

*Meditation on the
Fourteenth Major Arcanum of the Tarot*

TEMPERANCE

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*Exaudi nos, Domine sancte,
Pater omnipotent, aeterne Deus,
et mittere digneris sanctum Angelum tuum de coelis,
qui custodial, foveat, protegat,
visitat atque defendat
omnes habitantes in hoc habitaculo.*

(Hear us Lord, holy Lord,
almighty Father, eternal God,
and deign to send your holy Angel from heaven.
to guard, cherish, protect, visit and defend
all who are gathered together in this place.)

(Liturgical prayer of the introductory
service preceding the solemn Mass)

Everyone who drinks of this water
will thirst again, but whoever
drinks of the water that I shall give him
will never thirst;
the water that I shall give him
will become in him a spring of water
welling up to eternal life.

(John iv, 13-14)

Truly, truly, I say to you,
unless one is born anew,
he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

(John iii, 3)

By upbringing and intellectual training,
I belong to the "children of heaven";
but by temperament, and by my professional studies,
I am a "child of the earth".
Situated thus by life at the heart of two worlds
with whose theory, idiom and feelings
intimate experience has made me familiar,
I have not erected any watertight bulkhead inside myself.
*On the contrary, I have allowed
two apparently conflicting influences full freedom to
react upon one another deep within me.*

(Pierre Teilhard de Chardin)*

LETTER XIV



TEMPERANCE

Dear Unknown Friend,

The Card of the fourteenth Major Arcanum of the Tarot places us in the presence of an Angel in a robe which is half red and half blue, who is accomplishing—or presiding over the accomplishment of—a strange act, where he is pouring colourless water from one vase into another, or rather he is making it gush almost horizontally between the two vases, at an angle of about 45 degrees, the vases being held at a considerable distance from one another.

An intellectual shock! . . .and therefore an *arcanum* — something which one has

'Comment je crois Intr.; trsl. R. Hague, *How I Believe*, London. 1969, p. 7.

to take hold of and apprehend beyond the usual plane of experience and thought. This invites us, therefore, to profound meditation — to a spiritual exercise. Let us follow this invitation.

What is the problem that the Card — its whole context — arouses spontaneously in the mind of he who looks at it attentively? What is the *message* of the Angel with two wings, in the red and blue robe, holding two vases, one red and one blue, and making water gush in a mysterious way from one vase to the other? Is he not the one who bears the good news that beyond the duality of "either-or" there is — or is possible — still that of "not only-but also" or "both-and"? Does not the totality of the Card, the Angel of the Card, suggest the problem of *cooperating polarity*, or *integrated duality*? Does it not first of all suggest the presentiment or suspicion that perhaps it is thanks to the two wings, the two arms, the two colours of the robe, the two vases, that the water pours forth? . . . that this water is the fruit and the gift of the "both-and" of integrated duality, which jumps to one's attention as one looks at the Card?

Thus the idea which is presented first of all to the mind, in the presence of the Card of the fourteenth Arcanum, belongs to the range of ideas relating to *polarity* and what this latter offers in possibilities for the spiritual knowledge and realisation — mystical, gnostic and magical — of the Hermeticist.

In preceding Letters there has already been the question, in diverse connections, of a *twofold polarity* — that of "polemic" (war), which produces energy of an "electrical" kind, and that of cooperation or "peace", which releases force of a "vital" nature. Now, the Angel of the Card of the fourteenth Arcanum invites us to return to the problem of this double polarity and twofold dynamic, in promising to throw new light on this subject. Let us therefore return to this.

An expert of the first order in spiritual life and authentic spiritual experience, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, has bequeathed to posterity a doctrine of fundamental importance. This is his doctrine of the *divine image and likeness* of man. This doctrine lends itself admirably to serve as a point of departure for a thorough-going investigation of this twofold polarity. The following are its essential points:

God made man "in his image and likeness" (Genesis i, 26). The divine image and the divine likeness coincided in the first man, before the original sin. But their coincidence did not persist after the Fall. The image has remained intact, but the initial likeness has been lost. Man is, following the original sin, in the "disfigurement of unlikeness", whilst conserving the image.

Man was made in the image and likeness of God: in image he possesses freedom of will, and in likeness he possesses virtues. The likeness has been destroyed; however, man conserves the image. The image can be burnt in hell, but not consumed. It is damaged but not destroyed. Through fate as such it is not effaced, but subsists. Wherever the soul is, there also will be the

image. It is not so with the likeness. This remains in the soul which accomplishes the good; in the soul which sins it is wretchedly transformed. The soul which has sinned ranks with beasts devoid of intelligence. (St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermon on the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary*; French trsl. M. M. Davy, *Oeuvres de Saint Bernard*, vol. i, p. 106)

According to St. Bernard, the image is therefore the *essential structure* of the human being and the likeness in him is the totality of functions or *the functional structure*. It is the essential structure of the human being, the image, which is indestructable and which establishes freedom in an inalienable and irremovable way.

