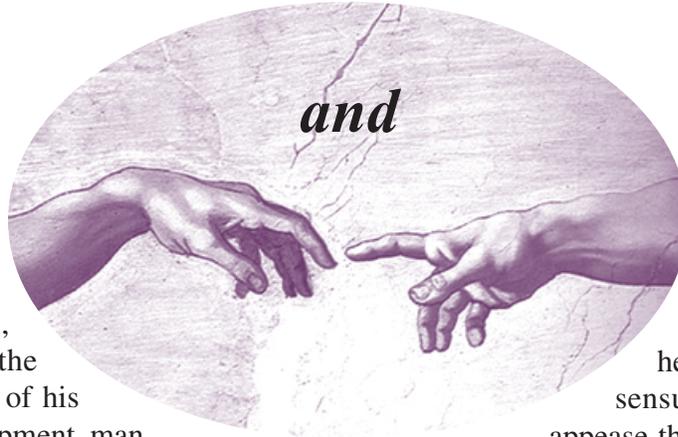


MYSTIC LIGHT

The Question



The Answer

WHEN, in the course of his development, man wakes from the dream of unconscious and unquestioned living and begins to exercise his reasoning faculty—observing, remembering, and discriminating—his relationship to the sensible world loses its naive simplicity. He becomes aware of what it is to doubt.

The last two millennia of Western man's existence have been fraught with a confusion of half-truths, have witnessed a mounting of the human will to know, accompanied by an increasing frustration of that very will. The contemporary seeking mind asks in all earnestness, "Is there an unshakable basis for certainty from which I can make equally certain judgments about life, its purpose and meaning? Is there a place where I may stand and be able to experience absolutely: This is true?"

This question has not always been asked. At one time, conditions of man's existence did not occasion doubt and a sense of separation. Gods once perceptibly brightened the ethers of man's consciousness. For a time, heavenly Beings were seen to dwell in the sphere of the Earth and the Cosmos was experienced as man's home. What can we say of this question that man is impelled to ask? What does it signify? That man feels himself to be incomplete; more, that he seeks to confirm deep within himself something that is not immediately forthcoming from the world of his sense experience.

At the outset, man construed his spiritual unrest as proceeding from the unfulfilled desire to possess

the world and experience her manifold delights. But sensuous experience did not appease this yearning, for its dimension

lies outside the soul's realm. On the contrary, the world of material experience tends to aggravate the Spirit's sense of isolation. It is ever a case of mistaken identity: What we sense is not, finally, what we seek.

Man first had to embark on the flat land of his local map's consciousness. He lost himself over the horizon of familiarity and traced the circle of the Earth's true form, coming back to where he started, flushed with the discovery of finding the Earth round; but at heart his need to know was more compelling than before. This figure illustrates a Tantalean pattern that man in a purely material framework reinforces when from out of this sensible world he seeks answers for an inner irresolution, for a condition of the Spirit. He traces self-confining circles. While in the going, he has the impression of nearing an answer. He has intimations of achieving his goal. But eventually he finds himself back at the point of his departure, materially advanced, perhaps, but spiritually none the wiser. The questioner, the seeker, is thrown back upon himself, again and again. His conscious identity being circumscribed by the physical sphere, reduced to the disposition of its outward forms, man is driven to a different mode of thinking to determine the reason for his being—and the reason for his being a stranger in the world.

The very activity of thinking tells us that reason and intelligence actually make possible our

Detail, fresco, The Creation of Adam, Michelangelo, Sistine Chapel, Planet Art

quandary; that did not Self, by an act of mind, abstract itself from immediate experience, no dilemma would exist. But the mind can also discover realities underlying sensory existence, because it has been created to discover them. Proper use of the mind is theodicy: it demonstrates and affirms the existence and beneficence of God in the face of darkness and apparent evil. Therefore, the Socratic motto: The unexamined life is not worth living. Or, rephrased, he who is ignorant of his spiritual identity, his identity as Spirit, is not truly living.

Through this preliminary understanding that his suffering results from his separation from divine consciousness, man realizes that his doubt and anguish are not uniquely his, that it is the common condition of fallen humanity, and that it is a blessing in disguise. For if our present circumstance were deemed adequate, we should not care to be aware of spiritual realities. *Human* dissatisfaction is *divine* discontent, which becomes not only an impulse to, but prompts in specializing organs for perceiving inner plane worlds.

