Greek term for "beginning" is "arche", which means essentially "principle".

The first "remembrance" of the past arouses in the harmonic being of God an active condition: "The Spirit of **Elohim** moved upon the face of the waters", thus taking cognizance of the "remains" — the submerged memory, the "deep" — of the past. The darkness upon the deep is the problem God faces. This darkness impels God to release light. God must act because He is what He is. Divine activity is inherently necessary activity; but "necessity" in God has not the character of what men know as compulsion. Acting and being are one and inseparable in God; creative action in Him is absolutely spontaneous even as it is necessary. There is no conceivable resistance, delay or conflict. Compassion is one with will, and will immediately becomes act.

The act is the release of Light: "Let there be Light." This Light surges from the very core of divine Harmony; it is the power of relatedness, and it is love-charity. It is Christ, the **Alpha** of the cycle of manifestation. Christ is the unity-center of the **Elohim** Creative Host. He is Light and He is also the rebirth of time, the Eon.

2. The creator, having willed to create and having polarized his consciousness (light-and-darkness can be interpreted here as the dualism of free imagination and self-criticism or self-testing) visualizes, in the light of spontaneity, a basic solution to the problem facing him — a "seed idea", a theme and its over-all development.

This stage constitutes the creation of the "firmament" during the second Day. The Latin term means a "firm mind". God calls the firmament "Heaven". But this is not the "heaven" spoken of in Genesis 1 : 1. It is the celestial expanse which the archaic mind believed to be

the place of spiritual foundations, God's creative Mind, the universal Formative Agency "in the midst" of all there is.

3. The basic solution having been "caught in spirit" or intuited, it must be worked out as a new form or formula, **a new way of relating elements** which are the legacy of the past. A new symphony uses the same notes of the scale and much the same instrumental tones as did previously composed symphonies; but the **relationship** between these notes and tones is new, and is meant to assume a new function in the score of this new symphony.

This is the third Day of Creation. The "waters under heaven" constitute what will become the realm of life, the realm where the material particles of chaos are to be progressively integrated into living organisms. God plans for such a realm and the first manifestation of life. With the concept of "seed" (1:11) the whole cyclic pattern of life-manifestation is established — but established as an archetype in the Mind of God.

4. The fourth step achieves what was begun in the two preceding ones. The visualized plan (step two) becomes the finished blueprint of the temple, the score of the musical symphony, the step-by-step formula of a chemical (or spiritual-alchemical) process. This plan obviously needs not to be written on paper; but it is somehow "fixed" in the mind or memory.

During the fourth Day, God is shown contemplating what was begun during the second Day, the precise pattern, the basic rhythms operating in the "firmament". For the Chaldeans, and indeed for all the human societies of the first millennia B.C., the sun, moon, stars and planets represented the Formative Powers of the universe, the "Creative Hierarchies". During the fourth Day God outlines their work, as controllers and guides of all cosmic processes, which in turn will set the stage for the evolution of man and man's ascent toward the perfect state of divine Sonship.

5. The blueprints, the musical score or the formula are first mental abstractions. To make of them concrete instrumentalities the required materials have to be gathered, worked upon, treated and refined.

On the fifth Day, the animals which live in the sea and in the air are created, not as actual, material organisms (this comes only in Genesis 2:19) but as *genera* and *species*. In some manner the sea and air animals are considered as providing means to refine life-materials which will be used by man and his forebears. The reference is presumably to the alchemical elements, Water and Air, respectively connected with the emotional and the intellectual natures of man.

6. At the sixth stage the **instrumentality** is completed, through the use of which the need that called for the creative process will eventually be met. It is only an "instrumentality", the use of which still belongs to the future. That is to say, the model of the temple is finished, from which many actual, physical temples will in time be made; the engineer's

machines which will gradually produce the many gadgets men need are completed; the formula of the process is laboratory-tested — it will work if properly handled.

During the sixth Day, the Earth element is conceived in God's Mind as the final factor in the archetypal Pattern of Man. It is differentiated and perfected through a new series of animal manifestations — the species that are to develop on the solid Earth-element. Then all the needed factors having been developed, in sketches as it were, Man is created in God's Mind as the divine Form in which the soul will be able to achieve its evolution toward the goal of perfection.

Man is created by the **Elohim** Host as the "image and likeness" of God, the Father. Man is conceived as the divine Vessel within which the materials of the earth can in due time not only experience **organic unity**, but in which they can be transmuted and transubstantiated into divine energy — matter and energy being essentially one. But if man is the alchemical Vessel for transmutation, the soul is the Alchemist. And the soul must begin its evolution where only chaotic matter is to be found — in the life-sphere, on earth (perhaps on similar planets as well!). The soul must begin as the "living soul", constrained by the compulsive, repetitive, unconscious energies of life; and only as it raises itself and is raised to the level of individualization and mind-activity can it become a positive agent for God's ultimate purpose.

7. In the seventh stage the architect, satisfied with his work, "rests". But what actually happens in every seventh phase of a cycle is that **there is a transfer from one level of activity to another**. The architect places the future of his work in the hands of the contractor and building supervisor, who will manage the actual production of the concrete building of stone, wood, mortar, etc. and will direct the many workers. The composer of music presents his work to the orchestra leader, who will gather the instrumentalists needed to "incarnate" the abstract score into a sequence of living, significant, powerful tones — if all goes well! The Creation-in-mind is ended, insofar as the cycle of time and all entities subject to time are concerned; the production and evolution in and with the materials of the life-sphere begin.

Human Evolution and the Lord God

The Ruler of all that deals with the evolutionary effort is God, but God in His particular role as Lord of the integrative agencies and activities of that sphere, "the Lord God". In this aspect God appears for the first time in Genesis 2:4, but His full revelation will come only to Moses as He declares Himself in His highest character as I AM THAT I AM (Exodus 3 : 14).

The expression "Lord God" translates the Hebrew "**JHVH Elohim**". The four-letter word JHVH has been considered the most sacred name of God by the Hebrews and unutterable. It has been transliterated in English as Jehovah, or more recently as Yahweh. But it is essentially the "Tetragrammaton" (from *tetra*, meaning four), a most significant grouping of one plus three letters — Jod and He-Vau-He. The significance of the word resides primarily in the number 4 (the square or cube) which represents the Foundation Stone and all such symbols of **concrete integration in and through matter**.

The other important fact is that the bracketing together of JHVH with **Elohim** seemingly is meant to indicate that JHVH is one of the **Elohim**. We might perhaps say that the Tetragrammaton represents the **fourth aspect** of God, the God who is the divine Principle of personalization; thus, the I AM THAT I AM. It is because JHVH, Jehovah, is the divine Principle of personalization that He has been passionately worshipped as a "personal God". But there is a great difference between a "personal God" and God presenting Himself as the Principle of Personality, the I AM!

Indeed, to say that **God displays the attributes of the essence or soul of personality in coming to man's assistance** is not the same thing as believing implicitly in a "personal God"! The distinction may appear highly metaphysical; yet it defines abstractly two approaches to God. And whether one or the other of these approaches is taken by man is a matter with most profound and most practical consequences.

However this may be, with the fourth verse of the second chapter of Genesis the whole trend of God's activity changes. The Lord God forms man of the **dust of the ground**, breathes into his nostrils **the breath of life**; and man becomes a living soul (Genesis 2:7). From then on the soul is the central figure of the Biblical drama; the evolution of the soul is the plot. The problem for the soul is to rise above the gravitational pull of materiality by controlling, **instead of being controlled by**, the "breath of life" (i.e., the rhythmic and repetitive energies of man's living organism — instincts, desires, passions, etc.). All human history, as well as the Biblical narrative, shows clearly how difficult this task is. The basic difficulty resides in the opposition between the soul's essence, which is derived from the unity of God, and the inherent characteristics of the materials drawn into the living organism of which the "living soul" is the integrative core. Matter is inert and therefore resists change. Yet **the one purpose of Creation is to produce souls that can change matter**. Life, as integrating energy, compels material particles to move rhythmically in relation to one another and to function as integral parts of one organic whole. And because

matter resists the power of life and always tends to return to its inert and neutral state (the trend today called "entropy"), life must compel. It works through compulsive rhythms repeated time and time again; and the body of matter obeys, yet obeys in the unconsciousness of instinct.

The "living soul" must have the characteristics of all life-activity, for it is the very core or focus of this activity. As already stated, the "living soul" as an agency of linkage between God and matter is turned, as it were, both ways. The soul's "intuitions" reflect the divine nature of the Lord, JHVH — a **passive** reflection. But the "instincts" involve the soul in the activities of material cells and organs. Blinded and pulled centrifugally by the repetitive whirlings of life-cycles which churn matter in order to liberate the energy locked in the inert core of the atoms, the "living soul" tends to be drawn away from its central "place" and to lose its integrity, its God-reflecting "form" and character. The soul thus faces a twofold problem. If it is eventually to become a positive and dynamic agent carrying out God's work and fulfilling the Plan of Creation "imagined" by **Elohim**, the "living soul" must become an active and conscious individual established in his own selfhood and identity, stating (by deeds, rather than in mere words!) "I am". This means that **the "living soul" must cease to be a passive reflection of the Lord**, somewhat as the child of today must become a mature youth, free from imitating his parents' behavior, free from father or mother complexes. On the other hand, the "living soul" has to fight a constant battle against the gravitational pull of materiality and self-division, and against the repetitive, compulsive moods and sensations associated with the fulfillment of the life-instincts. This fulfillment is necessary for the continued functioning of the body; and the soul, **as long as it is only a "living soul"**, cannot even think of denying it.

This twofold problem involves such difficulties that the evolution of the soul is a long story of failures mixed with a few successes. And it is this story which the Biblical narrative relates, from the formation of Adam in Eden to the Transfiguration of Jesus.

7. CRISIS AND SIN

"Jesus said unto them: If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."
John 9 : 41

History, seen from the point of view of religion — that is, of the relationship of God to man — is the series of outer events which express, in complex and often confused patterns, the rhythm of the successive transformations of the soul. One must accept this as fact the moment one considers the soul as the working out of the fundamental relationship between the One and the Many, between spirit and matter, between God and the multiplicity of the elements which constitute the universe.

In this approach to history, which we find in all the Sacred Books of the past, what matters most is not what a modern historian would call "objective facts", but rather the significance of these facts in terms of the process of soul-evolution. In this sense such a "sacred" history belongs essentially to the realm of art — that is, of sacred art — and the Biblical narrative is to be considered as a symbolical epic of soul-unfoldment, not recording facts as much as selectively using facts to enlighten human minds with reference to soul processes. By transforming these into great "Images" and vivid stories or myths able to condition and to mould the collective unconscious of a new race and an emerging civilization, the writers of Sacred Books have sought to impress upon future generations certain fundamental realizations. They acted, more or less consciously, as **builders of collective psychology**.

We, as **consciously** sophisticated twentieth century personalities, may have very little esteem for or interest in such religious imagery and myths, and probably "scientifically" deny the historical validity of the events which the Bible mentions; yet if we were born in a Jewish or Christian community, our collective **unconscious** has been most profoundly impressed by the stories of the Bible. These have actually moulded many of our deepest and most vital psychological responses; and it would be rather senseless to try to hide this fact. We should rather face it and seek to discover what essential psycho-spiritual significance the Biblical narratives might have, and why the Christian religion and culture have used them as building stones for the collective mentality of the Western peoples.

If we are able to come to the realization that the main sequence of events in the Bible constitutes a symbolic picture of the process of unfoldment through which **every human soul** must pass on its way to perfection or "divine Sonship" — indeed of the process of unfoldment which every individual would experience, in essence, **if** he or she reached full spiritual maturity — then we can reorient our conscious mind and ego toward this "sacred" tradition. This means actually that we would be recognizing and accepting those deeply hidden aspects of our unconscious, the existence of which we so often refuse to admit; we

would be accepting them into our consciousness and, by so doing, achieving a greater degree of inclusive integration as a full, rich, positive individual person.

We can only do this, evidently, if we pierce beyond traditionally orthodox statements based on a literal acceptance of every word of the Bible. Jesus is said to have explained to his disciples "the meaning of the Scriptures", and he promised that the Holy Spirit, after his departure, would further unveil to them such a meaning. So he could not have thought that this meaning was obvious and easily grasped! Yet Christian leaders have consistently clung to the dead-letter sense of the Bible. Modern unorthodox attempts at interpretation have sought to correct this situation; but, in many cases, they have been made by individuals who were steeped in the common religious feelings of the Christian tradition and unacquainted with modern psychology. Thus these interpretations are acceptable only to rather sentimental and over-idealistic people who have but barely emerged from the womb of an all-enfolding "Churchianity". A step further can and should be taken; and we should attempt to probe, with a more penetrating and less devotionally conditioned mind, into the actual psychological significance of some of the most basic Images which the Bible has powerfully impressed upon us.

The conceptual feeling-Image of the "original sin" and the "fall of man" has been one of the most tragically determining factors in the evolution of our Western civilization. It still deeply conditions, whether we accept it literally or reject it with intellectual scorn, modern man's mentality. We must come to terms with this concept and feeling-Image if we want to become spiritually mature individuals.

In essence, all that the stories of the Fall and of the Deluge after a wholesale perversion of mankind imply, if we consider such events as symbols of facts of the evolution of the human soul, is that the process of unfoldment of any soul, from the life-sphere where it operates as a "living soul" to the stage of individualized consciousness and egohood, is an inherently difficult and tragic one. This is so simply because the very nature of the life-sphere and the situation of the "living soul" in it inevitably lead to some fundamental crises. Perhaps the darkest consequences of these crises could have been avoided; but this is a rather aimless speculation. The crises **did** turn out to be "tragic", and **psychologically speaking** our souls are not as yet so far advanced that we are not still heirs, subconsciously though it be, to the consequences of these great dramas of man's ancient past.

In this sense we can speak of an original sin in the same way as the modern psychologist speaks of the lasting emotional effects of a deeply shocking experience in early childhood. The man or woman of 45 may seem utterly different from the child of 5; yet what happened at the age of 5 in relation to the father or the mother is well known to condition the future growth of the psyche for years, and to be the very foundation of some often-mentioned "crisis of the forties". If we believe in depth psychology — whether

Freudian or Jungian — and in the persisting power of such Images and complexes in the subconscious, it would seem rather illogical to scorn the idea of the all-human impact of an "original sin" and of the persistence **in man's collective unconscious** of a sense of guilt or deep-rooted failure. And if we believe in the persistence of this negative Image in man's unconscious — and a stubborn persistence it obviously is! — we must likewise believe in the need for "therapy" — which may mean "saving" from mental destruction — if the inner psychic life of man is to be purged and "redeemed" from stifling darkness and psychological "ghosts".

The need for healing and redemption from the unresolved memories of past failures is as obvious in most individual persons as it is in the collective mind-feelings of the human race. If we accept the possibility of psychological healing through the good offices of a psychoanalyst, we certainly cannot logically dismiss as "religious nonsense" the idea of a collective Redemption through the intermediation of a "Christ". However, all depends upon what meaning we give to these processes which we know as "sin" and "redemption". The concepts we still hold today are traditional and antiquated; and nothing in the Gospels really tells us whether or not they were held by Jesus, at least held in the manner in which they have been preached and belief in them enforced through centuries of Church control over the minds of men.

Essentially the idea of sin and atonement was an old Jewish concept; and it is not at all difficult to see how the Apostles — Paul, especially — might have felt more or less compelled to use it in a new form, as they faced a very difficult situation in their attempt to spread the gospel through the chaotic and uprooted society of their day. They had been stirred and fired with divine enthusiasm by the spiritual dynamics of Jesus' personality, by the awe-inspiring mystery of his death and his reappearance among them. Yet Jesus' death still constituted, especially for the educated classes of that period, an infamous end to a strangely brief career as a Prophet, even as a Healer with extraordinary powers. Jesus' death had to be interpreted; it was a fact which, like any fact, could be interpreted in several ways.

Paul, the man who stood, as it were, between two worlds — the old Hebraic world and the world of his Roman citizenship — must have realized, with inspired insight, that the death of Jesus could become the integrating link between the old and the new, between the tribal yesterdays of the "elect people" and the worldwide citizenship of which Rome was then the symbol and the core. **What needed to be done was to integrate the Gospels with Genesis** — to integrate Jesus' death with Adam's tragedy. Two tragedies! Seen together they would constitute a tremendously vast Mystery, the great drama of Sin and Redemption. Man, the sinner — God, the Redeemer. One "original sin" — the "only begotten Son" to wash it away with the "blood of Christ".

To this day we see the plot of this great drama (the redemption of the one basic human sin by the Son of God) presented by the Churches under the name of the "Plan of Salvation" — God's Plan. But it is not clearly enough realized that if this Plan is of such tremendous

significance as a revelation of God's love and of the glory of His triune being, then that which made it possible — Adam's sin — assumes also cosmic proportions. There could be no redemption were it not for the original sin. The usual idea of the redemption necessitates the belief in a most grievous sin rooted in the collective nature of man and impossible for any individual to eradicate without the awesome sacrifice of the Son of God.

In the great drama of Salvation, the supreme solution of the "last Act" (Christ's vicarious Atonement) grows in glorious meaning in proportion as the original situation (the original sin) is shown to be of the deepest darkness. The emotional appeal of Christianity — the great religion of the Redemption of sin, as it is so often called — is proportional to the intensity of man's feeling of sinfulness and guilt, and of man's fear of retribution and hell.

Paul presumably saw, better than anyone, the need to present a most vivid picture of man's sinfulness (including his own experience of sin) in order to arouse the people of his time to immense faith in Christ, the Redeemer. The Mediterranean world of Paul's day **needed** this emotional arousal. And the need was answered; popular, emotional Christianity won.

True spiritual or even ethical values alone have not, generally speaking, sufficient emotional dynamics to draw the mass-mind of man to them. Man is not willing to pass through the **metanoia** process; he is not ready to experience deep catharsis and rebirth unless he has come to a condition of near despair. Man will surrender the dark or rigid contents of his ego only if there is no other alternative left. Therefore man apparently must, at times, be made to realize with an almost unbearable intensity the darkness he lives in, so that he may be aroused to God-ward action, so that the soul may awaken from the drugged slumber of a negative state in relation to God.

However, what was dynamically effective in a world filled with the multitudinous remains of many tribal, imperial or city-state religions which had lost their hold upon both the masses of uprooted, dejected slaves (millions of them!) and the Greco-Roman aristocracies living in a spiritual vacuum, cannot be what our present-day Western world actually needs. It is one thing to energize the **birth** of a world-religion and another thing to spearhead the **rebirth** of this religion after it has been accepted by a whole civilization for some seventeen centuries! The enemies of Christianity in the Apostles' time had never heard of Christ; but the enemies of Christianity today have been, for the most part, Christians. They gave up Christ, perhaps, because of the way Christianity presented Christ to them. If Christianity is once more to make world-history and to transform our present world-chaos, it must be able to effectively heal the basic conflicts in modern man's soul. But Christian traditional attitudes and dogmas are responsible for these conflicts as much as, and perhaps more than, the materialistic approach of science. The enemy is within.

What is conflicting in modern man's soul are **two negatives**: religious dogma (religion's bondage to past interpretations of God, Christ and man) and scientific materialism (science's exclusive preoccupation with material values, facts of the material world and analytical-empirical, quantitative techniques). Only a positive power of

integration, channeled through minds illumined by love and dynamized by a creative will to transformation, can re-polarize these two negatives and dissipate their conflict. **A transfigured Christianity must be immensely positive. It cannot use a negative condition, sin, as the foundation for its emotional appeal.**

To wash away the sins of the world is the negation of a negation. Today we need an affirmative foundation for Christianity. Christianity cannot be transfigured and remain primarily the religion of the Redemption of sins. It must become the way to the glorious realization of divine Sonship by consecrated and heroic individuals. It must accept the Transfiguration more than the Crucifixion; the **life example** of Jesus rather than his death. It must affirm the divinity inherent, even if unawakened, in every individual. It must be a religion of creative, ever transforming acts of God acting through self-dedicated men who know themselves as souls, as free and creative individuals — "free" to become what they essentially are in spirit and in truth, and "creative" as participants in the vast Movement of an ever-renewed divine Creation, here and now.

In this age every mystery is to be revealed in the light of the spirit that shines everywhere and at all times, and which therefore absorbs all shadows. We have witnessed the tremendous fire and light released from the core of the atom of matter. The dead letter of the books and of the laws written on the stones of the past must reveal and give out its burning spiritual core. A "host" of creative mind-souls should arise in the decades to come, to spark the transfiguration of Christianity and of our global society-in-the-making.