Man *is* free, and remains so through all eternity—on earth, in hell, in purgatory, in heaven — always and everywhere. Freedom is therefore an *absolute fact*. As such, it entails immortality—the argument that one finds again in Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*, for what is his "categorical imperative" if not the divine image in man?

With respect to the likeness or totality *of functions* of the human being, a hotbed of sin, with its attractions towards evil, has taken root there. And it is immortal only in proportion to the measure that it conforms again to its image. Its immortality is optional.

This is the essence of St. Bernard's doctrine. It gives rise to the question: If the divine image in man has not undergone any weakening and if the divine likeness in him has partly abrogated and has had to make way for inclinations and habits tending towards evil, is there something in human life which counterbalances the bad inclinations in man's functional organism, opposing good inclinations to them? Yes. There is certainly something added to man's functional organism to play in it the role of a counterweight to the leverage of vicious inclinations and habit which have become established since the primordial Fall. *This is the guardian Angel.*

The guardian Angel accompanies as a faithful ally the divine image in man, just as vicious inclinations have made their way into the human functional organism which was, before the Fall, the divine likeness. The guardian Angel undertakes the functions, destroyed by original sin, in the likeness, and fills the breach wrought by them. He substitutes himself for functions destroyed through the Fall.

As the prayer of the service of aspersion (that I have put at the head of this Letter) states it, in praying to God "to deign to send from heaven his holy Angel to *guard, cherish, protect, visit and defend* all those who are gathered together in this place", the Angel acquits his charge in five ways: he guards, cherishes, protects, visits and defends. He is therefore a "flaming star", a luminous pentagram, above man.

He *guards* memory, i.e. the continuity of the great past in the present, which is the preparation for the great future. It is the guardian Angel who takes care

that there is a connection between the great "yesterday, today and tomorrow" of the human soul. He is a perpetual "memento" with regard to the primordial likeness, with regard to the eternal mission assigned to the soul in the cosmic symphony, and with regard to the special room for the soul "in my Father's house, where there are many rooms" (John xiv, 2). If it is necessary, the guardian Angel awakens recollections of the soul's previous earthly lives, in order to establish continuity of endeavour—of the quest and aspiration of the soul from life to life—so that particular lives are not merely isolated episodes but constitute the stages of a single *path* towards one sole end.

The guardian Angel *cherishes* the endeavour, quest and aspiration of the soul engaged on this way. This means to say that he fills in the breaks in the psychic functional organism due to the disfigurement of the likeness, and makes up for its failings—given the soul's good will towards it. For *support* never signifies substitution of the Angel's will for that of man. The will remains free, always and everywhere. The guardian Angel never touches on man's free will and resigns himself to await the decision or choice made in the inviolable sanctuary of free will—in order to lend his assistance immediately if it is just, or to remain a passive observer reduced alone to prayer if it is not.

Just as the guardian Angel is sometimes constrained not to participate in the soul's activity—this activity not being in accord with the divine image of the soul—so also he can sometimes take a greater part in human activity than usual—this activity being of a nature not simply permitted but also called for. Then the guardian Angel descends from the point of his ordinary post into the domain of human activity. He then *visits* the human being.

Such "visits" of the guardian Angel do sometimes take place—when then possibility and necessity coincide. But what the guardian Angel does unceasingly is to *protect* the human being. Here he makes up for the failings of the human senses, which are deprived of their clairvoyance from before the original sin. He is the clairvoyant helping the non-clairvoyant with respect to psychic and physical temptations and dangers. He warns, informs and helps to appreciate. Nevertheless, what he never does is to suppress the occasions themselves of temptation. For, as St. Anthony the Great said, "without temptation there is no spiritual progress". Temptation belongs as an integral part to the exercise of human free will, which is inviolable—both for an Angel and for a demon.

With respect to the last of the five functions of the guardian Angel concerning man, namely his *defence*, it differs from the others in that it is turned above, towards heaven, and is no longer directed below or horizontally. In dealing with the question of the defence that the guardian Angel accords to his protege, we approach the holy mystery of the very heart of the guardian Angel. For the nature of Angelic love is revealed here, of which the following are some indications.