It is particularly the growth of his mental powers, the growing need to justify experience rationally, to permeate the content of his consciousness with thinking, that is posing man his problems and simultaneously holding out to him his promise. This predicament describes the very condition for which the Rosicrucian Philosophy was formulated and ushered out onto the material plane—that it might provide man with reasonable sanctions for religious beliefs and moral conduct for which, at a prior time, ecclesiastical authority and vigorous faith alone sufficed. Man increasingly needs to know the reason for his faith. Less easily can he give himself to recite a creed that does not resonate in his soul, or to enact rituals whose value as living symbols is lost to his conscious understanding.

The antidote for contemporary amnesia is a reminding of core spiritual truths. What orthodox

religions bring to the casual practitioner are forms virtually devoid of their original informing life and meaning. This is the way of all ceremony and rote utterance that is not continuously ignited by the spark of living inspiration.

Man can approach the need for regenerating the religious dimension from two directions, which ultimately converge as one and the same activity: He may emphasize the historical approach, reading deeply into the systems, visions, and semantics of his predecessors from accounts of the lives of saints, gleaning the wisdom of sages and drawing on the creative insights of poets. From these rare ores quarried out of the experience of exceptional

souls, the student of higher knowledge may prepare, in the crucible of action, of persistent meditation fired by his spiritual aspiration, a vital substance that ultimately is he himself, become what he was seeking outside himself in the words and ways of others.

Proper use of the mind is theodicy: it demonstrates and affirms the existence and beneficence of God in the face of darkness and apparent evil.

A second approach to spiritual rebirth, the existential or firsthand method, emphasizes the value of immediate experience as the source for what one seeks. The past century has been witness to individual man's impatience with formal schooling, authoritative precedents, and historical priorities. The Aquarian impulse advances evermore strongly the intuition that out of the resources of his own being man can penetrate through the fog of intellectual confusion and the agnosticism of lukewarm thinking to realities that affirm his purpose and instrumentality in creation, that experientially confirm the truth implied in the ancient Ptolemaic or geocentric view of the Cosmos: Humanity is the focus for the endeavors of myriads of celestial Beings and cosmic processes.

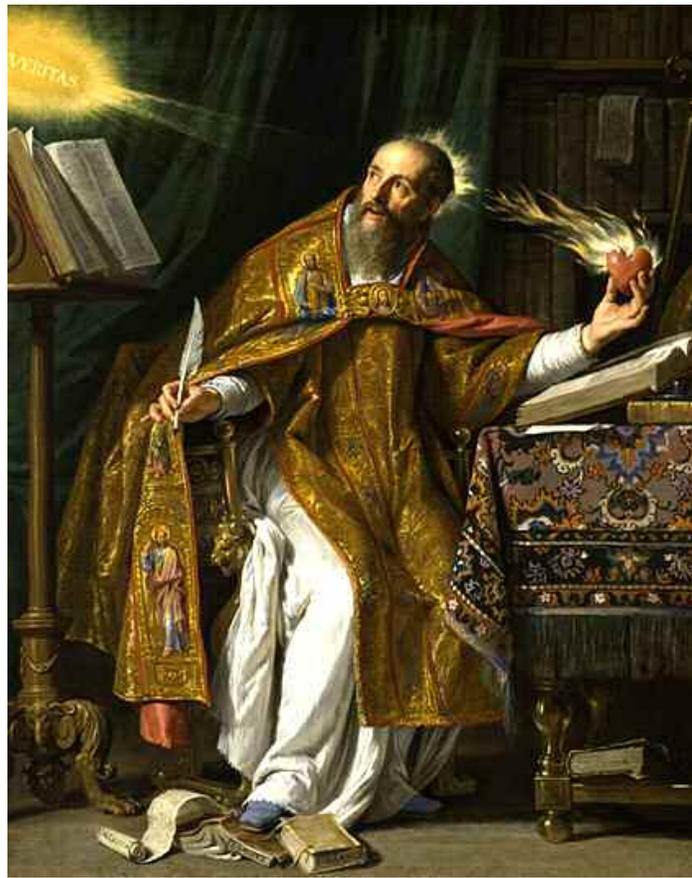
When man employs his thinking faculty solely to subserve sense perception, he demeans his status as a son of God and becomes, in effect, an issue of the mineral world. His thoughts and feelings, his entire inner life, is practically phased out of existence, being granted only as much reality as accorded

flickering shadows cast by light on moving physical objects.