Paul, were he now among us, would understand the need; for he was the one to say, in his Letters to the Corinthians, these inspired words: "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened". And again: "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

Dark Beginnings

In order to face the deepest, because most vital, implications of the concept of the "original sin" or "sins" one must use a psychological approach. But the psychology of which we speak here is one based on the premise that the soul is the central fact of the world of time, change and evolution; and that the soul has a divine purpose and a divine task for which, religiously speaking, it was created in the image and likeness of God. The completion of this task by the soul involves extreme difficulties because of the very character of the task. It involves great risks; and essentially it is God Who takes the risks, for it is God Who emanated the soul as a focus of integrative activity, as an outpost of spirit-unity in a world of material multiplicity and as a center of eternal (eonic) being acting in and through the compulsive and repetitive activities of "life".

The risk of evolution is sin. Sin is a **negative response** of the soul to the task for the performance of which it was created. The soul begins as an infant in spirit and in strength. It emerges out of the subjective state of divine unity and finds itself in a world of incredible strangeness. It seeks to comprehend this world, to orient itself to its inhabitants, to give them "names". It seeks to understand the meaning of change, of time and seasons — indeed of life and death. And in this very act of seeking it becomes different. It learns to perceive objectively and to think. This involves a great risk; and the result is, alas, the original sin in "Eden", the **nursery** of the soul.

Moreover, if we are to grasp the full psychological meaning of the symbolical events recorded in the second chapter of Genesis and traditionally known as the "Fall of man", we should realize that these events constitute only the first Scene of the first Act of the drama of soul-evolution. Two scenes follow which are essentially related to the first — two great tragedies: the crime of Cain, and the wholesale perversion of mankind following the "coming of the sons of God" mentioned in the sixth chapter of Genesis.

Indeed it is the whole series of events taking place **before the Deluge** which establishes the climate of sinfulness, guilt and failure in which the evolution of man's soul and the process of refinement of human nature have had to unfold since the "new start" **following** the Deluge. Likewise it is the negative results of the shocks, fears and frustrations experienced in childhood which condition the development of personality after the bio-psychological crisis of puberty — a fact which modern depth-psychology has definitely established.

Following this most revealing analogy it becomes clear that, in the Biblical narrative, the antedeluvian period of human evolution refers to the childhood of man up to puberty; while the period following the Deluge represents the early years of adolescence. In the story of Abraham and the "descent into Egypt" we have correspondences to the adolescent's involvement in problems of sexual and social-emotional relationship. Moses and the establishment of Israel and the Law represent the first development of the independent and

clearly conscious sense of being an "I am"; while the three kings of a united Israel — Saul, David and Solomon — symbolize three stages of development of the ego.

The failures of the ego lead to a state of division in the soul, which may amount to a youthful type of "schizophrenia", and as a result to a condition of bondage to external powers — whether personalities or causes. Then, after a series of attempts at reintegration, the coming of the Christ symbolizes the beginning of individual maturity. Man officially comes of age and, after "marriage", should begin to use the "powers of the Fatherhood" consciously and purposefully on his own individual responsibility.

Alas, it also happens that "Christ" is rejected; that the soul is crucified by the intellect and the personal nature becomes a "wanderer" in alien lands. Or else the marriage-life runs into deep ruts, and a strenuous conflict develops between the soul (or its frozen reflection!) and the mind-ego. This is the condition which the Western world is now experiencing.

The depth-psychologist of our day has shown that if the shocks and frustrations of early infancy can be seen by the grown-up individual in their true character, if the memories of the deliberately forgotten past are brought out of the unconscious into the light of consciousness, a process of liberation can begin. The "ghosts" of past failures can be dissipated when events which outwardly caused these failures are shown for what they actually were rather than for what they **seemed** to be to the insecure, immature and easily frightened child. The grown-up individual is given **a second chance** of meeting what has blocked the path of his soul-growth — of meeting it adequately and with the help of the knowledge he has now acquired.

What is more he is given the opportunity **to forgive himself for his sins** — of omission or commission. And this is, psychologically speaking, the absolution which the soul needs; for without this forgiveness the soul cannot freely proceed on its evolutionary path. It is weighed down by remorse or regrets, by guilt or despair. It is haunted by the "ghosts" which the mind constantly re-evokes as it delves again and again into the past in self-imposed punishment and useless misery. The mind may repeat this process consciously; but it may do it as well unconsciously, which often merely postpones the results while making them more acute and destructive of organic health.

What occurs in the individual person with a past of failures and sins, human collectivities such as a race or civilization may also experience. Christian man, whether he will admit it or not, is loaded with the sense of guilt which has been stressed and impressed upon his growing soul from childhood on by a collective belief in the original sin and in the inherent sinfulness of human nature. This belief is implied in so many traditions, symbols and stereotyped attitudes, and it is so insistently kept alive by Churches, by radio sermons and even by billboards one encounters everywhere, that it has all the power of a subconscious compulsion. Many violent attempts have of course been made by non-religious modern thinkers to eradicate the conscious belief in man's "sinful-ness"; but what have they offered in its place if not a materialistic and behavioristic version of it, and a feeling of

universal meaning lessness which destroys the very belief in the reality of the soul and of God!

One does not successfully remove a psychological complex by destroying the conscious sense of individual identity. "The operation was successful" and the patient dead; this does not add up to real healing! It would likewise be senseless to destroy the object or to extinguish the source of light when one seeks to dissipate the shadow which this object casts. What one needs are two sources of light falling upon the object from opposite directions — the direction of God and that of man!

What modern man needs so desperately is widespread psychological healing, but a healing in which the soul in man reveals its divine potential even though Christ be the Great Therapist. Indeed, what is needed is a healing implying that **self-realized absolution** in which not only one sin or another is dissolved, but through which the very understanding of what constitutes "sin" is transformed and renewed. A new understanding, a "renewal of the mind" through a reorientation of man's attitude toward the process and goal of soul-evolution: these are psychological necessities of our times.

In the light of such an understanding we can grasp in a new way the meaning of the tragic events previous to the Deluge, according to the Bible — the fall of man from Eden, the murder of Cain, and the wholesale trend toward evil which followed the coming of the "sons of God" and their "marriage to the daughters of man". These three crises should be easily understandable for we have actually experienced them in our own childhood, with varying results; not as literal events of course, but as processes of growth. They refer to: **(1)** the relationship of the child to his parents and his home, **(2)** the relationship with siblings (i.e., brothers or sisters), **(3)** the early phases of the development of self-will and the premature arousal (and misuse) of sexual energies.

(1) The "Sin" in Eden and the "Fall"

In the second chapter of Genesis (2:7) we are told that "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." The "living soul" condition is, as we saw in a preceding chapter, the first stage of the evolution of the soul. At this stage the soul is a focal point for the divine power of "life"; and the purpose of life is to integrate within an organic whole the power of God's unity and the multiplicity of material earth-particles — the "dust of the ground."

As a result the "living soul" faces in two opposite directions — Godward and matterward. The consciousness of the soul is likewise twofold — an awareness of God and an awareness of matter. There is, however, a basic difference between these two types of awareness because the soul is **essentially** God-like and God-attracted; it turns to God as the leaves of a plant turn spontaneously to the source of light, the sun. Yet, as it is the core of the processes and activities of life (the "breath") and as these organic activities deal with the chemicals of the soil (foodstuffs, etc.) which they differentiate and integrate as the substance of cells, the "living soul" must become aware of matter. And if it is not drawn to matter — the polarity of which is opposite to its own — then it must be forced to come in contact with matter.

At first the soul is not aware of matter as an **objective** reality, but rather of life-activities operating upon something strange, dark, entirely alien. The soul is **subjectively moved** by the rhythmic activities of life, and the feeling of "body" consists in an awareness that there are definite limits to these activities. Likewise the newborn infant is not at first aware of his body as a whole, but of changes of heat and well-being, of hunger and pain. He comes to sense that he himself can induce certain changes by contracting something, by crying, by relaxing. As he finds that there are limits to the changes he can induce, he seeks to discover how far he can go and what it is which helps or hinders him. He gains thus a shadowy feeling of external presences which he instinctively classifies, then "names", according to their effect upon his well-being.

The "man" God placed in the "Garden" is shown at first to live a purely **vegetative** existence. In the Garden there are only trees at first; and **in the midst** of the Garden **two** trees are singled out for his attention: the tree of life "and" the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:9). That there are two trees in the midst of the Garden is usually ignored. One may well wonder why! God's command to "the man" mentions only the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (2 : 17) and makes no reference to the "tree of life"; indeed, what God say later on when he drives Adam and Eve out of the Garden indicates clearly that the tree of life **had not been touched**:

"Behold, the man is become as one of us to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken." (3 : 22, 23)

Actually the "command" given by God to man, while man is still in the vegetative phase of his existence, need not be constructed as a dictatorial order. God simply tells man, who is without experience or objective knowledge, that he should not eat of the fruit of the tree of good and evil **because** "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (2 : 17). This is not a threat or an order, but a statement of fact. In other words, if man were to eat of this fruit he would, as a natural consequence, have to experience death — and that would be a tragedy for man. Presumably it was not God's intention that this should happen; but God was just warning the childlike Adam that the fruit was dangerous and that eating of it would mean death — just as a mother warns her child that fire burns and must not be touched.

However after Adam **had** eaten of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil the situation (apparently) became more critical; if he should eat "**also** of the tree of life" then man would live forever. This seemed to God such a dangerous possibility that He sent Adam and Eve out of the Garden and placed the tree of life definitely out of Adam's reach by protecting it with Cherubims with "a flaming sword which turned every way".

What then do the two trees "in the midst" symbolize? The answer is that they refer to the two higher levels of soul-integration above the "living soul". It is only through a knowledge of good and evil, that is, of the constructive and destructive consequences of any **self-induced** activity, that the soul can become individualized. Man, the individual, is responsible for his acts, for their polarity and their orientation. He can act toward the divine goal of integration, or the evil goal of total disintegration. He must choose. He must choose God or the negation of God. He must relate himself **positively** toward God's Will and identify his individual will with the divine Will, or he becomes the servant of evil and his relation to God becomes negatively polarized.

Thus eating of the fruit of the tree of good and evil means simply the beginning of the process of development of the "individual soul". On the other hand, eating from the tree of life would have meant partaking of divine immortality; but immortality means the perpetuation of that which one has attained in life as an individual. And if this individual attainment is along the path of evil, immortality would mean **immortality in evil** — a satanic kind of immortality as God's adversary!

The two trees are in the midst of the Garden because the moment God releases the power of integration, which is life, this release opens the possibility of individualization and of divine immortality. Mind and spirit are **implied** in life. They are at the core of the experience of the "living soul". The **risk** of creating such a "living soul" is that the mind-consciousness and the spiritual consciousness of man might develop when man is not **yet** able to respond to them with safety. It is dangerous to let a child handle matches and burning torches; it is also dangerous to allow modern man the use of the power of the sun! Nevertheless all divine plans seem to include "calculated risk", because no creature can

become a creator, or rather a co-creator, without a crisis of fundamental re-polarization and reorientation of his consciousness and his energies.

The crisis begins the very moment the "living soul" ceases to be a purely passive and vegetative reflection of God Who gave it the breath of life; the very moment man begins to "name" the living and moving animals which God created in Eden (2 : 19). The soul then enters the animated stage of its evolution. The reason given in the Biblical narrative for this Edenic creation of animals by God is intriguing. God said: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help mate for him." And when the animals fail to do the job then God creates Eve out of Adam's rib — or rather, in Hebrew, **Isha** out of **Ish** (the English translation says "Woman out of Man").

The Hebrew words, **Ish** and **Isha**, tell the story for "Ish" is a root-sound which is found in many languages to symbolize the "I", the Individual self. (In Sanskrit, **Ish-svara** is the manifestation or tone of the divine Self, the Logos; in German, **Ich** means "I", etc.). The "help mate for Adam" is a being that polarizes him, as polarization and the interplay of duality are necessary to spark and to warm up the alchemical process of individualization.

As the first un-sexed Adam becomes Adam-Eve, or rather **Ish-Isha**, the subjective and purely reflective consciousness of the "living soul" begins to be transformed into an objective consciousness of life and of the rhythms of life. Man no longer merely reflects, in unconsciousness, God his Maker. He becomes conscious of **life as power and as rhythm**. He becomes aware of time and seasons. He becomes positively oriented toward life; and this tends to bring about a change in his relationship toward God. It is a potentially dangerous change for the soul, yet a necessary one. It precipitates a crisis which is inevitable but which involves a very serious task.

The peculiar manner in which Eve-Isha is produced should tell us a great deal; but apparently this has remained largely a mystery to Biblical interpreters. What is a "rib" if not that which **defines the process of breathing by limiting it**? This is exactly what **Isha** does to **Ish**, Woman to Man. Woman objectively defines Man's life-power by focusing and limiting it. Also within the rib-cage is the heart; and the steady pulsation of the heart is even more fundamental to life than the breath. In other words, the ribs enclose the **rhythmic systems** of the living organism — **two** systems "in the midst" of the garden of the human body.

From the recognition of rhythm derives the sense of time. And the sense of time leads to the realization of the steady character of seasonal activity, of the rhythm of the seed. Woman's function also stresses this principle of cyclic, seasonal activity. To know that there is seasonal activity is the necessary foundation for agriculture and cattle-breeding. This knowledge alone can give man a positive attitude of control toward nature and life. The Woman (**Isha**) gives Man this knowledge.

However, seen from the point of view of the realm of unity, which is timeless and without extension or space (as we understand "space"), the descent of a soul — a pure reflection of divine unity — into the world of time and seasons means a tragic "fall". But this

fall occurs, at least potentially, the moment Adam becomes Adam-Eve; the moment the one human reflection of the One God becomes twofold. Man then enters upon the path of duality and objectivity — the path of mind-development.

Man **had** to tread this path in order to develop individuality and a positive free will, and in order to learn discrimination. Discrimination is choice between two alternatives. Only the consciousness which knows duality and has gained an objective approach to life and change can choose between two alternatives. Adam, as the one reflection of the One God, **could not** know what alternatives mean, and thus could not choose between them; he could not learn the lesson of freedom. Adam had to become Man-Woman and to experience the "fall" from timeless unity to cyclic time. And **this** was the crisis.

To experience a crisis is not sin! But to give a **negative meaning** to any crisis — that is sin. And Adam, faced with the realization that he was now in a world of time, of duality and change, was **seized with fear and shame**. He felt himself "naked", that is, unprotected, ineffectual, diminished and inferior. The experience of duality — the Ish-Isha, Man-Woman experience — gave him a sense of guilt and utter loss. When he remembered the unity of God, it seemed as something that was gone forever, and he became frightened. And **this** was the original sin: i.e., fear. Fear, when one is confronted by the evolutionary necessity for a crisis which completely changes the quality and the substance of one's consciousness, is the basic negative response to life and the God of life.

When this happens the very relationship of man to God turns negative, and God appears to man as an awesome Power that "curses", that is "angered" and "vengeful". **Human fear generates the only Devil there is**, and the negative countenance of evil superimposes itself upon the divine Presence in the soul. **This** is sin and the result of sin. Man, once the passive reflection of God's Image, finds his independence from God in a negative manner, and by so doing begins to experience the process of individualization in the darkness and the tragedy of sin.

Behind the mythological personifications of the serpent talking to Eve, of God's anger and God's "curse" — the latter simply being a prophecy of what the results of man's negative fear and shame would bring upon him — we can see the crucial happenings which bring on a state of more or less accentuated psychological cleavage between the very young child and his parents. The psychologist, Dr. Fritz Kunkel, referred to this crisis in his writings as the breakdown of the "We-feeling" — the feeling in which the child feels himself an integral part of his mother's being and his small family circle. Psychologists stress the fact that around the age of four or five the child normally forgets all that he experienced prior to that time. The first remembered event of childhood usually dates back to this period. **A change of psychic polarity occurs.**

As Dr. J. L. Moreno states, true memory begins only then, which means that the child acquires a real sense of time. He distinguishes past from present; and the future may well seem to him both exciting and frightening, because of his basic sense of insecurity in this

realm of time and seasons — a realm alien to the soul which, by spiritual birthright, belongs to the world of God's timelessness and unity.

This **fall into time** is the first great crisis of the soul. It is only **after** it that the soul becomes really aware of matter as such. This awareness is progressive and symbolized in Genesis by the need for some kind of "clothing". When Adam and Eve have eaten of the fruit of the tree of good and evil, they make themselves "aprons" of "fig-leaves" — certainly not out of a Christian kind of modesty, but as an expression of the fact that the experience of duality (the dualism of shape and sex-function being only the outer aspect of it) has brought the soul down to the level of the **vegetable** awareness of material forces and life-rhythms.

Then, after God has cursed Adam and Eve and the negative process of estrangement from divine unity has reached deeper, God makes for them "coats of skins". Animal consciousness has been forced upon Adam and Eve by God. The purity, but also the static and passive character, of vegetable life has been changed to the dynamic and restless emotionality of the animal world. Motion is required to produce positive, forceful emotions. The "living soul" has to "fall" into animal-like emotionality — into compulsive emotions.

At the root of emotional compulsiveness are fear and insecurity. The child who no longer feels "one with" his parents has lost the security of the true "home" — Eden. The psychological umbilical cord is torn; and the tearing often leaves a bleeding wound which saps the soul's energy, the life-energy, the "libido". This is the "curse", indeed every psychological complex is, symbolically speaking, a "curse" of the God of life-integration. It destroys some aspect of the integrative power of the "living soul" and makes the accomplishment of the soul's task that much harder.

The original sin is therefore the fear that engenders complexes.

(2) Cain and Abel

The dualism of Cain and Abel repeats the original dualism of Adam and Eve: Adam who is cursed to work and eat "in the sweat of his face," and Eve who is cursed to bring forth children in sorrow. Cain is the prototype of the man in whom the process of individualization has begun to operate. He is the symbolic fountain-head of "civilization" which develops through the use of fire, of tools and of the intellect (also a sharp tool!). The name, Cain, means in Hebrew, a smith — and also a spear, the product of the smith's art.

But Cain is heir to Adam's sense of guilt and fear. He feels deeply the power of the "curse" which makes it necessary for him to work, to till the soil, to impose his will upon matter, to forcibly control life and fire. He has to develop self-will and cunning in order to survive; and he resents it. This resentment turns into anger — actually it is an anger directed at God and at the compulsive forces of life.

Abel, whom God favored, receives the impact of Cain's explosive dynamism. Abel represents the feminine, intuitive mind which feels at one with the rhythms of life and seasons, and it thus receptively open to God, the Source of life. Abel breeds animals; therefore he simply guides the processes of life, providing for them the best possible conditions. He is the fountainhead of all "culture", the prototype of the pastoral life.

The name Abel in the original Hebrew is *Hebel*, meaning "breath". Abel is thus, in a sense, the breath of life, the foundation of the "living soul". Cain who **kills the breath** (Abel) should be seen as the prototype of the ego-will which seeks power by willfully and violently controlling natural energies. In Hindu Yoga there is a basic process called *pranayama*, meaning literally "killing the breath". By holding the breath, certain types of biopsychic energies are said to be aroused. All civilization, symbolically, is a "holding of the breath"; it is a struggle against the compulsions of nature, a damming up of the life-stream. The life-stream when forcibly contained may produce **power**, if handled with human ingenuity and skill. But the life-energy, if long held in check by the will or the fear of man, turns explosive. It becomes **anger**.

Anger results essentially from man's inability to bear the pressure of a situation in which he finds himself isolated and deprived of the natural fulfillment of life-instincts. He may be in such a situation accidentally; more often than not, however, he caused it to happen, or it is his characteristic destiny to grow **through** it and **in spite of it**. Cain can be said to have chosen this destiny, as Abel chose the easier and more natural way of flowing with the life-current. The brothers represent therefore the two basic ways for the soul to establish a relationship with God and with life — a negative (but dynamic) and a receptive (but passive) way.

The road Cain follows is the way of negation, but also of individualization by the refusal to remain a passive creature entirely conditioned by the rhythms of life and seasons. It is the road of the criminal, but also, let us not forget, of the ascetic who dams the reproductive energies of life in order to emerge out of the realm of life-desires and life-

compulsions and into the realm of God's unity and timelessness. It is the way of Prometheus who, in Greek mythology, is cursed and punished by the God, Zeus, yet who gives man fire, out of love and compassion.

Fire exalts but also destroys; and cities — these shrines to man's willful use of fire and mind-power — are built by men who feel isolated and lonely. Civilization is a tragic cure for spiritual loneliness. Industry and the arts, both symbolically developed by Cain's descendants, bring men together in cities; but in these cities the release of vast powers for man to use gives rise to competition and the drive for leadership and fame — thus to conflicts, ambition and crime.