Guardian Angels remain above their proteges. This means to say, amongst other things, that they *screen* him from heaven, from the look directed below from above. The fact that human beings on earth are screened by their guardian Angels from

Divine Justice signifies—other than guarding, supporting, protecting and contacting—that guardian Angels are the *defenders*, the advocates, of man before Divine Justice. Just as Moses said to the LORD, when the children of Israel had committed the mortal sin of having preferred a god made of gold to the Living God, ". . .but now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written" (Exodus xxxii, 32), so do guardian Angels "cover" their proteges before the face of Divine Justice. This amounts to the declaration—whether explicit or implicit is not important—"Forgive them their sins. If not, efface us from the Book of Life that you have written." This is the defence of guardian Angels for their proteges.

The guardian Angel covers his protege with his wings, in conferring on him his own merits before the eyes of Divine Justice and also in taking on himself the faults of his protege before the eyes of Divine Justice. It is as if he says, "If the lightning of divine wrath must strike my protege, my child, may it strike me instead of him—or if he must be struck, may it strike both of us together!"

The guardian Angel defends his protege like a *mother* defends her child, without regard to whether he may be good or bad. It is the mystery of maternal love which lives in the heart of the guardian Angel. Not all Angels are guardian Angels; there are others who have diverse missions. But guardian Angels, in so far as they are guardian Angels, are "mothers" of their proteges. This is why traditional art presents them as winged females. And this is why the Card of the fourteenth Arcanum of the Tarot also openly presents the Angel as a winged female, dressed in a woman's robe, half-blue and half-red.

Guardian Angels—or should I use the feminine form, "Angelines"?—are the manifestation of high and pure maternal love. For this reason the Holy Virgin and Mother of God bears the liturgical title *Regina Angelorum*--"queen of the Angels". It is the maternal love in her that she has in common with the guardian Angels and which, in surpassing theirs, makes her their queen.

There are, as I said above, other Angels who are not guardian Angels. I am not speaking of the eight celestial hierarchies above that of the Angels; I am speaking solely of the hierarchy of the Angels, i.e. of the *ninth* celestial hierarchy. There are Angels who are "messengers", i.e. "Angels" (*angeloi*—"messengers" in Greek) in the proper sense of the word; there are Angels with special missions and tasks—Angels of the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, the Virgin, Death, Life, Karma, Relationships (between different spheres), Revelations of Wisdom, Knowledge, Ascetic Discipline—and many others. Many of them represent paternal love, or rather fraternal love.

Here I do not want to say anything either for or against what Swedenborg says concerning the sex of Angels, but what I would like to portray here is the maternal love of guardian Angels, and that there are other Angels who represent paternal love and also fraternal love. And it is in *this sense*—and only in this sense—that I would like you, dear Unknown Friend, to think of the Angels as entities in whom prevails either the tenderness of maternal love or the justice of paternal

love. For what it is a matter of is not to project earthly sexuality upon heaven, but rather, on the contrary, to see in the former a reflection—although often disfigured—of the polarity from above. I may add that the Jewish Cabbala—above all the *Zohar*—teaches admirably the lesson of thinking of things here below as the reflection of things from above, and not inversely. The *Zohar* is truly one of the better schools of purity and chastity concerning all that relates to husband and wife, father and mother, son and daughter, fiance and fiancée, at one and the same time in the spiritual, soul and physical worlds. For true chastity is not to refuse to look at and to see, or even to deny, but rather to see the celestial prototypes through and beyond things here below. And it is this chastity that one finds and apprehends in the *Zohar*, the Book of Splendour of the Jewish Cabbala.

But let us return to guardian Angels. The Angels, including guardian Angels, live and move exclusively in the *vertical*. Ascent and descent constitute the law of their life, their respiration. They ascend towards God; they descend towards mankind.

It is said that the Angels are in perpetual contemplation of God. They are, if one understands by contemplation the state of being in permanent contact with the Holy Trinity and of being blinded by its light. It is the "dark contemplation" of which St. John of the Cross spoke which is that of the Angels. They do not see God; they are united to him substantially. With respect to guardian Angels, neither do they see one another, nor do they see entities of the other hierarchies—Archangels, Principalities, Powers, Virtues, Dominions, Thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim. For the presence of transcendental divine light in them envelops in darkness their perception of the intermediary spheres between God and mankind.

It is the latter sphere that they see, or rather the "spheres" of their proteges. It is here that they make use of this clairvoyance, which the human being—who has lost it—has need of for the protection it affords. It is here also that the Angels display the geniality of synthetic and profound understanding—without parallel—which has merited them, on the part of human beings, with the attribute of "omniscience". They are not omniscient, but the facility with which they orientate themselves in human things and grasp them—at contact with which their "dark" divine wisdom becomes resplendent—has so impressed human beings who have had the experience of consciously meeting with them that they have been led to consider them as omniscient. It is to this impression that has been gained of Angels that the word "genius" owes its original meaning, namely that of superhuman intelligence.