On the other hand, when man employs his thinking powers to condense elaborate intuitions, to translate images descending from inner-plane worlds, even as sense perceptions give evidence of the material world, then man is empowered to raise his consciousness above a strict identification with the physical world. He is blessed with the awareness that a reversion of the common attitude is correct—that the inner life of thoughts and feelings is rather the origin of what our senses convey to us from space. Rather do material objects take on something of the quality of shadows, secondary phenomenon, a multiple remove from the genuine and true reality.

The birth of the mind in its rightful role as midwife to spiritual realities redeems man from the oppression of matter. He discovers that he can be transformed by the renewing of his mind. The mind is all-potent to determine for man exactly what it is he seeks. Rightfully used, used as a sacrament, mind can give new life and greater impulse to the love capacity. Mind can protect and exalt the heart function as a spiritual receiver of the Cosmic Love impulse, by translating and transmitting that impulse as word and deed for human betterment.

Are we any closer to answering our initial question? What, if anything, may a man come to and find, through the strength of his own faculties, to which he can give absolute assent, as being so central to the fact or act of consciousness that its reality stands above whatever evidence mind itself may marshal to prove or disprove it? Again, why do we even ask such a question? Because it is asked of us. It already is. The question is asking us to follow it to its origin. It is God-given. God in Christ, our incarnate Answer, says, "Here I AM. Come unto me, know Me." In the guise of uncertainty, our question is laying down for us a thread of light which we may follow out of the subterranean labyrinth of thinking that is bound to sense-perceptions. This thread of light is a Lifeline that is dropped down into the material consciousness of each of us by our own immortal Self, our Spirit-Self, which prompts us to lay hold and climb



Oil on canvas (1645-1650), Philippe de Champaigne, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Saint Augustine

Heart aflame with love for God and His Christ, the Church Father receives inspiration from the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth.

toward the light's Source. Our soul is being fished for by our own eternal Ego, even as Peter through spiritual wisdom (institutionalized by the Catholic Church) was charged to be a fisher of human souls.

In our inextinguishable desire to know, to be what in our heart of hearts we intuit ourselves to be, we get so greedy for spiritual food, for that living Bread, that we seize upon the substance of our sense impressions and pierce through it to the soul of its inwardness and find that the image it gives us as mundane form is simply a window to an interior life, a physical word designating a metaphysical world, a door entering upon a reality of a different order, creating in us, by our building love for it, higher organs of knowing and seeing.

Should a critic call to our attention the vague mode of our delivery from material captivity, we might cite the highly suggestive table of electromagnetic vibrations appearing in Max Heindel's

The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception. This diagram makes wonderfully clear that the manifestation of being is a function of increased energy as measured by frequency or vibratory rate of etheric root-substance—thus sound, light, and X-rays are isomorphs of the same basic matter.

By analogy, as the thrust of the desire to know life steps up, as the impelling need to see the light increases, the ability to discern life and light increases proportionately, or rather, geometrically. Phylogenetically, the desire to see light has built the eye to receive the light.

Likewise, the desire to see the light of the reason for existence builds the inner eye that perceives the spiritual prototypes of the visible world. We are describing no tepid wish to have an occasional temporary solution to a mundane problem. Man must burn with a fire of desire that incinerates the personal ingredient in him, sears the little self and anneals the permanent element in his being. This irreducible and pure residuum then can carry the higher charge, can incandesce with the focused fire of willing to know, then with the ability to know, and finally with the radiant reality of knowing itself.

Our desire to know is a holy urge that has an all-penetrating property by virtue of its very purity and intensity. This is a requisite to the dawning and mounting of light. Man brings his pain and suffering, his anguish of doubt, to the altar of his inner sanctuary, to that interior place in him beyond which he cannot go. There he offers up, in the best way he knows how, the essence of his doing and his desiring; he makes of his life a gift, in the form of an unformable prayer: Here I give my doubts and pains in the holiest form I can achieve for them. Accept them as kindling for Thy fire to light me into understanding enactment of Thy ways.

Whether he reads a book or not, the seeker of Light, sufficiently intent on discovering, *will* discover, *will* be enlightened. Light and Truth will find

him as he allows his quest to be encouraged and hallowed by faith and love. Love, among countless other of its powers, fully enables the aspirant to tolerate the tension of being in the dark while having perfect assurance that all light and wisdom is now working in him. Love transforms the potentially inhuman quest for knowledge into a consciousness which lives truth.