Yet the Bible ends with a vision of the "Holy City" as seen by John, the one among Christ's disciples who embodied most fully the energy of divine love. The City of Peace, the perfect Jerusalem, in the midst of which the symbol and power of this divine love is enthroned, is the ultimate goal of the evolution of soul. Nevertheless the way to that goal is at first dark. The cities which Cain and his progeny built are dark with mental pride, with violence and lust. The sin of the line of Cain is the sin of the great cities. It is the sin of industry, of the misuse of fire, of the "merchants of death" — and of the atom bomb.

The crime and the curse of Cain hide a deeply paradoxical situation which reappears in different forms at every phase of the evolution of the soul. We will see this paradox implied in the story of Moses who also killed a man; in the relation between God, the one and universal I AM, and men who, if they are to be truly "individual souls", must also **each** be able to say "I am". We find the paradox in a new form in Jesus' life and death. Indeed the way of the disciple of Christ is a paradoxical way as we shall see presently.

At every step in the Bible, God is shown to look with favor upon the kind of attitude to life which we call "pastoral". It is as if God were saying: "Yes, there must be cities; but My home is with the pastoral people. Yes, there must be mind and industry; but My peace is with the men who have kept their intuitive perceptions clear, their hearts pure, their souls oriented toward Me, as mirrors to the sun and the stars."

After Abel is killed by Cain, Seth is born to replace him. This name, Seth, means "Appointed". God appoints Seth as the fountainhead of the pastoral way. Seth's descendants remain psychically open to God and in harmony with nature's rhythms. They "call upon" the name of God; they "walk with" God. They follow the way of the heart, of devotion and purity, of simplicity and conformity to steady patterns of culture and group-morality — the way that builds character rather than mind. It is from among them that God will select Noah and his family as the seed-remnant which will form the basis for a new evolutionary period after the Deluge.

From the point of view of psychological analysis, the rivalry between Cain and Abel can be said to dramatically condense the serious problems implied in the relationship between brothers, or brothers and sisters — as Abel may also be thought of as a feminine pole in relation to Cain, the masculine "spear", as no mention is made of daughters to Adam and Eve. Conflicts between siblings originate in the relationship between each of them and their

parents, or one of the parents. One parent seems to prefer a son, the other a daughter. One son knows how to attract the favor of the father, another fails to do so.

What this means, philosophically speaking, is that the various elements of any **present** situation have varied relations to the elements of the **past**. A generation is at peace if it is able to relate itself easily, as a whole, to the preceding generation; time moves smoothly from past to present, then to future. But if the step from the older generation to the younger is one which has all the elements of a crisis, then the members of this younger generation react differently, and indeed competitively, to this crisis and to their parents. Conflicts between siblings are thus most likely to occur in a home where the parents were under great stress at the times of conception and during pregnancy.

The "fight" between Cain and Abel occurs because of the manner in which God has responded to their sacrifices. Yet God had "cursed" their parents! Did the latter repent, seek to come back into God's favor and teach their sons to sacrifice to God?

Put in such terms the situation has the peculiar flavor of all literal interpretations of the Bible — interpretations which, while they are literal and exact at some points, imply completely imaginary assumptions at others! Nevertheless the psychological approach to the Cain-Abel crisis cannot fail to note that the siblings come to blows in terms of their relationship to the God who formed, then cursed their parents. In other words, we see the children re-embodiment the problems which caused tragedy to their parents, which lost for them the "ancestral home", Eden.

When Adam was called to task by God in the Garden after eating of "the forbidden fruit", what did he do? He placed the blame on Eve, and by implication on God Himself: "The woman whom **Thou gavest** to be with me . . ." Cain's conflict with Abel reflects Adam's resentment toward Eve. Adam recoiled in fear and shame from the new knowledge which the eating of the fruit of the tree of good and evil opened up to him. Cain, the first-born, is conceived under this shadow of guilt; and he transfers to Abel the resentment which Adam had for Eve, the temptress. He kills. He spills his (feminine) brother's blood.

Cain — "the spear", the smith who forges nails and weapons — sheds blood. And the shedding echoes a myriad of times through the history-pattern of the evolution of the soul, until we see the blood of the Perfected Man, Jesus, shed by the "spear" and the nails of the soldiers who serve the rulers of the Big City, Rome. Shed willingly for the "remission of the sins of mankind" by the Son of God? Yes; but in the sense that until a mentally sick person can re-experience the original cause of his deep neurosis willingly and **forgive himself for it**, there can be no complete healing. Jesus' willingly accepted Crucifixion polarizes and absolves the shedding of Abel's blood by Cain. Compassionate love-charity absorbs and neutralizes the violence of anger, as faith absorbs and neutralizes fear.

(3) The "Marriage" of the Sons of God

According to Genesis (6:1 and following) "it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose."

The Bible fails to say who these sons of God (*Ben Elohim*) were; but their coming into the life-sphere on earth can only mean that spiritual entities, who did not belong to the evolution of the "living soul" which began with the formation of Adam, joined this earthly evolution. The Lord God being the ruler of the life-sphere and of the evolution of all life-forms, it seems evident that He likewise directed these "sons of Elohim" to participate in the evolution of the human soul for a definite purpose.

We can surmise that the participation of these spiritual entities was planned by God in order to bring to the "living souls" of men, born of the earth, a spiritual power, form or quality which they so far lacked; that is, the power of the "divine soul", the power of the Fatherhood. The creative power of the Father is only focused positively and in dynamic expression through the "divine soul". The coming of the "sons of God" represents therefore a "descent" (or involution) of spiritual entities endowed with creative power — a power with which **neither** the descendants of Seth nor those of Cain had ever been directly and personally acquainted.

The intimate experience (the "marriage") of the creative power of spirit by human beings who were essentially "living souls" — with either active intellectual overtones (Cain line) or with a strong psychic sensitiveness (Seth line) — was bound to produce a great crisis in the evolution of man's soul and consciousness. A serious risk was involved; and the result was a tragic failure.

"Marriage" means a blending of energies. The creative energies of the divine spirit (the sons of God) and the compulsive, repetitive energies of life churning the heavy materials of the earth (the daughters of men) were blended in at least some groups of human beings. The outcome was the birth of men of fame, great personages, "giants"; but it was also the gradual materialization and perversion of the creative power which had thus come into man's possession. Instead of transmuting the energies of life and spiritualizing the "living souls" of the daughters of men, the "sons of God" were drawn into the whirlpools, the compulsions and the materiality of the bodies of earth which they or their progeny had assumed. The "imaginings of the thoughts of their hearts" became dark and evil "continually" — and imagination is what most resembles in man the creative power of God. Thus the spiritual beings who were to bring the transforming power of spirit to man failed, and the daughters of men likewise proved unable to rise to the opportunity to mother a new race of spiritualized men.

This failure of creativity, this inability to transform, spiritward, the energies of life, eventually produced the sin of "satanism": creative power turned dark and destructive —

black magic, in the real and awesome sense of the term; a combination of fear, anger and lust.

Fear, anger and lust are the basic sins of man. They constitute an inverted trinity polarized by hatred, as the divine Trinity is a threefold outpouring of love-compassion. Fear is the root-sin because it is the negative aspect of the Fatherhood of God; in its deepest aspect it is spiritual impotency. Fear is born of a feeling of lack of creativity, of a deep sense of inferiority and inadequacy which makes one recoil, helplessly and hopelessly, the moment one is touched by the creative power. As the dynamism of anger combines with fear, hatred is produced; and hatred blended with lust becomes "satanism". Satan is the negation and inversion of God — the "shadow" of all spiritual growth.

This Satanic shadow must appear wherever the soul refuses to grow, out of fear and inertia. It is therefore inherent in every crisis. It appears during any crisis of growth when the soul finds itself unable to meet adequately, deliberately, and with faith, love and hope, the challenge of the spirit — the challenge of self-transformation and creative renewal.

God is the challenger. God takes the "calculated risk". And as the risk becomes more dangerous and the issues more sharply defined, God must, by the very character of His eternal harmonic being, see Himself increasingly involved in **humanity**.

This involvement (or "involution") of the divine in the human reaches its climax when a man's soul is perfected enough to respond fully to the "incarnation" of God into this man. It is toward this climax that, in the Bible narrative, we see God working through and with especially sensitive men since the days of Noah; and as symbols of this divine involvement in human affairs we are told of several "covenants" God made with His human servants or agents. Thus begins the new method of soul-evolution, the process of soul-individualization under divine guidance.

God is the "E-ducator". He "leads out" the soul from the dark layers of the life-sphere — the symbolical Egypt — to the Land of the Promise. This land is the place of soul-maturity, where the individual can "know" the Father with the experience of the power of the Fatherhood. In this "knowing", fear, the original sin, loses its compulsive power. And man, experiencing himself a father "in the Name" of the One Father, is free from sin and, eventually, from death. He ascends to his true state: the state of divine Sonship.

8. THE COMING-TOGETHER OF GOD AND MAN

"God becomes as we are, so that we may be as He is."

William Blake — *There is no Natural Religion*; 1788

It is probably no exaggeration to say that there is no word more important in the whole Bible than the term "Covenant". This term literally means a "coming together"; it indicates a meeting, an actualized relationship. What gives to the Biblical tradition its most characteristic feature, by comparison with other bodies of religious doctrines or myths, is that the whole picture of human evolution which the Bible presents rests upon the development of the relationship between God and man. God, as Jehovah-Yahweh, is the positive, creative pole of the relationship; man is the receptive, unstable and often truly negative pole. But the important fact is that everything the Bible records can be seen as one phase or another in the process of unfoldment of the God-man relationship. The successive covenants by which this relationship is given a progressive form and character mark the essential turning-points in this process.

Obviously if one believes in a definite and evolving relationship between God and man God must be endowed with at least some of the attributes of personality. When God is conceived as a metaphysical abstract Principle, or even as a vast cosmic Existence within which all there is acts and struggles, there can hardly be any real relationship between such a God and man; there certainly can be no relation of mutuality, no interaction between them — and this is the case in Hindu or Chinese metaphysical-cosmic doctrines. It is true that the Hindu will say that the divine-cosmic *Brahman* is "one with" the human *atman*; but this identification provides no basis for "relationship". Relationship implies the fact that the related factors, while sharing some common foundation, are different from or perhaps opposite to each other. If all there is is God-Brahman, then man is essentially illusory or, at best, a fragmentary and superficial phenomenon fulfilling no really basic place in the cosmic "dream" or "play" of God. If so, there can be no significant relationship, no mutual interaction or interpenetration between an absolute Reality and a fleeting illusion born (somehow!) of "ignorance".

The Hebraic tradition however presents us with the picture of a God Who communicates with man, Who is angered or delighted by man's responses, and to Whom man should pray; and this tradition finds its logical consummation in the person of Jesus Christ in whom the divine and human natures are not only united, but interpenetrate as in a kind of symbolical marriage. Indeed all the Near-Eastern religions, in one form or another, stress this personal communication of God with man, and man with God; and when man is seen having reached a stage of total devotion to and love of God, God becomes "the Beloved", the constant Partner, the immanent and glowing Presence, an all-inclusive "Thou" to every human "I" (cf. Martin Buber's "I and Thou", a remarkable instance of Jewish

mysticism). We even hear great Christian teachers, like Meister Eckhardt, emphatically say that "God needs me, as I need Him". This is total relationship, a complete realization of mutuality in an everlasting and indeed quasi-absolute "coming together".

It is evident, however, that such a state of mystical union-in-sharing cannot be experienced during the early stages of the soul's evolution. The instinctive and utterly spontaneous reliance of the as yet pure and non-individualized "living soul" upon the divine Source, of which it is only a **reflection**, is not a true relationship, any more than the reflection in a mirror is in a condition of relationship to the real face — it is simply a projection of the face without any independent characteristics. **You can only be truly related to someone to whom you could refuse to be related.** The mutuality of response between the participants in any true relationship is vitalized by the possibility that the relationship might, at any moment, be dissolved or at least transformed. Indeed a relationship is usually strengthened by the fact that there are outside pressures which tend to dissolve it — a fact which defines, as it were, its meaning and value.

In order that the purely reflective "living soul" may begin to experience the gradual process of individualization, some kind of crisis is necessary. There are two fundamental possibilities: **(1)** the "reflection" meets another "reflection" and a sense of contrast develops which may lead to a real sharing. Thus Adam meets Eve, and one might theoretically assume that the Adam-Eve relationship could have "differentiated" both of them without upsetting their sense of reliance upon their divine Source, God; but the Bible tells us that what happened instead was — **(2)** that the "reflection" sought to assert its desire-to-be **against** its Source in the symbolical way of "disobedience". In Gen. 3 : 5 the serpent promises: "Your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" — in other words, experiencing duality, which means the capacity to become separated from the divine Source; to become "dereflectionized", i.e., to jump out of the mirror (the Garden of Eden) and acquire a positive character. This however makes "tragedy" inevitable.

Adam and Eve found themselves not only "naked", i.e., having to face the conflicts, the vulnerability and doubts implied in the very basic relationship of man to woman; they found themselves also impelled to project these unresolved conflicts upon their children, Cain and Abel. From these children, as we saw, two lines of human development proceeded: the way of the city through the use of fire and metals (civilization), and the way of nomadic cattle-raising and multiplication of seeds (culture). The first line (the Cain line) stressed interhuman relationships and presumably left out of the picture the relationship of man to God. If it was kept in mind at all, it was on an intellectual or purely symbolic level. The second line (the Seth line) kept man's relationship to God as the basic and vital fact of its pastoral life. It is this line which God naturally "favored". These men "walked with God" as they moved along with their flocks or slept under the stars.

When the "coming of the sons of God" (the **Ben-Elohim**; Gen. 6 : 1-2) introduced a new and infinitely disturbing creative factor into human evolution, we can assume that both lines were affected by this great release of new spiritual potentiality, though the Genesis

story here is very sketchy and vague. At any rate, when the most basic life-relationships became affected by the negative reactions of mankind to the conscious use of creative power, when sex-perversions and "black magic" led to an ever-increasing state of psychic darkness and evil-intoxicated imagination, God could still find among the Seth line a Noah and his family to "seed" the future of mankind after the Deluge catharsis.

By then man was no longer a mere reflection of God; he was **in potentiality** a "son of God". He had received the Promethean gift, the "God-seed". Because of this the meeting of God and man could develop into a real relationship — a relationship made possible by Noah's faith in God's voice and presence, and **by his capacity to adapt himself "creatively" to an unprecedented situation.** Noah is, because of this, the prototype of a new type of human being, of a new phase of soul development. Such a new human type can relate himself to God in a new way; and the new relationship becomes sealed, as it were, and symbolized by a "covenant". When this occurs God and man have really begun to "come together".

The Covenant with Noah

We find the terms of the covenant of God with Noah stated in Genesis 9. There we read that God promised He would not again destroy "all flesh" by a repetition of the flood, even though men would still hold evil thoughts — which God apparently realized had now become inevitable (Gen. 8 : 21). The most important fact in this covenant is that God makes the promise to "every living thing" and not only to man. The covenant is made with **life** itself; it is, we might say, a universal covenant and not merely a God-to-man pact. Life on earth will go on **regardless of what man does**; and the rainbow, which always has seemed to archaic man to represent a bridge between heaven and earth, is the symbol of this "everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth" (Gen. 9 : 16).

In future covenants we shall witness God coming ever closer to man in an ever more particularized sense. They will be covenants with a particular race, a particular people or group, and at last — through one individual person. Jesus, with whom He becomes totally united — with every man **as an individual**. The series of covenants represents, therefore, the progressive stages of the **descent** of God to man — nay more, the phases of God's "individualization". The Divine becomes progressively involved in the human. This **involution** of spirit polarizes a symmetrical **evolution** of the life-principle in man, the "living soul", toward the final stage of "divine soul", of Christhood. As prototypes of characteristic phases of this soul-evolution we have personages such as Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon and finally Jesus, center of the New Covenant to which the New Testament refers. The archetype-symbol of this dual process of involution-evolution is the 6-pointed star, or Solomon's Seal, revealing the interpenetration of a descending and an ascending triangle. The number 6 is the number of the soul and we find this number stressed in the measurements of the Ark.

As a result of the coming-together of God with Noah who has emerged successfully from his crisis and his tests, we see Noah becoming "an husbandman" and planting a "vineyard". Orthodox interpreters and ethnologists take these words literally; but, if one does so, the story immediately following of Noah's drunkenness and of the cursing of "Ham, father of Canaan", because he "saw his father's nakedness", makes very little sense. Esoteric tradition and the well known symbolism of the "drinking of the wine" in all Near-Eastern mysticism tell us, however, that a "vineyard" symbolized a "school of initiation" and the drinking of the wine referred to the partaking of divine inspiration and entering into some kind of mystic state.

Thus what the Biblical story tells us in symbols is that as a result of this universalistic coming-together of God and Noah, Noah began to develop a type of spiritual-mystic "culture" by means of which men could soar into the realm of a universal awareness of "life" and communicate with the "God of life", Jehovah — using, as it were, the **rainbow as a bridge**. Every symbol used as "seal" of a covenant between God and man can be used also

by man as a means to reach divine consciousness **at the stage indicated by the covenant.**

The story of Ham seeing the nakedness of his father no doubt refers to an unauthorized and unprepared attempt by a portion of humanity to "storm the gates of heaven" by uncovering and appropriating to itself the secrets of initiation. Here again we see the operation of the dualistic law symbolized by the tree of good and evil. In Eden God gave Adam (*Ish*) a woman (*Isha*), establishing the principle of life's polarization — the principle to which Hindu philosophers refer under the names *Shiva* and *Shakti*, consciousness and power-of-action. There is no reason to believe that the "eating of the fruit" refers to the consummation of the instinctual, pure, spontaneous sexual act — unless one be a Freudian! This fruit is the expression of the choice of an attitude with regard to procreation and to life in general. One attitude is "good", the other "evil".

One brings the relationship of God to man into the natural act; the other ignores such a relationship and makes of sex the expression of merely instinctual desires and organic excitement — and later on perhaps, of intellectual frustration or of a yearning for power and ego-glorification.

The dualism of Cain and Abel likewise refers to two basic attitudes toward the sustaining of man's life: Cain taking the **humanly positive** attitude of "tilling the ground" with sharp tools; Abel taking the **receptive** attitude of one who watches and encourages the spontaneous product of animal mating. When "the sons of God" come to the earth and marry "the daughters of men" and as a result "mighty men, men of renown" are born, this possibility for a man to become great and famous by the use of creative energies becomes disoriented and destructive — thus negative and evil. Men who have become jealous of the truly great ones attempt to reach an equal stature and fame by the perverted use of power — or by building "systems" and "doctrines" instead of being simply what they are!

Finally when Noah is able to "husband" in a definite and reliable manner the higher energies of life leading to mystic consciousness, one of his three sons, Ham, somehow forces himself into the sanctuary and "sees" what it was not lawful for him to perceive. Presumably he spreads that mystic knowledge without demanding from his disciples the necessary qualifications, while the other two sons "cover up" this mystic knowledge so that evil will not take hold of entire communities through **unprepared and untested** (i.e., uninitiated) men.

Evil spreads in the form of man's pride — the tower of Babel made of dried-up "mud" — the pride of a merely human knowledge not really based on the "rock" of divine communication. Men seek to reach knowledge and greatness only by their own efforts, forgetting that this **upward effort** of the human mind should be polarized by a **descent** of the divine if it is to be spiritually valid and illumined by "Truth".

A further form of evil develops in Sodom and Gomorrah. The Vineyard of Noah, the illumined agent of God, degenerates into the "vine of Sodom" whose fruits are bitter and disintegrate into dust (Deut. 32 : 32). The two cities are destroyed but in the meantime

Abram, a descendant of Shem, son of Noah, flourishes, being "rich in cattle, in silver and in gold". We see man now having reached a fully developed tribal state, though largely, insofar as Abram and Lot are concerned, through the pastoral life as opposed to that of the "wicked cities of the plain." Then God once more establishes His covenant with the pure line of human soul-evolution — i.e., with Abram.

The Covenant with Abraham

Several factors stand out in the story of Abram-Abraham which seem to have gone mostly, if not entirely, unnoticed. First we should realize that the Abram "station" of soul-development constitutes the fullest consummation of the "**living** soul". Abram and Lot represent a human condition of life-abundance in the pastoral sense, that is, along the line of which Abel and Seth are the prototypes. What we see occurring in the symbolic events of Genesis (ch. 12, etc.) is the **original mutation** by means of which the perfected "living soul" enters into a "critical state", a state to be resolved, at least in potentiality, in Moses, the prototype of the "**individual** soul". All that occurs in the Biblical narrative between Abram (having become Abraham) and Moses (having experienced the "burning bush" state in which he **hears** God's voice) is a crisis of growth. It actually represents the very crisis which every man experiences during the period of puberty.