But—and this is the tragic side of Angelic existence—this geniality shows up only when the human being has need of it, when he makes room for the flashing forth of its illumination. The Angel depends on man in his creative activity. If the human being does not ask for it, if he turns away from him, the Angel has no motive for creative activity. He can then fall into a state of consciousness where all his creative geniality remains in potential and does not manifest. It is a state of vegetation or "twilight existence", comparable to sleep from the human point

of view. An Angel who has nothing to exist for is a tragedy in the spiritual world.

Therefore, dear Unknown Friend, think of your guardian Angel, think of him when you have problems, questions to resolve, tasks to accomplish, plans to formulate, cares and fears to appease! Think of him as a luminous cloud of maternal love above you, moved by the sole desire to serve you and to be useful to you. Do not allow the scruple to arise in you, however noble it may be, that when you appeal to your guardian Angel you are allowing an entity to come between you and God who is not God, and that therefore you abandon the aspiration to *immediate* contact between your soul and God—to the direct and authentic touch of God, without intermediary! For the guardian Angel will never interpose himself between your soul and God in any way, even to an infinitesimal degree, to impede the occurrence of the "song of songs" of your soul and God! He has no other concern than to make these immediate and authentic contacts possible, to render your soul disposed to them—and he withdraws as soon as his Lord and yours draws near to your soul. The guardian Angel is the friend of the bride at the spiritual marriage of the soul and God. Just as the friend of the husband who "prepared the way of the Lord and made his paths straight" was obedient to the law of the friend of the husband—"He must increase, but I must decrease" (John iii, 30)—so does the friend of the bride, who prepares the way of the Lord and makes his paths straight, obey the same law. The guardian Angel withdraws before the approach of One who is greater than he.

There is what is called in Christian Hermeticism the "freeing of the guardian Angel". The guardian Angel is freed—often in order to be able to acquit new missions—when the soul has acquired the disposition of its part of "likeness" in order to experience the Divine more intimately and more immediately, which corresponds to another hierarchical degree. Then it is an *Archangel* who replaces the freed guardian Angel. Human beings whose guardian is an Archangel have not only new experiences of the Divine in their inner life, but also, through this very fact, receive a new and objective vocation. They become *representative!*, of a human group—a nation or a human karmic community—which means to say that from this time onwards their actions will no longer be purely personal but will at the same time have significance and value for those of the human community that they represent.

It was so for Daniel, who in praying the following, was acting not only in his name but also—and above all—in the name of the people of Israel:

. . .we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from thy commandments and ordinances . . . Now, therefore, O our God, hearken to the prayer of thy servant and to his supplications, and for the love of the Lord, cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary, which is desolate. O my God, incline thy ear and hear! Open thy eyes and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name. . . (Daniel ix. 5. 17-18)

And it was the *Archangel Gabriel* who "came to him in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice. . . he came to give him wisdom and understanding" (Daniel ix, 21-22). Here we have an example of the freeing of the guardian Angel and of the assumption of his responsibility by an Archangel—in this case the Archangel Gabriel.

It also happens sometimes that the Archangel is freed as well. Then it is an entity from the hierarchy of Powers or Elohim which replaces the Archangel. The human being then becomes a representative of the future of humanity. He lives in the present what mankind someday is due to experience in future centuries.

It is thus that Moses, Elijah and David, for example, were under the protection of the wings of an Elohim—and not only their words but also their *lives* themselves were *prophetic*.

But one could make the objection that it is Got/himself who was revealed and spoke to Moses, Elijah and David, and not an entity of the hierarchy of Powers or Elohim. There is reason to reply to this objection that just as there were human prophets through whose mouths the Holy Spirit spoke, so also there were hierarchical entities through whom the Holy Spirit, the Son and the Father spoke and acted. Thus the three Angels who appeared to Abraham in the heat of the day (Genesis xviii) spoke and acted as the Holy Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It was the Holy Trinity who spoke—through them—to Abraham,

Similarly, Jahve-Elohim was the "bearer" or "representative" of God—of his word and his power—in the accomplishment of the mission with which he was charged by the Holy Trinity, namely that of preparation for the Incarnation of Christ. In so far as he was an "authorised agent" representing God, Jahve-Elohim brought the providential design of the Incarnation to realisation; in so far as he was an Elohim or Power, he acted as guardian entity of Moses, Elijah and David.