Here we stand on the threshold of the greatest mystery in man's being and becoming—the world mystery. When man weaves the spiritual

impulses arising from his heart and mind and soul into the perceptions that compose the fabric of his daily experience, when, with the compassion spiritualized from his despair, loss, and hurt, he reads wisely into the Book of Life, he unites the seed of mental idea with the life body of love: Idea incarnates. Man contacts in his own higher Person, the

mystery of the incarnation of Divinity. He embodies the reality of a Deed performed for all humanity by the Spirit of the Sun Who took on human form that individual man might thereafter consciously take on divine form.

Divinity is the source of man's mortality. "Man" and "mortal" are synonymous only to the materialist. For man fully to realize his human potential, he had to become subject to two forms of death: one, death to the higher world upon physical embodiment. Two, death to the physical plane upon leaving his dense material body. Man's divinity is consciously realized through the foil and forces of death.

The cosmic gift bestowed upon man by Christ through Jesus was and is the power to establish contact with the Christ-Light as a spiritual member or faculty of man's developing individuality. Since Golgotha, man can, under his own power, awaken to his spiritual nature, can live consciously outside a dense material body, can experience life beyond the grave.

A glib dismissal of the Christ reality, the Christ

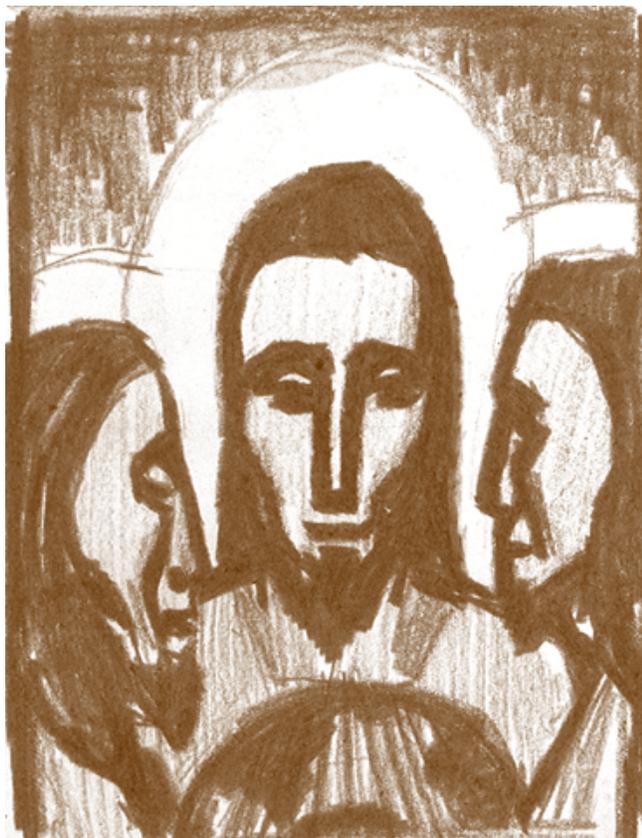
Love, among countless other of its powers, fully enables the aspirant to tolerate the tension of being in the dark while having perfect assurance that all light and wisdom is now working in him.

Presence, may be made on the grounds by which the reality of classical gods are rejected. This opinion has it that man can only have knowledge of himself and that his need for superphysical beings has simply objectified a dependent thought form. Anthropomorphism, God made in man's image, runs exactly counter to even the traditional account of creation given in Genesis where the Elohim (God) are described as creating man in *Their* image. The solipsist would yet prefer the unreasonable notion that the unfathomably delicate phenomenon that is physical man originated willy-nilly out of the chance combinations of atoms rather than took form in accordance with pre-existing Cosmic archetypes and by spirit-mediated processes .

As the conception of an exclusively man-centered universe is a delusion foisted by Luciferic beings, so the idea of a strictly material universe is a veil thrown up by other spiritual Powers whose own development is served by tempting man to regard only the physical world as real.

In his spiritual odyssey, man in search of ultimate answers must steer his course between these twin perils of egoism and materialism, which lie at the root of his tribulations. If he is exclusively for himself, he is against himself. If he believes only in what he sees, he is a non-believer and a self-deceiver. Yet, curiously, the forces that would subvert his spiritual career actually assist man, through a wisdom that is born of error and suffering, in consciously realizing his higher Self.