Abram goes to Egypt (Gen. 12 : 10) to escape a famine, and a very strange story is told. He is afraid that Pharaoh will desire his beautiful wife and that, in order to possess her, the Egyptians will kill him. So he makes her pass for his sister, and as he had foreseen, she is taken to Pharaoh, who gets in great trouble with "the LORD" because of her. Pharaoh realizes at last that she is Abram's wife and sends them both out of Egypt with their tribes. This is the **first** "descent into Egypt" — the second will come when Joseph is "sold for 20 pieces of silver and brought into Egypt" (Gen. 37 : 28). There will be a third one when the infant Jesus is also brought there by Joseph in order that the babe's life might be saved.

In the Bible Egypt is the symbol of material consciousness, and in another sense of Nature as the **past** of the evolutionary life-wave now seeking to produce the illumined individual man. Abram, who was born in the land of Ur, comes to Egypt willingly, because there is "famine" in the land to which he had traveled and therefore he cannot find food for his vast tribal group, humans and beasts alike. That is to say, the "living soul" as it expands in power and abundance is compelled to return to the past of a purely material evolution to find sustainment and greater wealth. In so doing however it risks seeing its "power" (*shakti*, or "wife") misused and profaned by the strong pull of material energies and in the process losing its own integrity. Abram is afraid of being killed when the Egyptians covet his wife; and so he resorts to a subterfuge. He separates himself from his "power" in order to save himself, and the "power" falls into the hands of the Pharaoh. But the Pharaoh cannot assimilate or use this new and unfamiliar "power" (Sarai) without serious trouble, so he gives it back to Abram and asks him to return to where he belongs, **unharmmed and presumably wealthier than ever**.

This allegory represents the first and quite "innocent" contact of the "living soul" with a realm in which it had never actually functioned — the first contact of a child nearing adolescence with a world of unfamiliar relationships and experiences. This contact prepares him for the real crisis ahead — a crisis which every archaic people celebrates and "sanctions" (i.e., makes sacred) by puberty rites of one kind or another. As the crisis nears,

Abram meets Melchizedek, "priest of the most high God", because in every profound and radical crisis there is a meeting with someone who, in a more or less mysterious way, focuses upon the person nearing metamorphosis the power of a previous cycle (Jesus, for instance, received the visit of the Wise Men from the East). Immediately thereafter (Gen. 15) we see "the LORD" coming to Abram, and the process of covenanting begins, including a prophetic vision of the "dark night of the soul" (the 400 years of bondage) which only ends with Moses and the Exodus.

The covenant starts with a promise of **land**. Land is the necessary foundation for the development of the process of soul-individualization; that is to say, individualization requires **boundaries** and a relatively stable state of existence. In terms of human collectivity, a particular culture able to leave a "harvest" of values and symbols (of laws, art-forms and institutions) must have a well-defined geographical location. It must also acquire a definite genetic character; it does not have it at first, in most cases, but it acquires it thanks to mating restrictions which gradually make a certain biological prototype dominant in the collectivity. This prototype is "Abraham's seed."

A psychic process of integration must also unfold under the "shield" (cf. 15 : 1) or aegis of a few basic symbolic rites or "primordial Images" which are established as progressively dominant features of the collective unconscious of the expanding community — in this case the "circumcision" rite, which symbolizes the free release of the creative energies of the would-be individual. Later on, in Deuteronomy 10 : 16, we find Moses saying: "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked" — the "heart" referring to the core of the rhythmic process of life which must be consciously and openly seen, then "assimilated", by the individualized mind.

This covenant is also characterized by a change of "names", i.e., of the basic vibratory tone of the selfhood of the prototypes (or "mutants") of the new evolutionary cycle. Abram becomes "Abraham"; Sarai becomes "Sarah". This is hardly the place to delve into the "Kabbalistic" meaning of these changes, or of Canaan, the Land of the Promise, etc. but, at least in the English forms, we see the introduction of the aspirate "h" or "ha" into the names. This is a powerful letter in Sanskrit as well as in Hebrew; in Sanskrit it represents the process of expiration of the breath and is connected with *Akasha* or the cosmic element of "sound" or vibration. It corresponds to the number 5, which is the hieroglyph of Man, the Pentagram or five-pointed star. Thus it would seem that the change of name refers to the impending development of the true **potential** of Man — Man, as an individualized center of divinity.

As yet, one can speak only of potential, for it is only to Moses that God will be revealed as the I AM THAT I AM, the divine Principle of individuality. As God speaks to Abram He introduces Himself as "the Almighty God" (Gen. 17 : 1) i.e. *El Shaddai*, the God of strength — the life-strength that is in the procreative process, in the well-protected and carefully multiplied seed. This insistence on the protection of a new kind of mutated seed in which

there is **God-guaranteed strength** gives a rigorous character to the patriarchal system; and in the name Abraham, **Ab** means "father".

The potentiality of the covenanting process becomes increasingly unfolded in and through Abraham's grandson, Jacob, whose name is also changed (into Israel) after his all-night struggle with an Angel (or "power") of God. In this struggle we see the growing unfoldment of the ego's strength as against the power of the divine energies of life. The ego is somewhat disabled (Jacob's thigh is put "out of joint" — the thigh being a foundation of active strength, symbolically speaking); and thus Jacob learns to deal more worshipfully with the God of "life". But the ego-will is already established and becomes the foundation for a twelve-fold process of individualization — that is, twelve basic powers unfold (the 12 sons of Jacob) which were inherent in life, but which now the ego controls. It is also interesting to note that Jacob is the younger of two sons, as was Abel. But this time this younger son is not killed; he wins by a stratagem, by deceit — the tool of the first manifestation of the ego, cunning. (Gen. 25 and 27).

With Joseph, the **eleventh** son of Jacob (11 is the symbol of the entrance into a new realm, the Gate), we witness the ego in its full negative as well as positive manifestations. He is Jacob's favorite son and thus carries on the process which Jacob already made definite. Jacob-Israel is the ego's will; Joseph, the conscious ego's mind. Jacob, the will, makes Joseph "a coat of many colours" (37 : 3); for the mind has indeed many colorings and is of the nature of a chameleon. Joseph, the conscious mind, is able to interpret "dreams", that is, to analyze the processes of the unconscious and the cyclic rhythms of life; and this analytic faculty makes him a power in Egypt where he had been sold into slavery. The mind must at first be a slave to matter in order that it may eventually receive its real strength and opportunity. Indeed Joseph manages to use his new capacities in order to control material forces; and he becomes second only in power to Pharaoh. He then draws to Egypt the whole group of Jacob's descendants who have found their life in the old spiritual-psychic realm empty and dead (a "famine") now that they have lost the ego-mind (Joseph) which they had feared and tried to destroy.

Then begins the "dark night of the soul", the 400 years of spiritual involvement in Egypt. It is at first a pleasant sojourn, because of the great prestige of the Joseph-mind; but it later becomes an oppressive bondage, as the very energies of organic matter are challenged by the enormous growth of the intellectual faculties. The intellect-ego is then compelled to work for the building of huge material structures, for the greater glory of the senses and for their ever more demanding satisfaction. It grows and multiplies, but in the wrong direction. Its powers and achievements serve Egypt, instead of working toward the next evolutionary step for man, the building of the Temple, permanent manifestation of the soul.

The Mosaic Covenant

The symbolic period extending from Abraham to Moses is, I repeat, a period of transition, a "critical state" in the soul's evolution. The potential of individual selfhood inherent in the human seed, when overshadowed or guided by the strength of the evolutionary process, is stirring increasingly. The first stirrings lead to the formation of the ego, which has its place as a temporary framework for the growing sense of self, of "I-am-ness." Then the divine Principle of the I AM Itself "descends" into the consciousness of the ego; and "Moses" begins his mission.

The Hebrew name "Mo-she" can be interpreted as the "fire of the mind", as the letter *shin* (and the vocal sound "sh" in many languages) symbolizes the element of "fire". Moses came from the line of Levi, the **third** son of Jacob-Israel; and the symbolism of the number 3 is here significant, for the third aspect of the Trinity is that Holy Fire which illumines the individual person (cf. the descent of the Holy Spirit as "tongues of fire" upon Jesus' Apostles at the Pentacost). Thus the House of Levi was later consecrated to the service of God and the Levites carried the Tabernacle and acted as priests. The name "Levi" seems to mean in Hebrew "attached or joined" — hence the **link** between God and this elect people.

Moses' mother, in order to save his life after Pharaoh ordered that all newborn male children of the Israelites be cast into the Nile, placed him in a water-tight "ark" after birth and hid it in the flags along the river's banks, where the Pharaoh's daughter found and subsequently adopted him. Here again we find the symbolism of a water-tight ark, as in Noah's Ark; but the waters are now those of the Nile, the river upon which the whole of Egypt depends for life. This long stream symbolizes the central canal of the spine and the cerebro-spinal fluid in which the central nervous system bathes. (In Sanskrit, *nila* means "blue" and the two original streams which converge at Khartum in the Sudan to form the main river are called the Blue Nile and the White Nile. Blue is the color associated with the Principle of individual selfhood operating through and in association with the mind: *manas*}).

After 40 years at the court of Pharaoh (the number 40 originally referred to the 40 weeks of gestation) Moses flees to the Sinai peninsula, after killing an Egyptian in righteous anger and fearing for his life. Mt. Horeb is called "the mountain of God" and, at the apex of the triangular Sinai peninsula **pointing south** (i.e., "downward"), it represents the focal point for the further "descent" of God into the human soul. Here "the angel of the LORD appears unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush," and the LORD speaks, revealing to Moses His new name: I AM THAT I AM; that is, presenting Himself as the Principle of individual selfhood in its ultimate divine aspect.

The Burning Bush, and the rod which changes into a serpent — the symbol which the divine I AM gives to Moses as proof of the covenant — evidently refer to what Hindu yoga calls the rise of the Serpentine Power (*Kundalini*) along man's spine. Later on we see the Israelites, led by Moses through the wastelands of this same Sinai peninsula, being guided

by a "pillar of fire" — another reference to the vertebral column. (The Doric column also had a similar and profound meaning in Greek esoteric philosophy.)

After God reveals Himself to Moses as the I AM Principle, He also confides to Moses His "name of power", JHVH (the fourfold power of life as a manifestation of the One, the Integrator), which name He had apparently not revealed to Abraham, Isaac or Jacob (Exodus 6:3). He repeats the terms of the covenant with Abraham and charges Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. The details of the whole Exodus are well known, from the parting of the Red Sea to the entrance into the Promised Land. Moses, as a thoroughly individualized and conscious Agent of God, hears God speak to him "face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend", and he receives the Tables of the Law. However, while the first Tables were "the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the Tables", the **second** Tables, after the Israelites had relapsed into pagan worship and Moses had broken the first, were "hewn" out of the rock by Moses; a very significant change.

Later on Moses and Aaron, instead of "speaking unto the rock" that it might give water, as God had bid them do, "smote the rock twice", **having apparently no faith in the power of the spoken word**. For this lack of faith both leaders are excluded from the Promised Land, to which Joshua instead leads the people.

The several failures of Moses and of the Israelites are symbolic of the basic difficulties man has to meet during the final stages of the crisis of soul-individualization. If Moses the Agent of God fails, it is because of the incomplete surrender of his ego-will to the will of the "individual soul". The means (ego) are emphasized as against the end (the "individual soul"). The striking of the rock for water is characteristic of the ego-will's reliance upon technique (or technology!) and showmanship. One must impress one's public! — and Moses probably remembered the earlier show he made at Pharaoh's court to best the court magicians.

However, **after** the soul has become individualized by the direct Presence of God and the face-to-face communication with Him, such muscular performances as striking a rock and, before that, breaking the Tablets, made by God, in a childish act of fury and righteous indignation (a Mosaic trait!), become failures with serious consequences. The people had regressed to the worship of the Golden Calf and Moses was violent with anger; but he too regressed to the use of magical tricks when he smote the rock as a showman would. He had not acquired total faith in the power of **individualized soul-existence at the level of mind-energies** — a transforming power manifest in the utterance of the word, indeed the very Power of the Fatherhood of God. In contrast we see Jesus entirely pervaded by this total faith. He very simply controls the elements by words; he commands Lazarus rise out of the sepulchre; he heals by saying: "Be thou whole".

The Mosaic Covenant produces a set of laws because God meets individualized man **in mind** and mind is the formative principle establishing **patterns of order**. The basic laws God gives to Moses are principles of right behavior and right relationship to be effective during the period in which mankind as a whole struggles collectively through the process of

soul-individualization. By "struggling collectively" I mean here struggling within the framework of definite religious-cultural and social-national traditions. Individuals can, of course, outrun the collectivity in which they are born. To them paths of occult and mystic training, "schools of prophethood", etc., are made available whose origin essentially (even if not literally) goes back to the "vineyards" of post-Diluvian times. But these individuals, who herald in some way the coming of the "New Covenant" of Christ, have had to pass through the process of individualization, through its "dark night of the soul", and its often seemingly insurmountable pitfalls and ordeals — for 40 days, weeks, months, years, or even lives!

The Covenant with the Kings

The covenant which God enters into with David, as King of a united Israel, brings to a further degree of concreteness and substantiality the involvement of the divine consciousness and power with the human soul. The 12 **tribes** of Israel under David have become a **nation**. National integration is established as a principle of human organization which parallels personality integration at the individual level. This new type of integration supersedes the more strictly biological and instinctual type of tribal order; it is founded upon two factors: a human King, and God's Temple.

The dualistic concept of King and Temple replaces the purely theocratic principle embodied in the Mosaic Covenant, a principle which makes of God the **sole focus of the power of integration**. Until Saul comes, Jehovah is officially the one and sole ruler of Israel, His will expressing itself through especially responsive men and special Prophets. But while Saul and David are still inwardly subservient to Jehovah — except on some occasions! — and accept admonishment from the Prophets, they are, as Kings, the visible focus of the integrative focus of the national life. God, on the other hand, is "established in His house", the Temple, which Solomon, son of David, finally constructs. At the level of personality unfoldment these three Kings of Israel symbolize three stages of growth at which the "individual soul" officially is accepted by the ego as the "inner Ruler", the Will. Yet in three different but symbolically characteristic ways, the three stages are at least relative failures. Even the building of the Temple by Solomon reflects his love for pomp and show; so that this "spiritual achievement" of the individualized person also has its shadow!

This contrast between a dual principle of integration and the unitarian principle of a true "theocracy" is repeated in the Christian era — and, in a very real sense indeed, at the present time. As the Roman Empire breaks down into a Western and an Eastern realm, the West accepts the dual principle — the Emperor and the Pope; while in the Byzantine East, the secular and the sacred spheres are united in the person of the Emperor as sole Ruler. Today the division between the Executive and the Legislative branches of the government is a modern democratic reembodyment of the dualistic principle, which even becomes a trinitarian principle with the establishment of a more or less independent Judiciary — and, in America, back of the three stand the Constitution and the People.

In Communist countries, by contrast, a unitarian principle of rulership is accepted — in fact, if not in theory; and in a sense this constitutes a kind of materialistic "theocracy", for Communism has indeed all the earmarks of a "religious" movement even though it be a religion of no-religion. It is religion in its purely negative aspect — which may well reach its extreme of manifestation in China.

The change from the wandering Ark of the Covenant, housed in a tent, to a solid and sumptuous Temple is deeply symbolical. God has become "established" in the collective substance of humanity — and the "individual soul" in the human mind which the ego has structured. But this establishment is actually most precarious, because of the folly of kings

and the old jealousies that divide tribes — and, in the individual person, because of the still powerful pull of the instinctual urges and the inertia of ego-structures (complexes").

The Kingdom is hardly established when, at Solomon's death, it breaks in two. Likewise the "individual soul" of man is constantly menaced by overt or subtle forms of schizophrenia. The mind always tends to be pulled by opposite forces, simply because it stands "in the middle" — a "firmament" which usually is not at all firm! The individual is a process; or, as St. Exupery beautifully wrote in his book *Flight to Arras*: "The individual is a path. 'Man' only matters who takes that path." In this sense "Man" is the Temple of God, the multi-une consummation of the cycle of humanity which began with the divine Word, the Logos. This multi-une consummation is the one Brotherhood of the "sons of God", of the men "made perfect", i.e., "Christed".

Alas, the glory and magnificence of the **physical** temple — which should be only a focus for the gradual actualization of the spiritual energies of the "divine soul" (the "son of David", Jesus) — are substituted for the pure simplicity of the real Temple "not made with hands". Kingly power leads to pomp and costly extravagance, and to unrestrained desire for women. David kills a husband in order to satisfy his desire for the man's wife; Solomon surrounds himself with many foreign princesses who bring to the Kingdom "strange gods". And gradually these gods sap the integrated structure of the Kingdom. Once more the "one God" is at least partially forgotten, and when this happens the unity of the Kingdom is overcome by duality.

This leitmotiv of "the one" which becomes "two" recurs constantly through the Biblical narrative. As long as the coercive force of the integration which manifests as "life" operates, one of the "two" carries the standard of the divine purpose, however hesitantly or spasmodically. One of the sons betrays, another serves God; the Cain-Abel dualism is inevitable and somehow balanced; both lines contribute, in ways often mysterious, to the final purpose. But when the Kingdom of David and Solomon breaks in two, both of the separated halves are fairly soon destroyed and led into captivity. However, while the captives from the Southern Kingdom of Judah returned to Jerusalem and rebuilt the Temple, the tribes of the Northern Kingdom of Israel seem to have vanished from history. They constitute the "Lost Tribes" about the fate of which so many ideas have been held — including that which makes them the ancestors of at least some of the people of the British Isles whereto (a certain tradition claims) Jesus journeyed at a later date and founded his first "Church"!?

The captivity in Babylon in a sense repeats the theme of the years of bondage in Egypt. Daniel in Babylon becomes as powerful a personage, or a more powerful one (because of the successive rulers which this region had in his days) than Joseph in Egypt, demonstrating symbolically that even in periods of captivity the soul may still inspire the fallen personality, and contact with the divine is not lost. It is not lost because God has "come-together" with man; because He made with man an "indestructible covenant".

Because of His covenant with Abraham, God raises Moses in due time from the state of enslavement experienced by the Israelites in Egypt. His covenant with David leads, after many vicissitudes and crises, and **through a transcendent change of level**, to the appearance of Jesus, who is called "son of David". Jesus establishes the foundations for the "Kingdom of Heaven" and proclaims the New Covenant. Of this New Covenant the Christ-transfigured Jesus is the seal, and the Last Supper the symbolic rite.

Jesus-Christ, human yet divine, **is** indeed the New Covenant, In him God not only comes-together with man; **He becomes Man**. Jesus-Christ — as the Way, the Truth and the Life; as "the First" of the sons of Man to become transfigured into a son of God — is the prototype of the long series of individualized souls who, after having experienced the Transfiguration, will become "divine souls". He is the "beginning of the end", because the ultimate end (the omega) of the cycle of Man is the Brotherhood of the Sons of God, the multi-une fulfillment of the divine potential which, at the beginning of the cycle (the alpha), was Christ, as the Logos, the One.

What the Christianity which we know historically, and which still today rules the lives of half a billion people, has done with the Way, the Truth and the Life exemplified by Jesus is another story — a tragic one! But the previous covenants between God and man recorded in the Biblical narrative certainly did not lead to a steady transformation of mankind either! Each stage of the evolution of the soul has its characteristic failures or its shadow. Jesus-Christ, as the New Covenant himself, has likewise not brought to men actual peace — outer or inner. But the process has been started; and it goes on, even under the menace of atomic bombs. Previous covenants led, after a few centuries, to captivity and bondage. What will happen to man after nearly two thousand years of betrayal of the Christ-Covenant, even though the betrayal has been in the name of Christ, who would dare prophesy! All that we can do is to try understand, at the core of our mind-consciousness and under the illumination of our flickering soul's light, the meaning of this New Covenant and of the God-man in whom the Divine forever fecundates and transfigures the human in an eternal, because ever-renewed "marriage".

Such an understanding can only come to the individual who is acting, thinking and feeling as an individual. The New Covenant is a covenant strictly with individuals. There is in it no **direct** social or collective message. The Christ-call strikes at the very heart or root of the individual's selfhood. It is a call to awakening — a call that proclaims: "Be ye separate!" Everything that is not of the individual is to be left behind — "Take up your cross and follow me." Complete individualization is indeed the Cross which any true "disciple of Christ" must carry, on to the very Mount of Skull where "death" is overcome in the very acceptance of the new step beyond, the step that leads the "individual soul" to the realm of the Divine.