Lastly, a guardian Elohim—and there are many of them—can also be freed. Then it is an entity of the first hierarchy, a *Seraphim*, who replaces him. It was so for St. Francis of Assisi. The Seraphim who gave him the teaching of the Crucifixion whereby he gained the stigmata—the Seraphim in the vision of St. Francis—was his guardian. This is why St. Francis represents more than mankind; what he represents is "divinised humanity"—this is the God-Man, Jesus Christ himself. However, stigmata are not always visible. There are stigmata, so to say, "turned outside", and there are stigmata "turned within"—but all those who are under the guardianship of a Seraphim bear the stigmata, visible or invisible. For they represent the Christ.

With respect to stigmata, this subject has been treated from a *practical point* of view in the fifth Letter on the Arcanum "The Pope". It is not fitting to treat it theoretically. Respect forbids me.

The following is what St. John of the Cross said concerning the stigmata of St. Francis:

It will happen that while the soul is inflamed with the love of God... it will feel that a Seraphim is assailing it by means of

an arrow or dart which is all afire with love. And the Seraphim pierces and cauterises this soul which, like a red-hot coal, or better a flame, is already enkindled. And then in this cauterisation, when the soul is transpierced with that dart, the flame gushes forth, vehemently and with a sudden ascent. . . And being wounded by this fiery dan, the soul feels the wound with unsurpassable delight. . . God sometimes permits an effect to extend to the bodily senses in the fashion in which it existed interiorly, the wound and sore (then) appears outwardly, as happened when the Seraphim wounded St. Francis. When the soul is wounded with love by the five wounds, the effect extends to the body and these wounds are impressed on the body and it is wounded, just as the soul is wounded with love. God does not usually bestow a favour upon the body without bestowing it first and principally upon the soul. (St. John of the Cross. *The Living Flame of Love* ii, 9, 11; trsl. K. Kavanaugh and O. Rodriguez, *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, London, 1966, pp. 598-599)

You see therefore, dear Unknown Friend, how it is with regard to the guardian Angel and the union of the soul with God. There is no reason to fear that the least hindrance to this union can ever arise on the part of the entities who are spiritual guardians of the human soul. On the contrary, rather, it is they who make it at all possible — and even beyond the possible — for the soul to be united with God in complete intimacy and with perfect authenticity and freedom. The friend of the wife only leads the wife to the husband — then she withdraws. Her joy is that of herself diminishing and of seeing that of the wife increase.

The Card of the fourteenth Arcanum represents a *winged* female. What do the wings that she has — and the wings of hierarchical entities in general — signify?

Tentacles, paws, arms, wings — are they not simply diverse forms manifesting a common prototype or principle? They are in so far as they express the desire to bear the sense of touch further, to be able to touch things more removed than those in the immediate neighbourhood of the surface of the body. They are *active extensions* of the passive and receptive sense of touch which is spread out over the surface of the organism. In making use of them, the sense of touch makes "excursions" from its usual orbir circumscribed by the skin which covers the body.

The organs of action are simply crystallised will. I walk not because I have legs but rather, on the contrary, I have legs because I have the will to move about. I touch, I take and I give not because I have arms, but I have arms because I have the will to touch, to take and to give.

The "what" of the will engenders the "how" of the action (the organ), and not inversely. The arms are therefore the expression of the will to bear touch further than the surface of one's own body. They are the manifestation of extended touch, due to the will to touch things at a distance.

It is similar with *wings*. They are also an exteriorised will — a will become organ.

This is the will to go out from the usual orbit not only in the horizontal but also in the vertical, not only to bear touch *forward*, but also to bear it *above*. Wings express the will for movement according to a cross, i.e. not only that of *expansion* on a plane but also that of *elevation* to another plane.

All this is related to the *whole* corporeal organism, i.e. the etheric and astral bodies as well as the physical body. Therefore there are physical wings (as with birds), etheric wings and astral wings. The wings of the subtle bodies (the vital body and the soul body)—like the physical wings of birds with regard to the air—are organs of active contact with the "air", i.e. with the substance and currents of the spiritual world. Just as the bird, whose body is solid and liquid, elevates itself by means of wings from the solid and liquid regions into that of the air, so does the Angel elevate itself by means of currents of vital and psychic energy—which correspond to wings—into the spiritual world higher than vital and astral elements.

Here the analogy stops. For there is also an essential difference between the functioning of the physical wings of a bird, and the operation of the wings—currents of vital and psychic forces—of an Angel. It is as follows:

The bird, in flying, *supports* itself on the air in order to overcome terrestrial gravitation. Its flying results from its effort—it *beats* the air with its wings—directed against terrestrial gravitation. However, it is the opposite for an Angel. Its "flying" is not a mechanical operation of "sculling in the air", as is the case with a bird, but it is a *magical operation* of the establishing of contact with "celestial gravitation", i.e. with divine attraction. He does not use his wings *against* terrestrial gravitation, but rather he employs them *in order* to put himself in contact with "celestial gravitation". It is the *touch* of divine love that the Angel seeks and finds by means of his wings, and which raises him in ecstasy to a higher sphere.