Over ages of experiment and blundering man discovers that real peace of mind and freedom of spirit are achieved only through living to and for the large, the whole, the one. Whatever he excludes from his consciousness causes man, to that extent, to diminish himself. His soul feels the absence and he cannot develop spiritual security until he ceases to protect his sense of self and ceases to honor personal preferences to the exclusion of general needs and overall harmony. Seeking man discovers that God plays no favorites, and that his best interests are served by emulating this divine example. The sun of his budding spiritual consciousness does not shine for one and set or eclipse for another. He is learning to live independently of the mutabilities of outer appearances. His consciousness is rooted in



Courtesy of Harry Menne

Christian Initiates

an interior certitude, in his eternal Sun-nature, whose personification is Christ Jesus, Christ in man. To know the answer, to come to absolute bedrock truth, a fact of experienced being not affected by the variables of time and space, is, as surely as the Sun shines, to come knowingly within the aura of the Christ Reality. He would and will discover for himself what the New Testament and countless other books testify to—that in God who manifested through Christ Jesus we live and move and have our being. The content of books is, after all, an expression of human thinking and intuition whose sources descend from on high and permeate humanity and its Earth more completely than air man's body or light the atmosphere. He must be weaned from dependency on the maternal, material world.

For man to come to Christ, he must turn away from his selfish part and attune his being to what God wants for him, which is to acknowledge his spiritual patrimony as a son/daughter of God.

To one who would go it alone he would say, "Fine. All the more power." Self-reliance is a cardi-

nal virtue and necessary for the spiritual aspirant. We can appreciate our spiritual pioneer's feeling that books are memorials, tombstones with inspired epitaphs. But at some point in his journey, such a brave one, our solitary pilgrim, must come to grips with his own pride, and through the purgative fires of suffering and humiliation acknowledge his powerlessness to know spiritual truth without knowing Christ—the Living Word of Truth. Then he may say, as if for a first time, and with overwhelming relief, "Not my will but Thine be done." He may say, "Not I but Christ in me." Then, through Christ, he is given all power in heaven and on earth. Each of us establishes the readiness to go, but the Way-shower points the Way and walks within as our Light on the path. Each of us may and must purify the vessel of our consciousness, but He who is the divine content of the Cosmos fills our soul with wisdom and comforts our heart with heavenly peace.

We may attain on our own to an experience of considerable conviction, but the full Light we seek in our spiritual center is the blessed Presence of the Lord Christ Who is the Source and spiritual substance of this inviolable Reality. This transcendent *I* is the Guarantor of our eternal life. Christ Jesus is the cornerstone of our spiritual temple. He is the Foundation that has already been laid.

When the stuff of immediate experience is recognized as being shot through and saturated by spiritual forces and spiritual Intelligences, we begin to know real reverence. In fact, no attitude is so conducive to the revelation of spiritual truths as genuine humility, which enkindles the desire to revere and to adore. These soul qualities invoke and make welcome their corresponding soul-realities. A feeling contemplation of natural wonders, when allowed to work on the soul, must elicit in one the awareness of supersensible Beings of Light and Wisdom who cradle man in their vast and perfect care. Life is holy. Creation is the handiwork of celestial Hierarchies of awesome majesty.

Yet man plays the critical role in his becoming divinely self-conscious. He determines and he confirms what he can know and what he may be. As he centers his conscious being in his Higher self, as he learns to love Light, to discern Truth, and to live the

MACROCOSM AND MICROCOSM

In patterned fires across the evening sky
The stars, like guiding lights, through space
are swung.

And gazing toward the firmament on high,
We see the constellations far outflung.
So vast are all those circling orbs of light
As limned against the darkness deep and still,
With awe we marvel at their starry might,
Thus moving in the universal Will.

Oh, come from hall and every cottage door
And stand beneath the tapestry of night,
Where glory shines on the celestial floor,
And streams of Life flow through the worlds
of light.

Then know the law for you to be the same
With all the worlds that swing in heaven's frame.

—Martha Norburn Allen

Good, man finds that his own transformation has transformed the world, that the light he has brought to himself illuminates reality at large, that he and Creation exist as One, that sin and suffering are afflictions of a consciousness divided against itself, products of the very condition from which doubts and questions arise.

Ultimate answers are not purely or even primarily mental in nature. They are embracing of all man's occult members. One comes to think Christ because, knowingly or not, one has already begun to live Christ, to practice His Presence. The man becoming wise gives more answers, lives more answers, and asks fewer questions, lives fewer questions. As he affirms the Christ, the immensely creative principle of I AM, he discovers that in a profound sense he is the answer, that man himself, in the amplitude of his full divine being, is the answer to the sphinx's riddle. When he fully solves the riddle, he is no longer subject to death. When man begins to experience who he truly is, he has entered in upon the Light within, he has begun to put on Christ. He identifies with, he is, the Light of the world. □