The New Covenant may be symbolized by the Cross, as Christianity has so passionately and darkly believed. But the Cross should be understood and experienced as a symbol of movement, of inner dynamism, of the tremendous unrest and divine discontent which are the inevitable conditions for that attainment . . . forever unattainable, for he who attains

has ceased to be what he was! To awaken, to arise, to walk on — these are the terms of this Christ-covenant with individuals. The "Way" of Christ is to live, with a new quality of livingness; it is to love, with a new quality of love; it is to die, with a new quality of surrender. It is Motion, always — perpetual going on . . . **through** every comfortable conformism and specious happiness, **through** family attachments, social respectability, intellectual dogmas, traditional feelings and collective worship; indeed **through** oneself and one's name of birth — always going on, through moments seen as cycles and cycles as eonic moments, always, always . . . and yet with peace, peace profound, within the going on; for in that going on there is rhythm, there is balance, all extremes meet. And in their meeting — only in their meeting! — love, beauty, joy, divinity are **real**. And in this reality alone, God is . . . God is "We".

9. CHRIST-LOVE

The Covenant with Individuals

"To the weak became I as weak that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

I Corinthians 9 : 22

To every individual, and to every civilization as well, there may come a time when the ancestral truth, the basic symbols and the laws which guided their growth become the **Old** Testament. A **New** Testament is given form and utterance. The creative Power of the universe is witnessed, is attested, in a new and transforming experience of value and significance, in a new experience of the gradually more total relationship of the Divine to the human. Because this experience is directed to the individual, it **must** be focused in and through an individual person who stands, individually yet as an "eternal" collective symbol for his race, as the "place of meeting" of the Divine and the human — thus, as "the Son"; Son of God and son of Man in inseparable union. When the Son appears, that which begot him becomes the Father. The Old Tradition, the ancient Record, become as well the "Father".

Indeed, the coming of Jesus gave to the historical-symbolical record of the long evolution of the soul and of God's relationship to this evolution the status of an **Old** Testament. In this record we see the attempt by the divine creative Power to establish progressively a more intimate, pervasive and steady contact with human nature. Symbolically speaking, this attempt constitutes a kind of premarital courtship between God and human nature; the "woman" loves immaturely and unsteadily, resists and evades the "man" who woos her and seeks to fulfill and transform her. God is "the Beloved"; to Him a Solomon sings rapturous songs. Yet nearly in the same breath the great King seeks diversion in a thousand concubines who bow to "strange gods"; he tries to escape from a destiny of **total** self-renewal. Yes, Solomon builds a Temple, prodigal in expenditure of energy and pomp; but he does this in very much the same way that a young girl adorns herself sumptuously, spending her patrimony wastefully to emphasize how valuable indeed she is! Could she have faced, in bare desertic beauty and innermost purity, the One she loved, yet dared not fully love, there might not have been a split in the "kingdom" and captivity for the symbolical Israel, the soul of man.

The "simple way" is not, alas, the way of human nature — not in most cases, and not for a long time. Man learns through tragedy and deprivation to let go of the earthliness and fears of his nature and, more important still, of the rigidity and the "stiff-necked and proud" character of his ego. Human nature is indeed loaded, subconsciously if not consciously, with the burden of ghosts of "dark beginnings" — ghosts of fear, of anger and of lust. It **reacts** to this tragic past and its sense of guilt either by the blatant, angry and lustful

rebelliousness which sooner or later brings destruction such as Genesis symbolically records, or else by an emotional and devotional subservience to the words of a God Who manifests Himself at the semi-conscious level of the psychic nature. **A compulsion to goodness is just as compulsive as a compulsion to evil.** The Divine Marriage within the unafraid, purified and truly individualized, and thus "free", person cannot occur where there is compulsion of any kind. Unconscious compulsion must be replaced by the **conscious acceptance** of one's individuality, one's "truth of self", one's destiny — with all the beauty and love, all the pain and tragedy that such a destiny inevitably implies.

It is only when the human soul has seen its ego patterns destroyed, its "temple" of obsolete legality and moral taboos razed, rebuilt, and razed again only to be at long last finally scattered to the winds, that the New Testament can really begin. The New makes the Old obsolete, or at least it completely repolarizes and transsubstantiates the contents of the past. The true Son no longer bows down to the Father in an **external** kind of psychic or legalistic and formalistic subservience; for the true Son has experienced the "power of the Fatherhood" **within his heart and his groins**. Neither does the true Son in his turn seek to assume the old type of authority associated with the Father in the Old Testament! He now knows of another and "higher" (i.e., freer and more perfect) type of Fatherhood, one which no longer carries any essential character of personification, a universal Fatherhood. This universal Fatherhood is focused, at least potentially, within **every** human "heart"; that is, at the dynamic and pulsating core of every man's individuality, once this individuality is **really** awakened and operative.

The tragedy of official Christianity, for all these centuries, is that it has failed to understand the basic distinction between the Father-God of the Old Testament (the Tetragrammaton, the JHVH-Elohim, Jehovah) and the **principle of universal Fatherhood** of which Jesus spoke constantly. It is true that a personal Father is an expression of this principle of universal Fatherhood, but only a limited, managerial, formalistic and rigorous expression ruling over a race, a people, a group. Such a type of Father in the "old" sense is necessary during the early periods of evolution, when the building process of the soul operates at the stages of the "living soul", then of the most uncertainly and unsteadily individualized soul. But it becomes obsolete, at least in principle, when the complete Marriage of the divine and human occurs in the Son, the Christed Jesus — when Man reaches spiritual maturity.

The obsolescence of the old Father-Image is unfortunately neither at once understood by most human beings (who remain in actual fact within the "Old Dispensation"), nor practically applicable in terms of the mass-consciousness of humanity, even where Christ is acknowledged in name — most often only in name. Neither the "Laws of Moses" nor the ritual-covenant of Abraham, even if interpreted in a symbolical sense, can be totally replaced by Jesus' single commandment: "Love ye one another **as I have loved you.**" If such a total replacement is attempted by an individual, or even more by a whole society, it comes in most cases as a sudden swing of the pendulum, away from a paternal authority (in

the "old" Biblical sense) which had proven enslaving, terrifying or at the very least deeply frustrating.

The kind of "love" which some contemporary American-born Churches preach in the name of Christ is, generally speaking, only a diffuse, vague, emotional-devotional, naively happy kind of love. It lacks focus and a psychological foundation of understanding as to what its source in the person actually is.

Evidently it is far more pleasant and beautiful than the Calvinistic attitude of "fear of God"; yet it still represents a glamorized and largely compulsive, or else largely ineffectual, confused and confusing type of love. It is a "Love ye one another" type of love, a **commanded** love, deliberately pushing resentments and fears into the unconscious depths of the psyche; it has forgotten the second part of Jesus' request: "as I have loved you." The love of Jesus — the love that is, in its Principle, Christ — is a **focused** love. It does not bask in the sun of sweet generalities and verbal incense. It is focused upon any and all **personal** situations; it supplies to each **what each precisely needs**. The basic message of the Gospels is that there can be a complete Incarnation of the Divine in a man — in **any** human being. Incarnation means a total descent of the Divine, an utterly focused descent; for only thus can it be totally effectual, healing and "redeeming".

The proof of this "Christed" love is its power to **heal** the soul — and at least to some extent the body if no irreparable, structurally physiological damage has been done. It is as well its ability to **redeem** the memories and "ghosts" resulting from the past. Which past? The past which has produced experiences of fear, terror, pain or deprivation because of the tragedies resulting from the childish misunderstanding and the misapplication or perversion of the "old" type of Father-authority. And by such Father-authority I mean the power of society and tradition, of rigid legality and collective taboos, of religious fears and dogmas — as well as whatever may have gone wrong in the actual father-child relationship in youth.

This is **not** to be understood as a defense of some kind of "spiritual anarchy". In the love of the Son there is order, principle (arche). The Fatherhood operates as powerfully as in the "old Father-Image" sense; but it operates from within. It operates under the one "Law" of the universe — i.e., according to the very nature of spirit upon which all existence rests — the principle of answer to need. But, and this is the essential point, this answer, if it is to be truly spiritual, must be an individualized and focused answer to an individual need. Spirit is not a vague power diffuse in the universe, even though it be everywhere manifest; it is focused everywhere; it is focused in the precise manner in which its operation can be most effectual; **it is focused through an individual person in an act of Incarnation**. Only so can there be healing and redemption of sins (these ghostly presences in a guilt-laden, terrified soul!). Only so can a person truly act "in the Name of Christ". All else refers to half-measures and vague attempts largely founded upon glamor, self-deception, or an immature attempt to compensate for psychic darkness, just as an aggressive attitude usually compensates for a deep sense of inferiority.

In the "patriarchal" old order, law and morality, social and cultural patterns, rules and regulations, are **external** to the individual; they bind him as a part of a social or religious collectivity. They envelop and clothe him; he is enfolded by them and, relatively at least, quite helpless against this **collective** pressure which always seeks to mould him, forcibly or by subtle psychological means. The old organized religions are actually but transcendentalized social organisms adding "divine sanctions" to a tradition or a collective expectation. But it seems clear that Jesus did not seek to built a new religious organization; at best he envisioned small groups of men enkindled by a new faith and a new vision as **leaven** to lighten up the social processes. These leavening groups (*ekklesia*, in the true, original sense of the word) were meant to spread a contagious fervor, a burning desire for self-liberation within a decaying social order with which Jesus wanted to have nothing to do. He certainly repudiated any claim to leadership in terms of social or political reorganization.

The Divine Beloved

Jesus refused to be a father-Image to his disciples, or to any one. He refused both the fatherhood and the kingdom of "this world". He spoke to individuals, not to a society. Unlike Moses and Mohammed or more recently Baha'u'llah in Persia and Palestine (the Bahai Faith and its "World Order"), he left no system to deal with **collective** problems; he produced no plan for either a limited or a universal society. His Gospel is addressed **solely** to individuals. His message refers to internal realizations in consciousness, and a new quality of individual behavior based on a universalistic principle of human relationship ("love", *agape*) — the new factor in human evolution. Jesus presents no outer form, except possibly the Prayer he gave. But even this Prayer states only what the individual needs, and needs to realize, in relation to a "Father" who is in that "Heaven" which, as Jesus constantly stresses, is **within** everyone regardless of race, tribal taboos or social forms. The Father is "ours"; even he, Jesus, does not separate himself from all other men. What he does, his disciples can do; yes, and even more.

If he refuses to accept the Father-Image of his followers, what then does he represent? The answer can only be: the Beloved. He is, as Christ, the Beloved of mankind. He comes to supersede the Father, whose formalistic, authoritarian and rigid rule — once distorted, dogmatized and made into instrument of psychic and/or social oppression by priests and churchly privileges — has kept individuals in fear. Evidently such a fatherly rule steadies or solidifies usefully the over-all collective order of society, when society is based on tribal or quasi-tribal patterns of human relationship. But the central message of Jesus' Gospel is that this type of society and these biological-psychic foundations for human relationship have become obsolete. "Behold, I make all things new!" — not all at once evidently, but in principle, in the creative Word.

Alas, what have the Churches made of the Beloved! They have built around His name either a hierarchy topped by a Father (Pope, "little Father", *pappas*), or the literal worship of a "Book" — a well-known psychological substitute for a Father-Image. They have quenched with "holy water" and watery devotionism the flaming fire of the divine Beloved. I repeat, paternalistic rules and traditions are necessary to protect the tender stages of the early growth of human persons; but they no longer make sense to those who have come face to face with the Beloved, and in whom He radiantly abides as a fire of unquenchable, but ever-focused, ever personally applied divine love. All true love must operate **through** a person; but if that person tightly hugs that love which surges through his or her inmost heart, and emotionally binds it to the consciousness and feeling-nature; if that love's intensity is stepped down into devotion to a human or theistic fetish; if it ceases to fulfill the need of the being for whom it is meant as a healing, redeeming gift — then it is no longer love born of spirit and it becomes mere passion or sheer lustfulness. It may also become, at so-called higher levels, a power of psychic enslavement in the name of "religion" or "religious salvation".

Jesus, the Christed Lover, because he loves divinely, heals and redeems individuals. As a power of spirit, one can only love individuals; only the love of individuals can be focused enough to be spiritual, in the real sense of this word. But just because this love is directed toward individuals, that is, to **any** individual who calls for it with the strength of a need that is **open to receive an answer** — because of this, it is universal love. If you love your kin (the members of your family, your tribe, your culture) because of this kinship, this is not universal love. If you love your mother, father or siblings more than the stranger whose need should summon forth from within your innermost heart the love that heals and redeems, then you are not a "disciple of Christ". Jesus indeed enjoins you to "leave behind" or even "hate" father, mother and all forms of blood kinship; to take up your Cross (symbol of total individualization and separation from collective patterns of relationship) and to follow him. His disciples and followers, and they alone, are his mother and brethren. He left the Mother-Image and received the power of the Fatherhood, but only to renounce all the externality and authority of concrete fathers and to polarize within his own vibrant individuality the fire of divine love. To everyone who is ready, willing, and truly open to the "gift-waves", he is the Beloved.

But he must be consciously accepted as the divine Lover in the light of self-revelation — unlike the Eros of Greek mythology who is never to be looked at and should only be received in the night, in the unconsciousness of instinctual love. The love that is spirit-in-act must be met consciously; it must be called forth in humility and in the silence of a heart whose infinite anguish and perhaps despair have drawn from it all physical blood-spirits. **Christed** love heals and redeems what is left of the darkness of the past; it makes all things new — as the fabled phoenix is new that rises from its own ashes on the empty altar where once fire was raging. The Old Testament becomes the New Word: "Love ye one another as I have loved you." In this Christed love the individualized person, having "become separate" from all the past that bound him, realizes himself as "a universal", ready to serve and to love wherever and whenever needed, without fear and without lasting attachment — leaven to lighten up the heavy dough of human emotions, sower of seed for the soul ready to receive the gift of tomorrows that sing.

The Christ Covenant

All coming-together of God and man in the Old Dispensation were directed toward the establishment and start of some collective process, as we saw previously. Noah and his Ark were the prototypes of the new humanity, indeed of all earthly life, after the Deluge. Abraham was to be the fountainhead of a people related to a particular land. Moses was the Liberator and Father of that people after their "fall" into material consciousness (Egypt). David stood for Israel, as a national whole. But Jesus is every man, you and I, once we establish ourselves truly and steadily in our own individual identity; for it is only in that state that we can receive the love that transfigures the integrated human whole into a conscious agent for the action of spirit anywhere and whenever needed.

Anywhere and whenever needed! That is the challenge of this new covenant with any and all individuals, effective in any place and at any time. And in this we find the basic distinction between the Old and the New. It is the distinction, which I have previously mentioned (cf. 2), between "life" and "love". The old religions were and remain religions of life; but Christ is the fountainhead, in the Western World at least, of the gospel of love. "Life" refers to a type of organic integration which is always to some extent adjusted to a set of particular conditions in space and time; it operates at a certain place and under seasonal conditions. Life can "adapt" itself to some degree of change, but actually the possible variations of temperature, climate and environment to which any living organism can satisfactorily adapt itself are very small considering the immense range of possibilities in the universe.

By contrast, divine love is a truly universal power. It can operate anywhere and at any time. It energizes and guides a type of **integration** which differs essentially from that which operates as "life". Life operates on the principle of exclusion; it accepts only for integration that which is like its original substance, that which vibrates in **consonant harmony** with its own initial rhythm. Love, in the divine sense, is all-inclusive; it chords dissimilarities into a **dissonant harmony** within which the differences of the integrated units each contribute to the resonance and power of the whole. Life begins in unity; for even the two original cells, male and female, have become one when the cycle of life begins within what has become a "closed" organic unit, the fecundated ovum. Divine love begins in the confrontation with the state of plurality and diversity. When Christ-love comes, it does not address itself to one selected person but to all persons whose need "cries out" for healing and redemption; yet it gives itself **wholly and unreservedly to each** in a spontaneous yet focused giving of self — different though each may be.

Christ-love comes to heal and redeem; and without the healing of what now actually is and the redemption of what has been, the ideal which "spiritual people" today like so much to call "liberation" is inevitably a glamorous illusion. But "healing the sick" does not essentially mean removing the outer symptoms of disease — though these symptoms may also disappear **if the past, too, is totally "redeemed"** and the structural damage is not

beyond "economical" repair — yes, repair in terms of "economy" within the whole process of soul-evolution. Healing the sick means fundamentally restoring to the afflicted the consciousness of wholesome participation in the process of human evolution — a consciousness which a person loses, to some degree at least, when he becomes "invalidated" by illness; that is, when he is deprived of acting in the fullness of his capacity and value as a human being.

In this sense "sin" is an illness, if not in itself, at least in its inevitable consequence (delayed though it be): a sense of guilt. Guilt deprives a person of the full capacity to share wholesomely with others and lowers his or her value, or validity, as does sickness. And sickness is, in many instances, the secondary result of an **unwillingness to share** in the life — and the love — of the human community, visible or invisible. A person may refuse, or shrink in fear from, the sharing of life and love; and if there are no other convenient means to express this perhaps subconscious refusal, illness may be invoked by the frightened or too weary ego. It is invoked as a shield for this person's egocentricity, for his craving not to participate and not to share, even if parts of the person's nature tragically long for companionship and for love.

Such a condition always has its roots in an unredeemed past of hurt, anguish and perhaps inner despair or unbearable psychic exhaustion. Today "depth-psychology" seeks to reach such psychic roots and to remove from the unconscious depths of the psyche the areas of decay which may at times flare up in outer symptoms, often utterly baffling to the conventional medical man. The only proof of healing is, however, the restoration to the afflicted person of the willingness **and the freedom** to participate and to share.

But to participate in what, and to share what? That is the great question to which modern psychiatry gives a generally ineffectual and indeed essentially meaningless answer — worse than which is only the attitude of those American-born Churches which "deny" illness, and by calling it an "error" add a deeper, less recognizable sense of intellectual guilt to the original cause of the condition. In most cases these causes are simply forced back into the unconscious by a more strongly solidified and self-satisfied ego!

To most psychiatrists — for practical reasons no doubt, even more perhaps than for theoretical ones — a mentally ill person is pronounced cured when he or she is able to return home and somehow "get along", get a job, and so on. This is called "social adjustment". But the ridiculous thing is that it was the social or family environment, to which the "cured" person will return, which in the first place set the stage for and conditioned the illness — if it did not directly cause it. Somehow the shock of having been ill is supposed to have taught the now "cured" person how to "adjust" to this very environment in the activities of which he or she **could not** desire to participate and whose **quality of consciousness and feelings** he or she rebelled against sharing.

Yet it may well have been this person's "individual Soul" that refused such a participation and sharing because the **quality** of the life or the love in that environment was of too low a level, was too binding — binding with chains forged by the deviation and

misdeeds of the "Old Order". It may be that sin and disease were the only means available to the person to become "separate" from the mass-mind and to repudiate, fumblingly and tragically though it be, a social or parental conformism which stood against the normal drive toward "individualization", toward actualizing the inborn potential of that person's individual selfhood. So the person became ill, physically or mentally; ill because he or she yearned at the core of his or her being to be truly an "individual" able to share with and to love other free individuals. What may have been a twisted and confused attempt at soul-growth is interpreted by the medical man and by society at large as a sad failure of character, if not a terrible shame. Beaten down by drugs or mental pressures the patient returns, officially "cured"; but this may well mean that the soul has lost its fight.

To be ill **in vain**: this is the only tragedy! To pass through a drastic crisis and not experience rebirth at a level of the "New Order" or at least on the way toward it: this indeed adds to the burden of unredeemed past. The horror of our recent World Wars is not so much that brutality was let loose on an unprecedented scale, or that so many people died, but that mankind seems to have profited so little from the devastating experiences of suffering and uprooting which tortured men, women, children — **in vain** perhaps. To break down while learning is of little importance compared to not learning from that breakdown. The pains and tragedies of human love deepen and renew the soul that thereafter understands pain and tragedy, and as a result is able and willing to love "as" Christ loved the sinner and the sick.

To realize the meaning of all this in the very marrow of one's bones (builders of red blood and symbol of the ego), to experience in intensity of feeling the first hesitant dawn of Christ-love even though this love challenges the traditional patterns of social conventions — as Jesus repeatedly challenged them — this implies a total reorientation of the sense of human relationship. It demands a repolarization not only of the possessive and compulsive patterns of instinctual love, but also of the imprecise and diffuse desire to love everyone and everything so that everybody will be happy and bask in the sunshine of divine goodness and abundance.