One could thus say in a concise way: the bird flies by *beating* its wings against the air, by resting on the air; the Angel "flies" by *immobilising* its wings after having touched God. The bird flies thanks to the air; the Angel "flies" thanks to God. In other words, the Angel's wings constitute semi-organic links with God.

Links—for there are two: one wing holds him in contact with divine understanding, and the other with divine memory / imagination. The two wings are therefore related to the contemplative and creative aspects of God which, in their turn, correspond to the divine *image and likeness* in man of which Genesis speaks. For the image is the analogous *structural* relationship of the kernel of the human being—his higher Self or, according to Leibnitz, his "monad"—with God at rest, whilst the likeness is the analogous *functional* relationship of the human being, i.e. his three powers—understanding, imagination and will—with God in action.

Now, the two Angelic wings are the Angel's links with the eternal sabbath and the eternal creativity of God—or, in other words, with *divine gnosis* and *divine magic*. It is by means of the "gnostic" (or "left") wing that the Angel is in contemplation of divine wisdom, and it is by means of the "magical" (or "right")

wing that he is active in his capacity as messenger or "Angel".

This is the *principle* of polarity underlying the duality of the wings. The principle remains valid also for Angels—and for entities from other spiritual hierarchies—who have more than two wings (sixteen, for example). It will be the task of a future science of "Angelology" to grasp the reason or reasons for the plurality of wings of certain Angelic entities. This future science will develop—as there is reason to hope—within the heart of mystical theology, the first layer of which was given by St. Dionysius the Areopagite, or "pseudo-Dionysius", as the learned take pleasure in designating the founder of mystical theology. With respect to us, we have to restrict ourselves to a general explanation of the *two* wings of Angels, in reminding ourselves that it is a matter here of a meditation on the fourteenth Arcanum of the Tarot, whose Card represents an entity with *two wings*—which constitutes, consequently, the problem which occupies us here.

From tradition we know that there are also human beings endowed with wings. Thus the right panel of a triptych forming the circle of a deesis, a Russian icon from the hand of Nicephorus Savine, shows St. John the Baptist as winged (beginning of the seventeenth century, school of Stroganoff, at present in Tretyakoff Gallery, Moscow; cf. T Talbot Rice, *Icons — Ikonen — Icones*, London, 1959, plate 63). Similarly, in place of the Hermit of the Marseille Tarot, the Bologna Tarot shows a winged patriarch, who walks laboriously, bent double on two crutches, having a pillar behind him (cf. Oswald Wirth, *Le Tarot des imagiers du moyen age*, Paris, 1927, p. 145). This is *not* Saturn as Oswald Wirth interprets this Card of the Bologna Tarot, but rather the *Hermit*, i.e. the very essence of the *way* of practical Hermeticism. For the winged old man before a pillar, supporting himself on two crutches has nothing—iconographically—to do with Saturn, save for the advanced age, whilst the context (the pillar, wings, and crutches) of the Card portrays all that is essential, both as fulfilment and as trial, of the spiritual way of Hermeticism. To become a *pillar* is the *aim* of the Hermit or Hermeticism the *means* of raising oneself as a pillar are *wings*; and what becomes more and more difficult for one who becomes a pillar is horizontal movement. The contemplation which is established as a more-or-less permanent state in the soul, by means of wings, renders horizontal movement more and more difficult—the powers of the soul (understanding, imagination and will) being immersed in contemplation. The Hermit of the Bologna Tarot is therefore a Hermeticist (and iconographically the patriarch represents Hermes Trismegistus rather than Saturn, the oriental covering of his head and his dress being traditionally those of the aged Hermes Trismegistus). The Hermeticist, as portrayed in the Card "The Hermit" of the Bologna Tarot, lives in the vertical, immobilised; he has become a "spiritual stylite" at the expense of movement in the horizontal. Here it is not a matter of ancient mythology, but rather of the Arcanum of the practical and spiritual way of Hermeticism.

The astral and etheric wings of a human being signify a more-or-less advanced

degree of recovery of the divine likeness in him. For certainty it was the lot of man before the original sin to have wings. He lost them subsequently. How are they recovered?

Wings are organs of the subtle bodies—astral and vital—and not any kind of activities of the conscious self. It is therefore a matter of the domain of the *unconscious* when it is a question of wings. It is a matter of the task of rendering spiritual endeavours turned towards God, such as prayer and meditation, semi-*organic*, i.e. to transform *conscious acts* of the self into psycho-vital currents of the subtle bodies.