Jesus said: "I came not to send peace, but a sword" — or division. He said: "Take up your cross, and follow me." Indeed the Covenant which **he was** underlines at every step the acceptance of the Cross. There must be crucifixion; there must be catharsis; and first of all there must be tests and ordeals in the loneliness of "the desert". Man can only be free when he has serenely accepted to be bound in an heroic allegiance to the New Order. Man can only experience Christ-love when he has seen possessiveness, jealousy, ambition and fear eaten away from his "living soul" and his ever-insecure ego by the acid of suffering or the caustic lye of the "great doubt". The Christ-covenant is written in blood; yet it is a song of joy and of peace, intoned by the emptied heart and the chastened soul. And just as warm red blood is the "signature" of the potentiality for unfoldment of the "individual soul", so the willing surrender of blood is the efficacious symbol of the readiness to participate in the companionship of the disciples of Christ. In this sacred Company the "I" is transfigured by

the "We" in which all those who accept the responsibility of divine Sonship, even in its earliest stages of expression, share. And in that sharing there is beauty and there is peace, and the fire of suffering radiates the light of understanding and love divine. **THROUGH FIRE UNTO LIGHT — *Per ignem ad lucem.***

The life of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels is a symbolic ritual, a mythos, objectifying and impersonating every step of this Christ Covenant, the Covenant written in the heart and soul of every man in whom the fire of individual selfhood longs for transmutation into the light of Christ-love.

The Way and the Life

The way of the New Covenant begins, at least as far as man's present-day consciousness goes, with the Annunciation to Mary. Mary represents "human nature" in a condition of complete openness to God and of readiness to serve God's purpose for humanity. This purpose is revealed to her, and likewise her part in it. The revealer is the "Angel sent from God", Gabriel, who in occult tradition is the Angel of the planet Mercury — Mercury being, in astrological symbolism, the conscious mind, the messenger of the gods. Mercury, in India, was associated with Buddha; and it has been said that an aspect of Jesus' inner nature was directly inherited from Gautama, the Buddha — a statement which at any rate quite accurately defines the historical-psychological relationship between Buddhism and Christianity.

The Angel Gabriel, as the revealer of the power and initiative of the divine spirit, is the "higher mind" of man, that aspect of man's mind which is not an evolutionary product of earth-nature but instead an involutory expression of the formative power of the divine creative Word — the Universal Mind. The Annunciation thus represents a first step in human-divine integration at the level of the mind. The realization in conscious mind precedes the act of divine impregnation. And this is the only "human" way; for man is a conscious agent and nothing ever happens to him spiritually that he is not able to imagine or conceptually envision. This does not mean that he can know the exact working out of the life-process; the Angel's explanation to Mary certainly leaves a great deal unsaid! (Luke 1) Yet it contains the type of statements which, considering Mary's background, were sufficient and necessary **to orient her expectancy and polarize her wondering intellect** in the direction of the divine act about to be performed and of the divine purpose of that act. The type of power at work is defined, and the result to be expected outlined.

It is very important to note, however, that the Angel in conveying the meaning of the act to be performed by God has to use the type of thought-imagery already in Mary's mind; otherwise he would not be understood and he would only confuse her. He announces to Mary that Jesus shall be given "the throne of his father David," that "he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever", and so on — statements which, in view of what happened to Jesus, can be considered true at best in a symbolic form. However Mary could only think of kingdom, of reign and spirit according to the old Jewish approach. God and the higher mind (the Angel) had to meet her at her own level of evolution, as the best type of "human nature" available at the time for the purpose in view.

What is envisioned in the mind organizes itself into concrete physical actuality. This is the process of gestation — mental-spiritual or biological, as the case may be. But the process is both unfamiliar and long, and God grants the wondering soul confirmations — what the medieval Alchemist called "signatures". Thus Mary (according to Luke) obtains confirmation from Elizabeth, who was then about to become the mother of John, the Herald. This is the old principle that "great dreams", dreamt by an individual and implying a

message from the gods, are not to be believed unless someone else in the tribe or community either has a similar dream or confirms the message by some unexpected token or "signature".

The birth of Jesus is surrounded by very significant event-symbols. It occurs as he who acts as his physical father, Joseph, goes to pay his taxes to Caesar in the ancestral town of the line of David, Bethlehem. This sets the historical and racial background for the event — the subservience of the old tribal Jewish world to the "universal empire" of Rome. Two worlds are in conflict; two cycles have met. The Roman empire is the matrix of the cycle of human evolution in which mankind is to realize itself as a global organism, as the "dissonant harmony" of the several basic races of men. Symbolically, the divided progeny of Noah is to reintegrate its immensely diversified units into a global Federation which should polarize on earth the Divine Company of all those individuals who have felt, envisioned, realized and enacted in their ritual-lives — consummations of a long process — that love which is Christhood.

The visit of the Kings, Magi from the East, symbolizes the interaction of a closing cycle in its most perfect expression and of the new cycle in its beginnings. Later on we will also see how John the Baptist, the seed-end of the Hebraic order, transfers his power to Jesus, in whom the New Order begins. But this baptismal rite deals with a **personal** interplay in terms of the local setting of Jesus' life; whereas the Magi represent the culmination of **all** mankind up to the Christ-Incarnation. The event has a universalistic meaning. The Magi come from the East, the Roman empire conquered from the West. In the Birth the old East and the blatant West meet — the East, to worship; the West, to reject and crucify.

Indeed the Christ-birth is a great moment in human history; but it is as well **the** Supreme Moment in every Soul's cyclic process of perfect actualization in and through the Divine Marriage. Yet there may be many a potential Jesus who, because he could not face the Crucifixion, did not experience the Resurrection.

After a long period of obscure development — obscure because it refers to the strictly personal process of development of the individual out of the racial womb — Jesus is shown meeting John, asking of him to be baptized. Jesus is then 30 years old. Thirty years constitute a complete revolution of the planet Saturn which, in astrological symbolism, represents both the "Father-Image" and the ego which gives structure and direction to the individual psyche. After the completion of this 30-year cycle of Saturn, Jesus' individual selfhood has reached full maturity and is ready to become **repolarized**. It is repolarized by the descent and incorporation of the Holy Spirit as a dove, while the voice of God is heard saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Besides Jesus, **only John the Initiator** hears this voice of God; and he hears it because, by this declaration of God, he is made to know that his own time and mission are practically ended.

John closes the Hebraic cycle of prophethood during which men, who were selected by the Father-God to perform a mission for their tribal society, were "seized" by the spirit and made to utter prophetic utterances. Jesus, on the other hand, opens the new cycle in which

individuals, after having become true exemplars of the divine archetype, Man — i.e., sons of Man — are able to experience the Divine Marriage within; men therefore who are no longer **mouthpieces** for the God of "life" (the Father that integrates by ruling and managing) but individuals consubstantial with and sons of God Who is love — the universal God. The Adamic cycle of tribal mankind opened as "Jehovah" breathed into Adam's nostrils the "souls of life" (*Nephesh Hayyah*); it closes, potentially at least, when the Dove of Spirit animates the total personality of Jesus with the "universal Soul" (the *Shekinah*, the Holy Spirit).

Yet even the Baptism is not to be considered as a final consummation. It is the threshold that links the Old Order with the New, the particular with the universal. Jesus receives the universal power of the Fatherhood; but to receive power from the Divine is not to be united with the Divine. Before the "Marriage" can take place, Jesus must prove, to himself and to God, his ability to use this power in utter purity, faith and effectiveness. His innermost motives are being "tested" and he has to overcome three basic temptations. These temptations are produced (1) by a personal hunger for the spirit ("bread"), (2) by the desire for spiritual prestige (the ability to easily win a following by displaying miraculous powers) and (3) by the tendency to confuse levels of power and to materialize the spiritual into the strictly personal, the organic or the social.

Then Jesus enters **the way of the miraculous**, the way in which new potentialities emerge at his creative touch or utterance into actuality. And the first "miracle" fittingly is the transmutation of water into wine in Cana. It is significant because it occurs at a marriage feast. In this **lived** parable we see human love about to reach fulfillment in the natural way of life-propagation according to social custom; but something is missing. The celebration falls short of potential "ecstasy". Jesus blesses the common substance of that love (the mere "water" of socialized human emotion) and lo! it becomes "wine", symbol of all mystical communions — wine which represents the capacity in man to transcend his ego-fears, his rigid sense of and subservience to social conventions and social distinctions. To add more meaning to the miracle, it is made at the implied request of Jesus' mother. He chides her for making the suggestion — "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." (John 2:4) — but nevertheless performs the miracle.

Why does Mary, the mother, make the request? Because she is the most perfect manifestation of human nature as such, and she has been touched by the ecstasy of divine fecundation. Her heart aches seeing the banality and conventionality of human married love, and she calls upon the Divine to bless this human love with the freedom, lightness and transcending joy that the symbolical "wine" provides. And when Jesus answers her: "Mine hour is not yet come", he no doubt envisions the Last Supper when this wine that nature offers to man will in turn be transmuted into his own blood. In that ultimate hour Jesus will empty his heart into the vessels of all human hearts, so that bereft of everything, betrayed and scourged, he may meet the supreme crisis which leads the victorious to rebirth in an

organism of divine light. Water, wine, Christ-blood, divine light: the four hypostases of the one Supreme Power within, through and enfolding all existence — Love.

Another significant episode in the early phase of Jesus' public life which seems not to have been given sufficient importance and adequate depth of meaning is his encounter with the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well, at "the **sixth** hour" — six being, as we already saw, the number of the soul. Jesus was wearied and he asked of the woman: "Give me to drink"; and an extraordinary dialogue follows (John 4).

One recalls the equally not fully understood episode in the Buddha's life when, having tried for years to follow all the severest practices of yoga, emaciated and faint with hunger, Gautama asks a milkmaid passing by for some milk to drink. A beautiful conversation ensues as Gautama questions the maiden. Revived by her gift of milk and brought back, as it were, to the most basic and simple wisdom of earth-nature, Gautama sits under the famous Bodhi tree and after long hours of meditation and inner trials he reaches the perfect peace of understanding, the Nirvana state. **Would he have reached it without the maiden's milk and her simple words** — symbols no doubt of some deep and fundamental interchange of truths and energies?

It is often said by liberal ministers that Jesus never claimed that he was the Messiah. But **he did**, almost at the very start of his public life! And to whom? To a woman who was living with her **sixth** lover, a woman of a people with whom no orthodox Jew would have had dealings (John 4 : 9). To her, thus doubly impure (personally and racially), Jesus reveals his identity: "I that speak unto thee am **he** (the Messiah)" (John 4 : 26). Why did Jesus tell the Samaritan woman his essential "Truth of self?" Why to **her** before anyone else, his disciples included — and at Jacob's well?

It may be best not to inquire too deeply into the mystery, for such an inquiry presumably must be left to the individual who faces the need for a solution to his own deepest problem; yet this episode and the one in Buddha's life evidently refer to some deep polarization of consciousness in which these two great divine personages require the presence of two simple women of "lower" (in a traditional sense) social order. Jesus' and Gautama's messages and destinies greatly differ, and so do the characters of the two women protagonists. In the case of Jesus, healer and redeemer, it is no doubt significant that he should declare himself to one who had greatly "sinned" according to the moral law, yet who elicited from him no rebuke but instead a teaching of the deepest character — indeed his central and new teaching concerning the **universal** Divine! "The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, **nor yet at Jerusalem**, worship the Father . . . when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father **seeketh such** to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in **spirit** and in **truth**." John 4:21 to 24. (emphasis mine).

The "miracles" of Jesus could all be analyzed and interpreted afresh; and most of his utterances, if not taken literally and allowing at times for probable mistranslation and latterday additions, can give clues to the process according to which the individual person

himself **becomes** the New Covenant which is one, yet many. The covenant must be written afresh in the language of every person's individual selfhood because it is a covenant in spirit — as the nature of the **universal** Divine is spirit — and all that is of spirit is always focused to meet the particular need of a particular individual. Yet all these "individualized" covenants constitute but one covenant for they all formulate the same principle of the "Marriage" of the Divine and the human, whose "progeny" is the "divine soul", the "Christ-child" within the heart.

The climax of the "coming-together" process is the Transfiguration. Here the state and glory of divine Sonship become fully manifest, and as it is thus fulfilled it integrates not only the Divine and the human, Christ and Jesus, but the past and the future of the religious-cultural cycle of which Jesus is the seed-end at the very point when this end becomes the seed-beginning of the new cycle or "dispensation". The PAST of the collective racial-cultural Hebraic cycle is represented by its two foremost and polar representatives: Moses the **Law-giver**, who talked to the Father-God face to face as friend sees friend, and Elijah the Prophet, who experienced the Divine in the whirlwind and was taken up to God in a chariot of fire. The FUTURE (i.e., the germinating energies of the cycle about to begin) is represented by the three main disciples of Jesus — Peter, John and James.

Some students of theosophical doctrines will no doubt see in the protagonists of the ritual on the Mount of Transfiguration a symbolic reference to the seven-fold nature of man. Jesus, Moses and Elijah constitute the higher Trinity, the Soul, while John, Peter and James represent the lower manifestation of the higher realities: John polarizes Jesus, Peter polarizes Moses, James polarizes Elijah. The Voice of God is the seventh Actor in the ritual — but not an Actor really; instead it is Activity, a universal Principle which can never be **personified**, though it is **impersonated** in a threefold Presence during the cycle as: Love, Form and Consciousness (Jesus, Moses and Elijah — and John, Peter and James). This "God" may be considered as the Elohim in a collective sense (for "Elohim", I repeat, is a plural noun in Hebrew) and must not be confused with "Jehovah" (the JHVH-Elohim of Genesis 2) who is only the Father-manager of the realm of "life" and from whom man receives only his "living soul".

It is interesting to note that John and James, the two sons of Zebedee, may have been close cousins of Jesus (their mother being perhaps the sister of Mary); and that Jesus called them "sons of **thunder**" — which evokes in the mind the name of the great Aryan deity, Rudra, the Thunderous. James apparently was the first of the Apostles to experience death. On the other hand it was Peter who, by his statement of recognition of the divine Sonship of Jesus, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," **polarized** the Transfiguration; for before the **potential** "Sonship" of Jesus could become **a completely actualized fact** one still merely-human individual had to realize this potentiality as a fact. Jesus' divine Sonship could only be made complete and perfect by being anchored, as it were, in the mind of a man who "saw" it and proclaimed it; a man who had enough "faith" to see and proclaim. And yet this man was to deny him thrice in the hour of darkness!

The validity of all this rests upon the fact that in such spiritual events as the Transfiguration what is involved is not merely that an individual fulfills his own evolution. To believe that this is the case is a naive egocentric illusion. In every transfigured NOW the past and the future are implied — a cycle comes to an end, another begins. The "past" announces the coming process — Jesus is told by Moses and Elijah of his death in Jerusalem (Luke 9 : 31) — while the "future" (the Apostles yet to be) directly hear, for the first time,

the Voice of God: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him!" They experience the power of the universal Fatherhood.

Alas, the three disciples' experience at the Transfiguration is a sad but expectable comment on humanity's spiritual unpreparedness. They are "heavy with sleep" — as they shall also be on the Mount of Olives. They "enter into a cloud" — that is, they can hardly bear the light, and their consciousness is clouded. Peter's reaction to the great vision is typical of the "Old" religious attitude; he wants "to make three tabernacles" — and the whole pattern of the Catholic Church's worship is there announced in seed: huge edifices, altars and statues, pompous ceremonies!

Thus Jesus is told by "the past" of his cycle that he must experience death in Jerusalem, and "the future" reacts to the Supreme Moment of human evolution in a manner that is barely distinct from that of the religious tradition which, in that very moment, was being made obsolete. Jesus must be crucified according to the tradition of physical violence and torture because the whole momentum of the past evolution of the human Soul has been deviated and perverted by the "ghosts" which linger in man's subconscious — the ghostly memories of guilt rooted in the **fear** of Adam-Eve when confronted with the knowledge of good and evil, the **anger** of Cain whose brother was preferred to him, the **lust** of the descendants of the "sons of God" who married the "daughters of men". Fear, anger and lust are the three "gates of hell"; and it is in order to dissolve these three gates that the Christ, focused in the mind of Jesus, will have to descend into hell "for **three days**".

This descent starts a process of all-human catharsis; and indeed the historical era which is now coming to a close and which we call "Christian" has been a long period of catharsis, of conflicts and of wars, of fear and hypocrisy. But so it must happen when the ghosts of the deviated and tortured past rise to the surface of man's consciousness. In psychoanalysis one speaks of the transference of the patient's Father-Image to the analyst; and so our civilization has seen the enthronement of this Father-Image in the head of a Church, or in "the Book" literally accepted as the Word of God. Yet all that Jesus taught was that Heaven is within us, that the Kingdom is within the heart, and that the Father is the universal Principle and the Power that reside **potentially** in every man. They reside at the center of the Cross — yes, the cross of man's body — where can be made to bloom the celestial Rose. But this Rose can only be beheld by those who have dared journey through all circles of hell and, having assimilated the experiences of the darkness, can receive in silence and in peace, in self-surrender and in love, the perfect seed, the God-seed, growing slowly in the heart of the Rose.

The Crucifixion is the inevitable sequence to the Transfiguration in view of the human and social background against which this Transfiguration takes place. The ritual-drama of the Passion unfolds in a mode of human incomprehension or frightened betrayal, and of divine sacrifice. Death is **made sacred** in a divine-human sense, because it is consciously accepted and it does not occur in vain, as most deaths do. To suffer and to die is not tragic

if you know why you suffer and die. As the Gnostic saying attributed to Jesus has it: "If you would know how to suffer, you would have power not to suffer" — that is, not to suffer in the meaningless way in which most sufferings are experienced amidst fear, remorse and blind rebellion by men tortured by despair and a gnawing sense of frustration, futility and bitter defeat.

There have been, of course, innumerable human sacrifices in the tragic history of what we like to call "civilization". But in the Christ-life drama sacrifice is given, perhaps for the first time publicly and clearly, both a cosmic and human meaning — above all a universalistic meaning. Countless virgins have been sacrificed in older cults to insure earth fertility and abundant crops; the first fruits of the ground and the first-born have been sacrificed to the gods. But the **object** of the sacrificial rite was always to produce a particular, and most of all a local, result. The Crucifixion, by contrast, has significance as a universal symbol. It has meaning in terms of the whole process of soul evolution.

We might like to say, with the Fundamentalists, that "the blood of Christ redeemed the sins of man"; but having said that you have only pronounced emotion-laden words. What do these words **actually mean** in terms of the universal process which the Bible symbolically outlines — the evolution of the soul? The phrase "redemption by suffering" has echoed back and forth through the vaults and chambers of Western man's tortuous mind; but it is only today **perhaps**, with the help of depth-psychology, that we can really begin to understand with a clear and conscious mind what this phrase actually means, and to what it precisely refers.

What is to be "redeemed" is the **memory** of our (and collective man's) transgressions and perversions — the ghosts whose roots are fear, anger and lust. They are the festering sores, the poisoned areas in our subconscious and in the collective unconscious of mankind. And this redemption of the past is the healing of the present. We can, with the power of spirit and understanding and with the knowledge our mind gives us, heal the sickness of today; but the sickness of today is, very often indeed — and possibly always — the secondary result of the "sin" or the fear (both words mean much the same!) of our ancient past — personal and collective. And the **primary** result is hidden in our unconscious, in our personal circles of hell. How will it be made to "come out" of the grave of unconsciousness if not at the command of a "Christed" individual who "loves greatly" and is willing, able and ready to suffer greatly that the aroused "powers of hell" may be absorbed, assimilated and released as vital energies in the universal circulation of "life"?

The techniques of psychiatry, excellent as they may be in some cases, are no substitute for "Christed" healers and redeemers. Diseases may be cured, but can **memories** ever be totally redeemed and released in the resurrected consciousness as soul-transforming understanding and mind-illuminating love — unless a "redeemer" comes? And this which is true for the individual person is also true for a whole civilization, a whole historical cycle.

It all begins with the Annunciation to Mary; for the mind of man must consciously accept the possibility of redemption and healing before this potentiality can be made actuality. There must be a focused descent of the creative spirit in an "individual soul" whose power of creative imagination is forever fresh, virginal, untainted by conformism, tradition and fear. There must be a baptism by the water of that wisdom which the past transfers, in its creative essence, to the future. There must be a testing of the quality of the inner sense of individual selfhood, of the ever-lurking possibility of ambition, pride and mental confusion in the ego of every man invested with unusual powers. There must come association with all manner of human beings, with men and with women, with new groups and old entrenched social-religious privileges. And the way is strewn with "miracles", for he whose imagination is free and spirit-pervaded performs miracles of transformation, small or spectacular, but always real in terms of the soul-evolution of those touched by the flow of that love which is the free and imaginative fulfillment of relationships.

But he who fulfills relationship in the spirit of Christ-love must accept the crisis of redemption. It is not enough for a Christed individual to utter words of healing or to make the sick whole by touch. Redemption means crisis accepted and gone through. There are many crises, and indeed many crucifixions, in the life of the redeeming individual through whom the Divine may pour grace in moments of great intensity pervaded with humility and with love. Yet, though this Christ-love, as it consumes the hearts of the dedicated, is crucifixion, it is also joy and resurrection. And the song of Easter resounds through the works of those whose love has "known how to suffer" and, thus knowing, reach at the very core of suffering that peace and that sense of the beautiful and the true which is the eternal resurrection.

10. THE LIFE OF MEDIATION AND ITS PARADOX

"When man is as the woman and the woman as the man, there you will find me,"

Gnostic Saying of Jesus

Every great spiritual Movement is centered around a "truth", an image or ideal of what the life of man should incorporate and radiate, if lived in the fullest and highest sense possible to the human beings of the epoch at the beginning of which this Movement is initiated. He who is the true Source of this Movement, by his words and his example, by the impact his personality makes upon those who follow him, embodies this central dynamic truth. He releases the "tone" that sets vibrating in ever widening circles of human response a section of humanity, and perhaps eventually the whole of mankind.

In this book an attempt has been made to uncover the essential, dynamic, creative truth of Christianity as it can be seen emerging from the life and the words of Jesus, as we have them recorded, and also from the ancestral background (the Biblical narrative) which Christianity believes to have been fulfilled by Jesus, the Christ-being. The "Great Images" that are the very soul of Christianity have been discussed in an effort to provide a more convincing, more stimulating and inspiring interpretation of them for the men and women of our catastrophic century who certainly need desperately some spiritual renaissance and a stirring vision of some essentially valid way, truth and life.

To most convinced Christians the central truth or ideal of the Movement which Jesus initiated probably appears to be "love" — just as perhaps, to Buddhists, the core of the truth which the life and words of Gautama the Buddha embodied in the sixth century B.C. might be said to be "detachment", or "the wisdom that transcends all dualities". This little word, love, even when qualified by other words, can however be quite confusing. It is to be hoped that the preceding chapter has made clear, and to some extent at least convincing and real, what love essentially means in the truly Christian sense. A further step in its interpretation seems nevertheless to be necessary in order to show more precisely what this love implies or reveals when understood in the deepest, most philosophical and encompassing, yet absolutely practical sense.

This more philosophical interpretation will take us back to the ideas expressed in the chapter defining the meaning of the much used and abused word "soul", and thus will be a seemingly fitting conclusion to this entire book. It is an intensely **practical** interpretation because it defines in universally valid terms what the "greater life" of man can be in all circumstances. This greater life is the way of man simply because it is essentially what man **is**. It represents man's place and function in the universe, at least as we know this universe today.

It is presumably not mere chance — whatever "chance" may mean, if it means anything at all! — that the very size of man places him about midway between the assumed

size of the whole universe and that of the atom, as physicists like Jeans and Eddington have stated. This fact — if it is a fact! — can serve at least as a convenient symbol of the metaphysical concept according to which man stands in a central position "between" spirit and matter. This central position defines the soul of man; for as we have seen, the soul is to be considered as the Field of integration within which the Marriage of the highest and the lowest can be accomplished. The soul of man — or rather man as soul — like the old Roman god Janus, looks in two opposite directions: it faces **both** the past and the future. In other words **it mediates all opposites**.

The life in which the Truth of man operates at its fullest is "the life of mediation". Man, as Soul, is the mediator of all there is; and Jesus is the perfect man in that he fully embodied this state of mediatorship. In him spirit and matter and all polarities of being and existence were harmonized and integrated according to the character of these polarities — that is, with spirit as the positive, initiating pole. What we call Christ-love is the power which makes this integration possible as a practical, totally lived and demonstrated fact of experience.

The ideal of a life lived as a "middle way" was stressed by the Buddha in a most beautiful and insistent manner; but a position of balance between extremes is one thing, and the actual **integration** of these polar opposites in a life of mediation through the power of love-charity is another. There is a basic difference between **standing at peace** in the midst of conditions which pull in opposite directions, and **bringing to a dynamic focus of transformation** the two opposites; thus between peace and love. Love is not peace; yet in perfect Christ-love there is a core of peace, of total acceptance of suffering as well as of joy. This acceptance makes possible the **steady containment** of opposite forces and conflicting emotions. In the container's strength is peace; the container (the field of actualization of the soul) remains what it is even as it pulsates under the impact of the conflicting polar energies which are its contents. Conflict is experienced by the container's central consciousness of itself as a "dance"; gravitation and levitation have become the necessary elements of this dance of opposites. This dancing is mediation. What is mediated is experienced **within**; but it is also **performed in the without**, for it has to be a ritual act as well, a symbolic drama making visible and actual to all the principle of mediatorship and revealing the character of the love whose inclusiveness can alone transform the conflict into a dance, the tragic into the beautiful. This is the way, the truth and the life — potentially for all individual human beings.

The ideal of mediatorship has been exemplified in many ways throughout the centuries in which Christianity has spread all over the globe. The concept of the divine Marriage is well-known. Many Christians might well assent to the statement that the supreme destiny of man, as an individual person, is to be the Field within which the union of the Divine and of earth-nature is to be accomplished in clear consciousness and all-inclusive love. Yet any thorough discussion of the truth of such a statement would at once reveal that, for the orthodox Christian believer, this divine Marriage occurred **only once and for all time** in

the person of Jesus Christ; and that the essential purpose of the Christ-incarnation was to "save" all men by "atoning" for their ancient collective sin. Thus the mediation of which the Church speaks is, in its essential character at least, reserved solely to Jesus as Christ; in Him the divine and human natures were integrated, and this integration was a special act to repair an event **in time**, man's "original sin". It is true that theologians speak of this Christ mediation as being an "eternal" act somehow transcending the framework of time, and that human beings after Christ can somehow "partake" in that mediation through an "imitation of Christ"; but it is here that the Church-inspired dogmas seem to confuse and deviate the truth.

The ideal of a life of mediation does not in essence apply only to one particular, miraculous case. It refers to the central potentiality inherent in any and all human lives. It refers to the place and position of Man in the universe, to the destiny of Man. The potentiality is **latent** in every human being; and it is this revolutionary fact that Jesus proclaimed in a variety of ways. Nevertheless one should be careful not to misunderstand such a statement of fact! It does NOT refer to man as an ego, as a socialized entity conforming to or reacting against traditional patterns. These patterns represent only the prenatal environment of true manhood; they condition man's early stages of growth, but he must emerge out of them if he is to be truly man — man the individual. Only in the individualized soul of man does this potentiality of true mediatorship exist. The ego is only a scaffolding needed to frame and simplify the work of making fully concrete and substantial the field of the soul's activity, the field within which this soul can act as mediator.

What the soul "mediates" ultimately is the unity of God and the multiplicity of material entities which are the remains of a past cycle of manifestation; but only the soul that has reached the stage of "divine soul" (as the term was defined in Chapter IV of this book) **can** effectuate such a mediation, for only the "divine soul" is actually an Agent of God, the One. This is not, however, the only level at which the life of mediation can operate! It can operate at **any level** where opposite forces are in a state of conflict. And this means everywhere; for all forms of existence are produced by the dynamic interplay of polar forces, and such an interplay always manifests **at first** as conflict, often as tragedy, to the consciousness involved in this interplay.

At any level the mediator's function is **to transform conflict and potential tragedy into a temporary state of "catharsis" from which the life and consciousness of whoever is affected may emerge renewed and more inclusive.** And who should be affected first of all, as the soul fulfills its function of mediator, if not the total being of the living person of whom this soul is the focus of integration! Yet in some cases this transformation seems inoperative, for that very person may, due to previous failures perhaps, give out to others what he should theoretically apply first of all to his own existential being. In this case, we may witness the phenomenon of genius in one field or another of social-cultural or even religious activity; for the truly creative-transforming genius is essentially a mediating activity between past and future; he is an "activity" even

more than an "actor". The entire personality of the genius is to be considered as the mediating activity, for it represents not only the "solution", but the conflicts which summoned forth the integrating solution — the "Image of Salvation" or "redeeming Symbol". The "human condition" in its contemporary crisis is represented in the genius as the living and acting person; but **the work** of the genius reveals (or sometimes hides under an involved symbolism, as in a dream) the solution to this critical human situation.

What produces the mediating, integrating Image or Symbol is, one might say, the soul at the core of that person; yet often one may quite significantly visualize at the inmost center of this soul, an outpouring of truly divine creativity. "God", or a creative-transforming aspect of God, is Himself directly the spirit-pole in the mediating activity, while the matter-pole is the personality of the genius acting as a representative man for his race or culture. The real mediating process operates within and through the entire "field of soul" of the genius; and in that field the harvest of a long past may be said to have been concentrated. For, any true mediating activity must "redeem" the entire past.

Through any true act of mediation the past and the future, the **alpha** and the **omega** of the cycle being affected, become integrated, and their opposition is resolved in the present moment — the moment in which the whole cycle is focused and which can thus be called an "eternal" (or rather eonic) Now, or as in some mystical philosophies, "the Instant".

In many schools of "spiritual" endeavor the practice of **meditation** is advocated and definite rules are given for its pursuance. In terms of what is presented here "meditation" should be seen at best as a prelude to or a preliminary phase of the process of **mediation**. Any true and spiritually effective meditation has for its essential aim the raising of the individual consciousness to a level at which it ceases to be enmeshed in ego-patterns, and instead begins to partake in the vast process of universal evolution in the light of the soul. But alas many types of meditation merely replace egocentric patterns — if they do even that! — with dogmatic Images which freeze the process of mediation into collectivistic-religious Images of salvation. This may be a more secure and comfortable form of mediating soul-activity; and to the vast majority of "seekers" after spirituality it may indeed be the only reliable and safe way. Nevertheless the deepest and highest mode of mediating activity must always remain, at least as long as we deal with individual persons acting in the framework of our time-space universe, an activity which finds its focus in the acts of an individual.

The individual is the lens; and though the light of all suns and stars be converging upon that lens, yet it is **one single** lens that focuses the multifarious rays of light. It is this great truth that the Christian Churches have materialized or personalized in the concept of the "one and only" Son of God. In every true act of mediation the mediator is, in terms of this act, "one and only" — even if the act has as preliminary condition the fulfillment of some actual relationship which, symbolically speaking, "sets" the lens correctly and polishes away its impurities while absorbing the diffidence and hesitancy of the consciousness which then is facing its greatest test of faith and courage.

Everything ultimately rests upon, and is an expression of, the Principle of relatedness which is the core of "love". Every truly spirit-pervaded "meditation" serves to free the consciousness of the meditating individual from the obstacles to relatedness and love which the fears and the possessiveness or greed of the ego have built. Meditating upon "great truths" or universal symbols simply expands and makes more translucent the framework of a consciousness which accepts only what the ego-scaffolding surrounding its living core allows to come in or to get out. A man must fully accept the Truth of Man before he can love fully without ego-bent deviations and in freedom from social-ethical-cultural conditioning. Otherwise any mediating activity would be reduced to the level of his ego-controlled and so-called "personal" angle of vision. Every true mediator is therefore first of all "son of Man"; and it is only as son of Man that he can unite with the one Christ-principle and be transfigured by Christ-love, thus becoming, **in the individualized manner** which his time and place actually demand, a true mediator.

There is no essential difference between creation and mediation. It is always the divine light penetrating and transforming the darkness of the end-results of as yet unresolved conflicts, results which in their ultimate aspect represent the condition of utter separateness and indifference to any possibility of relationship. This penetration of light is an act of true "love-charity." The light mediates between That which is conscious and compassionate Unity

and the myriad points of darkness, residue of what failed to reach unity as it refused the love and relatedness which were its cyclic destiny (i.e. its potential of existence); and this mediation creates the possibility of a new future, because it reveals a new meaning, a new purpose. This mediation-creation is the central truth of the Christ-consciousness; and this is what, I repeat, distinguishes the Christian from the Buddhist ideal. The ideal which an undogmatic and essential Christianity presents is that of the man in whom the Divine has become focused in an activity which frees and transforms other man; an activity made possible by the "Marriage" of the Divine and of human nature within the field of actualization of the individualized soul.

This ideally Christian life is thus a life through and within which opposites meet and interact. It is an "in-between" life. The interaction of these opposites reveals meaning; and this interaction revelative of meaning has its symbol in the chiaroscuro of the European painters of the Renaissance. The Christ-life is a **chiaroscuro** because it is neither light exclusively nor darkness exclusively, neither strictly divine nor strictly human; because it is **both**, and **both meaningfully**.

Such an ideal of existence is, obviously, most dynamic; it is also most "insecure", because most unstable in its essential requirement that balance and integration be incessantly renewed and assured in the ever-fleeting moment. It may seem an apotheosis of change — and thus one may see its roots in the old Greek philosophy of Heraclitus. And yet what is presented as the supreme reality is **not** change as such! Change is only one pole; changelessness is the other pole. Every phase of existence changes into another and often into its opposite; yet the "harmony" of the ever-cyclic Whole is not affected. Its harmonic character is neither diminished nor increased; the Whole is not more nor less whole as a result of the interplay of its incomprehensibly vast multitude of parts intent upon working out ever-changing forms of relatedness. There is no static peace in this immense "dance" of ever-dissolved and ever-recreated relationships; Christ did **not** come to bring peace, but a "sword". There is no security; not because there is no God — as atheistic existentialists seek to believe in their tragic gesture of self-glorification as men — but because there is God **and** men; because therefore God must inevitably become "human" in polarizing man's efforts to become "divine". Nevertheless there **is** peace and security of a magnificent kind, just because there must appear to be none from the point of view of **partiteness**. Just because we are "parts", we can have faith in the Harmony of the Whole of which we are parts. It is only if we make ourselves believe that we are truly little wholes buffeted by the tremendous storms of universal energies that there is really no security and no peace.

The tragedy inherent in the so much spoken of "human condition" is that we do not easily accept God **and** man, the changeless Harmony of the universal Whole **and** the fact that, while we have a sense of identity and wholeness as "I", we nevertheless are parts of this Whole, of this Harmony. We do not accept the **relatedness** of God and man, of man and God. We yearn to be divine, "spiritual", perfect; but we misunderstand the process by

wanting to belittle and perhaps to erase our humanhood even while we are, here and now, men and women. We want to be divine first, whereas it is always the divine that has the initiative. We so want to be divine that when God knocks at the door we are usually so absorbed in our "meditation" or busy "doing good" and "saving people" (or cats and dogs!) that we do not hear the knocking. We so want to be what we actually are not, **now** — even if the potentiality of it is within us! — that we have no time for the process of relationship which alone can clear the way for and make possible the meeting with the Divine when Its time has come. And Its time may indeed not be the time our conscious self expects! It may not even be **Nature's time**, as we are told in the mysterious parable of the fig tree which was cursed by Jesus when he found on it no fruit to appease his thirst and hunger, **even though it was not the season for bearing fruits. What a paradox!**

Indeed the life of ever-watchful, ever-ready response to the call for relatedness and harmonization through the unobstructed fulfillment of relationship is a constant paradox. It is, in another sense dear to contemporary thinking, a "dialectical" process — for the paradox is to the life of the spirit in focused activity what the syllogism (thesis — antithesis — synthesis) is to the logic of intellectual correlations. The life of a "disciple of Christ," the life of mediation, is a paradox because it is an "in-between" life; "**in** this world but not **of** this world" is another way of putting it (John 17). It is a life of dynamic integration of opposites; but out of this integration comes an expanding sense of meaning and purposefulness.

Every effort man makes along the way of Christ-like relatedness tends to bring its opposite into play, and it can only be effective **through** the experience of the opposite. Peace, in this sense, can only be consciously realized and actualized through some form of "war", but only when war can be made significant as the womb of a greater sense of more-inclusive peace. God can only be experienced **actually** where man is most "human", and only when Man is understood as that field of dynamic existence in and through which God is to take individual form in the perfection of all-inclusive Christ-love.

The Beatitudes

In the Beatitudes which begin the Sermon on the Mount, we are given terse statements of the paradoxical steps which a man seeking to follow the way of Christ must take. One can hardly be certain that there is a special meaning in the fact that there are nine such statements; nor do we know the precise meaning which the word Jesus used in his Aramaic tongue sought to convey. "Blessed" in English, "heureux" in French are translations of a Greek term which seems to mean more exactly "enjoyer of bliss". Most likely these nine sayings refer to basic steps in a process of psychological repolarization and transformation which gradually leads to an increasing sense of fulfillment and beatitude. It is this process as a whole which needs to be understood and applied.

The sequence of the nine statements presents a very symmetrical pattern which has not usually been seen or understood, partly because of the manner in which the eighth is formulated, a manner which hides its basic character. One should divide the Beatitudes into two sections of four corresponding statements, plus a culminating clause which brings the entire teaching to a concrete and actional focus. The first four Beatitudes are negative in their initial statements; the second four are positive, though the last of these is couched in apparently negative terms; and the final Beatitude repeats the eighth statement in a personally directed sense. We have thus in Matthew's Gospel the following sequence:

A. Negative traits

1. The poor in spirit (. . . theirs is the Kingdom of heaven)
2. The mourners (. . . they shall be comforted)
3. The meek (. . . they shall inherit the earth)
4. Those who hunger after righteousness (. . . they shall be filled)

B. Positive traits

1. The merciful (. . . they shall obtain mercy)
2. The pure in heart (. . . they shall see God)
3. The peacemakers (. . . they shall be called children of God)
4. Those who, as they are being persecuted **for right's sake**, demonstrate the new way of righteousness shown by Christ (. . . theirs is the Kingdom of heaven)

C. Focusing conclusion

You (my disciples) who will be reviled for my sake (. . . great is your reward in heaven)

The double fourfold pattern is confirmed, as it were, by the formulation of these teachings of Jesus found in Luke's Gospel — the only other one of the Gospels to incorporate, in a different form, these Beatitudes. In Luke's version (6 : 20-32) those who are blessed are:

1) the poor, **2)** those who hunger, **3)** those who weep now, **4)** those who are reviled and cast out by men "for the son of Man's sake". And the polar opposition to these four Beatitudes is not, as in Matthew, a second set of four more blessednesses, but a corresponding sequence of four "woes": **1)** Woe unto you that are rich, **2)** Woe unto you that are full, **3)** Woe unto you that laugh now, **4)** Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you, as their fathers did to the false prophets. Moreover, the Beatitudes in Matthew are pronounced by Jesus on the **Mount**, while in Luke they are uttered after Jesus and the Twelve had "come down" from the Mount and while they "stood in the **plain**" — thus in two significantly opposite frames of reference!

If we consider the first four Beatitudes in Matthew's Gospel we should realize that they set into opposition the two terms of a "dialectical" situation. The Beatitudes in Luke provide, as it were, the first terms of the situation (thesis), and the Woes their repudiation in an antithetical manner. The "rich" become "poor", but gain (according to Matthew: synthesis) the "Kingdom of heaven". Those who are "full" (Luke) become through deprivation "mourners" (Matthew), but they shall "be comforted". Those who "laugh" shall "weep" — they must become "meek" — but they "shall inherit the earth". Those who are socially well accepted come to be "reviled", as they "hunger and thirst after righteousness" (a kind of righteousness not acceptable by tradition), but they "shall be filled".

Here then we have four basic paradoxes; and it makes little sense to try to blunt the sharp edge of the paradoxes by softening the meanings of the phrase "poor in spirit", which actually means in Greek "beggars in spirit." Jesus evidently was always ready to shock his listeners: Lose your life in order to gain it; serve, if you want to be master; leave behind and "hate" father, mother and all attachments of the life-realm, and follow me, etc. "Who is my mother, or my brethren? . . . Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother" (Mark 3 : 32-35).

What can it mean if not that what Jesus sought to impress so powerfully upon his followers was the need for a fundamental repolarization of consciousness, for a radical change of values. To a society still controlled by tribal concepts of absolute paternal authority, of ritual law, of racial and religious exclusivism (the seed of Abraham, the "elect people" of God, etc.), he brought an essentially different level and scale of values. While using the three most basic concepts and Images of the Hebraic society — the Father, the Law, the Kingdom — he told the people, at times bluntly and at others in parables, that these concepts and traditional images had reality and value at an entirely new level where they meant something totally different. The Father was "in Heaven"; the Mosaic laws, though valid socially, were all absorbed into one new great commandment (actually, a universal Principle); and the Kingdom, so longed for traditionally by the Jews, was not of this world, but actually "within you". The result: **nothing really was where and what you expected it to be!** The level of all values had been changed by the New Covenant

written in the heart of every man. For the old set of allegiances, a new set had been substituted, whose hold upon man was of an entirely different character.