The apostolic counsel "Pray constantly" (I Thessalonians v, 17) is the key here. It is impossible to pray unceasingly in full consciousness, but it is certainly possible to carry over prayer from consciousness into the unconscious, where it can operate unceasingly. The astral and vital bodies can pray unceasingly—which is not possible for the conscious self. The latter can certainly, through its initiative, establish a current of unceasing prayer in consciousness at first, then carry it over into the psychic unconscious (astral body) and into the vital unconscious (etheric body). Yes, it can even carry it as far as the physical body, as is evident from the "sincere accounts of a pilgrim to his spiritual father" (*otkrovennye rasskazy stranika dukhovnyim svoimu ottsu*)—2. Russian book from an anonymous author of the past century on the practical training of the school of unceasing prayer. I have seen translations of this book in English, German, Dutch and French (English translation: *The Way of a Pilgrim*; trsl. R. M. French, London, 1954)—It is described how the pilgrim—who is the author of the book—in waking up during the night, hears his heart beating distinctly the words of the prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ—Son of God—have mercy on me—a sinner" (*Gospodi Iisuse Khriste — Syne Bozhiy — pomiluy mya greshnego*).

Now, it is "unceasing prayer", established in the psychic and vital bodies, which forms the currents directed above in these bodies, and which *can* lead to the formation of wings. I say "can", because the formation of wings demands something still further, namely a current from above which moves to meet that from below. *Wings* are formed only when the two currents—that of human endeavour and that of grace—meet and unite. The Devil of the fifteenth Arcanum of the Tarot also has wings. But his wings consist only of energy engendered from below. They are deprived of grace from above. Angelic wings, on the contrary, are due to the union of effort and grace, just as are those of the divine likeness to-be-recovered in man. It is divine grace which plays the decisive role here. In the last analysis, wings are a *gift* of divine grace.

Pure humanism can create only the wings of Icarus. And the lot of Icarus is known: his wings of "wax" melted in the warmth of the sun, and the unfortunate Icarus fell to the earth. Regarding demonism, it can develop only the wings of a bat, i.e. those of darkness which are organs by means of which one can *plunge* into the depths of darkness.

The presence of authentic and legitimate wings in the human subconscious

(i.e. the psychic and vital bodies) is not without effect on the consciousness of the human being. It manifests itself above all, and in general, as a constant orientation of consciousness towards God. Then man always has the feeling of the presence of God and the spirirual worlds and nothing can take this feeling away from him or suffocate it in him.

This feeling (that the Bible designates as "walking with God" or "walking before the face of God") crystallises itself into two unshakeable convictions: that one can endure all for God and that one can accomplish everything with God. *Martyrdom* and *thaumaturgy* are the two pillars on which faith rests and through which it conquered the old world. Now, it is the "gnostic wing" which disposes consciousness towards martyrdom and it is the "magical wing" which disposes it towards thaumaturgy. A winged human being is therefore disposed towards the heroic and towards the miraculous.

This is the essential of the problem of wings. They are the opposite of legs, because they are organs of contact with heaven, whilst legs are those of contact with the earth. The former put us in relationship with "celestial gravitation"; the latter put us in relationship with terrestrial gravitation.

With respect to *arms* — and the Angel of the Card of the fourteenth Arcanum has arms — they are related to the *horizontal*, i.e. to the fields of mutual attraction of beings who meet one another. If the law of wings is the love of God, that of arms is the love of neighbour. And the law of legs is the love of terrestrial Nature.

The Angel of the Card holds two vases united by a current of water. Thus we find ourselves right in the *problem of fluids*.

The problem of fluids is that of the dynamic functioning of the *whole* human being, i.e. corporeal, psychic and spiritual. In reality, it amounts to that of *life* — understood as a comprehensive spiritual, psychic and corporeal process. For just as there exists a system of physical circulation, so also there exists a system of vital and astral circulation, which in its turn is simply a reflection of the system of circulation comprising spirit, soul and body — the threefold body — as a living unity. The principle underlying this total system of circulation is the divine *likeness*. And as it is this which has undergone the disfiguring effect of original sin, it is the mission of the guardian Angel to see to it that the total system of circulation functions in as healthy a way as possible. The guardian Angel therefore watches over the functioning of the system of spiritual-psychic-corporeal circulation, i.e. the *health* and the *life* of the whole human being. This is why the Card of the fourteenth Arcanum represents him to us as engaged in the accomplishing of his office of regulating the system of circulation, or the human being's fluidic system. The system in question comprises several active centres — the "lotuses", the nerve centres, the glands, to name only the principal ones — but the harmonious functioning of all these centres depends on a single thing, a single action which takes place at the key position: this is the current which constitutes the relationship between the *image* and the *likeness* in man. The monad (the image) should not exist for nothing nor should it inundate the system of circulation (the likeness).