That everything is inwardly different while remaining outwardly the same — this is the great paradox of the true life lived according to the spirit of Christ. Here a man is walking; yet God is in him, God is he. Nevertheless he remains a man. Jesus' outer appearance had apparently not changed when he and his disciples descended from the Mount of the Transfiguration — not even after the Resurrection when he appeared to his disciples and they touched his flesh and later ate with him. What then did happen? This: What was the human pole of the relationship with the Divine **had now become the relationship itself**. In this consists essentially the life of mediation. The mediator becomes the relatedness of the divine Whole to the individual part, as this divine Whole expresses itself in focused activity through that part, here and now.

Such a process of mediation implies inevitably a paradoxical situation, because the attainment of the goal requires the surrender of all normally valued means. The end requires the devaluation of the means. One reaches the end — the divine Marriage, the mediating power — only when one has abandoned all faith **in any means whatsoever**, and especially in all traditional means.

In a sense it is the paradox found in the creative activity of true genius. Only when the laboriously acquired techniques are forgotten does the direct and seemingly "unconscious" act of creation flash through the quieted, yet expectant, organs of creation. But this does not mean that discipline and muscular-mental exercise are not necessary! So are nine months in a womb a preliminary requirement for wholesome birthing as a human being.

The paradox is that you can never operate creatively and spiritually except by surrendering all that was needed to build you up to the point at which, having surrendered, you can act as an integrated and creative whole. The building up is the thesis; the birth out of the matrix (the surrender) is the antithesis; and the synthesis is the fact that when you are thus "free" you have only achieved a state of **more inclusive allegiance** not only to whatever had built you up but to what had produced what had built you up, etc. This new allegiance, however, has a new character; a new quality of consciousness pervades it, because what this new allegiance "binds" is not you, as the individual ego you were, but a "you" that is now **the relationship** between that old, narrow, exclusivistic you and a vast Power, divine in essence, that has become focused within this new "you".

Thus in terms of the Beatitudes, he who had gained riches in the old tribal society and, above all, who felt himself rich in traditional wisdom and great in mind, has to become a "beggar" in the realm of all that the world considers "spiritual". He must become denuded inwardly of all familiar and respected values; he must experience the "dark night of the soul" of Christian mystics, the "great doubt" known to the Zen disciple. He must be born out of all he owned, even while still owning it if that external ownership should be of value in what will follow. He must beg, as one who has absolutely nothing and perhaps believes in nothing.

Then what happens? Out of the darkness emerges the sense of the relationship of God (the Whole and the One) to the particular condition and place the individual had been occupying in the world. God's power focuses itself upon that condition and place — that is **upon that man's individual potential of existence** (not upon his "self" as it actually is!) — and a relationship, a "Marriage", takes place in terms of the possibility of divine manifestation which this man's condition, place and capacity represent for God. The individual thus becomes that relationship; he is now the mediating link between the Divine and a small or big function inside of the society from which he had freed himself. Now the individual person is a "personage". He has an office to fulfill; he **is**, as mediator, this office — very much as the person who assumes the Presidency of the United States is the mediator between the whole of the national, racial, cultural potential of America and the conditions, circumstances and needs he finds when he takes office. But in the case of him who lives in the way of Christ, the state of mediation is not an impermanent function. He is established in a state or relatedness which is essentially permanent, even though up to a certain point "along the way" there may still be failure and at least temporary disintegration.

If the first Beatitude refers to the surrender of all that represents traditional wealth, the second refers to the surrender of all **emotional-personal attachment**, for what we mourn is what we have been emotionally attached to. The third Beatitude indicates the need of surrendering all forms of aggressiveness — an important factor in the society to which Jesus addressed himself, for two currents then divided the Jewish people, one advocating political violence, the other love.

The fourth Beatitude refers to the need to abandon all **prejudices**, that is, literally, all judgments of value based on traditions and customs antedating any actual experience in the life of the individual which are related to such judgments. The old "righteousness" was established on values which the coming of Christ made obsolete. The Christ-oriented individual inevitably and paradoxically "hungers and thirsts after righteousness" — just as he is a "beggar in spirit" (first Beatitude) — because he must have seen all ancient Images of spirit, righteousness and ritual purity fade from his consciousness. He is totally empty, naked as a newborn baby. Now something new will fill this baby's body — air; that is, *pneuma*, breath, spirit in the new sense of the term, the Spirit of Truth.

The second set of four Beatitudes establishes positively what must be the main fourfold character of the way of life and relatedness which the disciple of Christ, the future Son of God, must exemplify.

1. Mercy is the basic quality of all relationships expressing the new status of the individual who has actually become the field of relatedness between God and human nature; it is compassion, all-inclusive and redeeming love-charity. It can only be attained by the "beggars in spirit". The first and fifth Beatitudes are thus linked in that paradox that only through the utter surrender of all wealth can the all-inclusive abundance of the plenitude of relationship linking God to man be experienced and radiated as mercy or Christ-love; for it is this surrender alone which can open to man the "Kingdom of heaven" (first Beatitude).

2. Purity of heart signifies a dynamic life-sustaining type of motivation which both accepts and gives out, as the heart receives and releases with new vigor the blood of the whole organism. Such a kind of motivation cannot be a fact where the heart is attached to this or that **particular** object of desire or enjoyment. Thus only those who have "mourned" the loss of all such attachments can truly be "pure in heart". They "shall see God" (6th Beatitude) because to "see God" is to become aware of the ineffable wholeness of all there is, to have come face to face with the absolute Beauty that is all-encompassing Harmony. How could one, after such an experience, be exclusively attached to any one particular ever-changing fragment of this universal Wonder which, from whatsoever point of view it is seen, remains always wonderful?

3. Peace-generating activity (i.e. the activity of "peace-makers") can only proceed from a consciousness in which the opposing forces of existence (such as good-and-bad, high-and-low, etc.) are harmonized in dynamic interplay. Such a consciousness is the true spiritual inheritance of any man who has understood the awesome power of the Fatherhood of God in Whom all opposites are contained as in a vast cosmic "dance". Such an

understanding should assuredly make one "meek", humble! This very humility, this childlike awe before the majesty of the Father, is the very condition which allows a man "to inherit the earth"; for paradoxically, pride always generates opposition and leads to a fall. Likewise only the man who is willing spontaneously and joyously to serve whomever or whatever he loves or admires **can** be trusted to be a leader. Such a quality in relationship makes of a man a true "child of God" and proves his capacity to manage "the earth", that is, all facets of this dualistic existence of ours, filled with everlasting conflicts.

4. The uncompromising allegiance to the Truth at the center of our being, even to the point of enduring all persecutions, comes only to the individual who has found himself totally empty of the values of the past and thus hungers and thirsts for the Annunciation from the new Spirit, the new "righteousness" (i.e. the new rites of activity, the new creative manifestation of Truth). Such an individual, like Mary, will be "filled", and to him will be given the power of the Creative Order, which is the Kingdom of Heaven.

There remains only the ninth Beatitude which brings the general principles thus stated to a focusing conclusion. **Every universal spiritual Truth must be brought to a particular focus of activity here and now; it must address itself to a need of the place and the time — or else it is not "spiritual"!** I repeat that if one can say that spirit is universal and operating everywhere, it is because it is focused at every point of space simultaneously. But, wherever spirit is seen in operation, it is never **found** expressed in terms of "generalities" but always in a precise formulation directed toward the solution of a particular problem. However, "particular" is here to be understood as referring to a particular group situation; in any case, to **one specific** whole, collective or personal though it be.

If then Jesus makes such pronouncements as the first eight Beatitudes — the four basic steps to the spiritual life, the life of mediation — it is **because** he sees before him men and women who can become his "disciples" and whose potentially uncompromising character (not perfectly so actually, as Peter's future behavior will at least twice reveal!) will make them subject to revilement and persecution. The universal principles of the way of Christ **potentially** open to every man are thus focused in a statement of actual fact-in-the-making; that is, of what is immediately ahead for those of Jesus' hearers who are ready to tread this way of Christ.

The comparison between the apostles-to-be who will be persecuted and the "prophets which were before you" is significant in that it establishes a functional filiation between these prophets of the Old Order and the spiritual sons of Christ. The evolution of the soul, which the whole Bible symbolically narrates, is a continuous process, and the Fatherhood of God impregnates and pervades one level after another of this evolution. But with the coming of Christ a basically new phase begins. Where before there was "overshadowing", now there is "Marriage". Man needs no longer to become only a screen upon which the likeness and image of God-Elohim can be projected under relatively rare and specially prepared conditions. Man needs not only to **reflect** the essential **relatedness** that

potentially links him to his Creator; **he can be this** relatedness. He can be the Field in which the relationship, God to human nature, is effected in act. He can be **container** of that relationship. He can thus fulfill the destiny of Man, which is to be the sacred vessel — the Chalice — within which the Divine and the natural interpenetrate in an alchemical rite of transsubstantiation and thereby of redemption of the past. The past is redeemed as the present is transsubstantiated in the light of a future in which past, present and future are realized in the essential and structural unity of a whole cycle of universal manifestation, an Eon.

Apostles and Seed-Men

Thus we stand at the threshold of the future as the Beatitudes end. The disciples are ready; or nearly so. They are enjoined to be the "salt of the earth" — that which gives taste to all things the mind of society will assimilate — and the "light of the world", rays of the Sun of the New Covenant. They are to radiate upon all men the great creative Truth that every "individual soul" in expression on this earth **can** actualize, in due time and season — its inherent potential of divine Sonship. The disciples will become apostles and fecundate the future with their heroic lives and their deaths.

But this was some nineteen centuries ago! What of today? Do we not find ourselves in a world situation which is practically the antipode of the one which the Apostles faced when Jesus sent them to spread fervently the "Good News" of the renewal of all values? For nineteen centuries this "Good News" has circulated through all continents, has been heard by billions of human beings. And what have been the results? What do we find as a cycle of history can be seen coming to its close — the very cycle which, I believe, the coming of Christ ushered in? The Apostles, they were the "beginning" of the cycle; are we not today the "end"? Assuredly, Christ can truly be said to be both the **alpha** and the **omega** of the cycle; but we, men of the twentieth century, who are the manifestations of this **omega**, cannot have the very same function, and display by nature the same character that the Apostles had to display in fulfilling their destiny.

As I said in the first chapter of this book, the situation is reversed. In the time of the Apostles Christianity was taking the offensive against crumbling religions and a disintegrating "universal society" of limited character. But in this, our time, Christianity is assuredly on the defensive; and the issue humanity faces seems to be either nearly total extinction, or a radical reorganization in terms of a global society which will integrate all peoples on all continents. Faced by such an alternative, what is our potential of destiny? It can certainly not be that of the Apostles after Jesus' official death. To spread a dogmatic Christianity to a few more wild tribes in the Amazon region makes very little sense — except as example of **individual** courage and faith — when the great Christian nations are pervaded with materialism, greed and lust (as a form of escape from meaninglessness) and totter aimlessly at the edge of an utterly senseless, and known to be senseless, total atomic war! What then?

A cycle is the expression, according to a time-formula, of a sequence of characteristic changes in the nature of the basic relationships which are the warp and woof of existence in a particular region of space. The basic relationships which characterize the **alpha** stage of an historical cycle are necessarily not the same as those which stand out as significant features of the **omega** stage (i.e. the consummation and close) of this cycle. Symbolically speaking, the small germ piercing the crust of the soil in springtime, eager to conquer space **sunward**, has evidently not the same character as the seed or the golden leaves falling **earthward** during autumnal days. Christ as a Principle in the ebb and flow of existence, or

as a divine Being whose consciousness encompasses the entire tidal movement of a great cycle of time in its **essential and structural** enfoldment (not in its details, because that would cancel man's "freedom of choice"! — Christ so considered is "changeless"; that is, He encompasses in His being the whole cycle of change. But we who live and have our being in His mystical (or "eonic") Body are, as men in actual existence, manifestations of the meaning, function and purpose of the brief span of time in which we live. We are expressions of change — expressions which may be totally or mostly unconscious of what they express, or which may consciously accept, and thus significantly assume, their place and function in the vast tidal movement of change.

The Apostles were **germinal men**. We can be one of two things: seed-men or leaf-men. We can let ourselves be caught in the terminal disintegration of all that belongs to the realm of green leaves, whose task it was to capture the sun's rays and assimilate their energy, transforming it into chemical (i.e. "cultural") products essential to earth-life; **or** we can somehow emerge from the plant of our society as **potential vehicles** for the life of the species, endowed with the kind of relative "immortality" and capacity for life-renewal which it is the seed's function to express.

The masses of humanity always follow the line of destiny of the leaves — they are swept by a tide of cultural, social, ethical disintegration which brings about the "vulgarization" (from *vulga*, meaning "crowd") of all the great values which had given form and significance to the culture and society of the "summer" period of the historical cycle. As to "seed men", they can operate at several levels — some strictly social and cultural, others truly "spiritual". At any level their lives reveal **1**) a **condensation** of whatever has been essential in the historical cycle as a whole, and **2**) the **detachment** of such essential qualities from the dying plant. Then after having "detached" themselves and fallen to the ground they become embedded in a new soil; or they are somehow kept in abeyance and latency for a future sowing, perhaps in distant regions of space.

Such a "condensation" (in the symbolic form of a seed) may mean many things. But it means inevitably that a principle of selectivity — i.e. of mental-spiritual discrimination — is at work, which separates the quintessence from the non-essential. To this process, of course, Jesus refers constantly in the Gospels. Moreover, all seeds are not "good" seeds! There are seeds of destructive as well as seeds of constructive cyclic activity; and the value of the greatest of Oriental philosophies is that they help us to realize that the dualism of good and evil — and indeed **all** dualities — are essential parts of the great "dance" of universal life, in all space and at all times. And because Man is by destiny the mediating principle, Man must become fully conscious of all the pairs of opposites. The "man of God" is he who has experienced **both** the consciousness of evil and that of good, and deliberately, freely has assumed responsibility for the side of the good; whereas the "man of evil" (the man "perfect" in evil) knows only what is evil, having seen himself compelled, by the accumulation of myriads of previous failures and defeats which he could have avoided, to refuse the good — to curse the Divine.

Jesus spoke of his disciples as having been "chosen" by him, as having been "given to him" by the Father. Jesus as the **alpha** of a great cycle of human evolution is the germinal beginning of this cycle. The Apostles are the "powers" of that germinal beginning, as the energy necessary to pierce through the soil's crust is being released. It is apparently a twelve-fold energy. There are twelve Apostles, as there were twelve Creative Hierarchies in the Sky (symbol of the Creative Order of the Universe as a whole) according to the cosmologies of Chaldea, China and other societies. Twelve is a number symbolizing a building activity directed outward; it refers to the establishment of the framework of existence, of the structure of any particular unit of microcosmic or macro-cosmic being.

The Apostles (and, after them, those men significantly called the Fathers of the Church) built the outer structures of the Christianity we have known thus far; they selected, in a more or less unconscious and inspired way, the Great Images of this Christianity which today is indeed being challenged, and which is, in most cases, only displaying a power of inertial resistance to the relentless waves beating against its foundations. The Apostles built these foundations out of their very blood. They built in the power of intense, uncompromising, unadulterable faith; they forged their tools in the fire of a limitless devotion, of a superbly blind yet immensely effectual love.

This today we cannot do. We have not the materials to do it with, **as Christians**. Yes, there are still heroic missionaries and Church consecrated men who are flashing magnificent examples of courage and stolid fervor in the darkness of our materialistic, technology-intoxicated century. But these examples are, more than anything else, **protests**; they are protests against the vulgarization and commercialization of all noble values. And yet they may also be sublime gestures of atonement as, for instance, that of Dr. Schweitzer deliberately taking upon his shoulders the colonial sins of his civilization. They may reveal, in the drama of lives heroically lived, the very core of the spirit of Christianity. They do reveal that the Christ-spirit is still pulsating within the body of official Christianity. Yet as a whole this body has lost its essential vitality, its creative world-transforming enthusiasm. Other religions are on the march, particularly the Bahai Faith whose apostles today establish centers all over the world in a spirit of intense devotion and self-abnegation rivaling that of the early Christians. And, in its early days at least, Communism too was a kind of religion which sent fervent and fanatic devotees to martyrdom.

What can we do, then, as Christians which would express our historical position at the close of a cycle which might well see, before this century ends, the widespread collapse of our civilization? If the Western civilization disintegrates as did the Roman Empire 1500 years ago (in whatever way this may take place) what is there for us to do which would have permanent value in terms of the future? And we may be very sure that it is what we do now, within the next twenty years or so, which will be our "last chance", if events pursue their relentless course.

What does the seed do, essentially, as Fall approaches? It transfers itself from the realm of the dying plant of a particular cycle of vegetation to that where the life of the

whole species to which it belongs has its "immortal" being. The product of a yearly cycle (a seed) becomes the vehicle for the perpetuation (and perhaps the transformation through "mutation") of a whole species active in billions of plants for millions of years. Every seed is an "agent" for its species. Every "seed-man" likewise is an agent of That which stands as the mediating principle at the core of the World-Process, as the God-man, as the individualized expression of Man having become a divine focus for the harmonization of past into future, a Son of God incarnate.

The state of Christhood is essentially the seed state. The seed, understood as a universal symbol, represents the beginning and the end of all cycles. But the seed which is "beginning" has its being **before** the actual beginning. Christ is the seed; Jesus is the germ. Christ is the "eternal" (i.e. eonic) reality; Jesus is the initiating sacrifice in actual time — a sacrifice prolonged throughout the cycle of our present Christianity by the continuing sacrifice of his Apostles and of those who, physically and socially, fathered forth the Christian civilization, Eastern as well as Western.

Our time is the time for "seed-men" who will allow the Christ Principle to integrate their minds within the Field of creative energies of the divine Mind and, if ready, their "individual souls" within the Company of the Sons of God. The seed in the Fall must be reintegrated within the species in order that it can become the vehicle and agent for the species; and likewise the seed-man must find his mission by transferring his individual consciousness (as part of the plant of a particular society, culture, religion) to the level of the consciousness of Christ. Only then can he become "consecrated" as a seed which, in due time and when sown in fertile soil, will "die as a seed" that a new vegetation may be born.

This "sacrifice of the seed" — germination — may be far ahead of us, men of the twentieth century; that is, it is far ahead in the sense of the actual birthing of a truly new culture. Nevertheless there is a "seed death" in the fact that a mind, which has partaken of a vision or illumination, projects what has been seen or realized into a concrete form of expression (a formulated idea, a book, an inspired work) even though it may take a long time before this form of expression, this "seed idea", finds the proper soil in which it is destined to germinate, releasing a great Image which men will make further concrete and operative as an institution of some sort, symbolizing and implementing a way of life.

What does it all mean, practically speaking, to us, today? It means that what is needed in the years immediately ahead is a new harvest of "seed ideas" in which the power of the universal principle of mediation that is Christ should become the potentiality of new forms of Christianity. Men should come — some have already come — who are symbolically "full of seed"; men who, like Mary, experience the Annunciation by the Angel of the "illuminated Mind" and, like her, accept their destiny as servants of the God of all renewals, of all transformations; men who mediate between God and the energies of human nature and, partaking of both, fulfill them both.

What is needed is not "revolution"; what is disintegrating will disintegrate of itself and we must let the dead bury their dead. What is needed is **mutation**. What is needed is a new quality of relatedness, a deeper, more conscious sense of love, a more inclusive awareness of harmony and of the beautiful. Men and women are needed who are able, willing and ready to incorporate these new values of existence into their dedicated individualities, into their illumined mentalities, to offer them for all to see — actual, formed and radiant — as the consecrated host is offered on the altar in the rite of perpetual adoration. Humanity must have faith again, but a new kind of faith! Not faith based on a tradition to which one returns when weary and discouraged by the chaos of this world, but faith evoked by the vision of that which is "full of seed", that which is rich and warm with an immense potential of birth and of victory.

This faith, we may center it around the vision and the name of Christ; for to minds and souls that have been cleansed from the ashes of obsolete dogmas or distorted verities, the name Christ speaks of universal relatedness, of love that includes and redeems all in a perpetual song of healing and whole-making, of harmony that excludes no seeming discord, of beauty, signature of inner attunement to the order and peace of the universal whole. This

name, so abused by many and made meaningless by lip-service and memory-patterns of brains dulled by conformity, this name, Christ, illumines the central destiny of man — man the mediator, man the field within which the harmonic integration of all dualities (of spirit and matter, good and evil, individual and collective, "changelessness" and change) reveals itself as the progressively more divine soul. This "divine soul" is the seed-harvest of lives nobly-lived, of deeds precisely and beautifully done, of thoughts clearly envisioned and loves radiantly experienced. And all this is man, potential; man that will be, that must be.

Man so understood **is** Christ, Christ in myriads of individualized aspects. And to whom and in whom this realization bums like an unquenchable fire out of the very stone of a past released and transfigured, indeed "all things are possible".

(New York, 1951 — Venthône, Switzerland, 1959)