In the first case, the human being would be deprived of the stimulation to live a truly human life, that is to say he would not be orientated towards the aim of human existence. In the latter case, the human being would be shattered by the additional impulse coming from the monad (the image)—which would be an irreparable catastrophe. Now, it is a *just measure* in the relationship between the image and the likeness which has to be guarded and which is, in fact, guarded by the guardian Angel.

This is why tradition has given the name *Temperance* to the fourteenth Arcanum of the Tarot. For it is a matter here of the *measure* in the fluidic relationship between the image and the likeness which is necessary for *life* and *health*.

Just measure in the fluidic relationship between the absolute radicalism of the monad (the image) and the relativism of the phenomenal personality (the likeness) constitutes the fundamental principle of spiritual, psychic and corporeal health. This measure amounts to an always changing equilibrium between eternity and the moment, between the absolute and the relative, between contemplation and action, between the ideal and the phenomenal. Many relevant things can be said concerning the polarity of Mary and Martha—and have indeed been said—but we, all of us, live a healthy life only in as much as the two sisters in us are present and active as *sisters*, i.e. that they *collaborate*, having in view the Third.

No one can dispense with the Mary in himself—nor, equally, with the Martha in himself—and remain healthy in spirit, soul and body. "Pray and work" cannot be replaced by any other formula. For one cannot live either without contemplation or without action. This is what Krishna made Arjuna understand in the Bhagavad-Gita: ". . . performing all actions, always depending on me, he (man), through my favour, obtains the imperishable and eternal seat" (Bhagavad-Gita xviii, 56; trsl. K. T. Telang, *Sacred Books of the East* viii, Oxford, 1882, p. 128).

And, equally, this is what St. Bernard showed to advantage through his monastic reform, where contemplation and work were united, as also through his affirmation of Christian chivalry in his sermon on the second Crusade and in the rules that he gave to the Templar Order. Nowadays many criticise the saint for his intervention sanctioning and encouraging the Crusade, but what he did was simply to make an appeal to "Christian Arjunas" on the new field of *Kurukshetra*, where the two armies of Islam and Christianity had *already* been assembled for a battle without mercy some centuries before him. The battle had commenced in the seventh century of our era, when the Arabs invaded the eastern Christian countries. Charles Martel repulsed them at Poitiers in France, and through this victory (in 732) saved Christian civilisation and the West from Mohammedan conquest. Should one have been content with having saved the kernel of the West and have taken only a defensive attitude—in the manner of the Byzantine empire, which subsequently, little by little, became entirely conquered by the Mohammedans? The great battle of the twelfth century was still not achieved; it was always in process. Can one demand of St. Bernard that he should have preached the necessity of abandoning the Holy Land to the Mohammedans and of begin-

ning a "peaceful co-existence", at the expense of the country where the cradle of Christianity is to be found?

Be that as it may concerning the crusades, St. Bernard advanced not only active contemplation for the monks but also contemplative activity for the knights — just as Krishna did more than fifteen centuries before him. The one and the other did so because they knew that man is at one and the same time a contemplative and an active being, that "faith without works is death"—and that, equally, works without faith are death. All this as *theory* is as clear as the day. But with respect to practice, it is not thus so. Practice entails an *arcanum*—an intimate *savoir-faire*—which is the fourteenth Major Arcanum of the Tarot, Temperance.

Temperance, as a spiritual exercise, signifies the task of knowing the relationship between the image or monad, the likeness or phenomenal personality, and the guardian Angel or individual grace. This means to say that one should find the source, current and direction of inner *life* — in grasping its nature and role — and work and live in conformity with this knowledge.

Firstly, the relationship between image and likeness: What is the intimate experience of this, and how does it reveal itself? The following is a straightforward answer:

The contact established between image and likeness is experienced as inner *weeping*. Weeping is the reality of the fact that the two sisters—the image and the likeness — *touch*. The usual experience rendered by the expression: "I am moved to tears" is only a reflection of what happens when image and likeness touch. They then mingle their tears—and the inner current which results from this is the *life* of the human soul.

Teats, sweat and blood are the three substances of the threefold mystical-gnostic-magical Mystery of man. To be touched from above is "tears"; the effort to conform to that which is above is "sweat"; and the consummated marriage of grace from above and effort from below is "blood". Tears announce the engagement of the eternal and the temporal; sweat is the trial that this entails; and blood is the region where the wedding of eternity and the moment is celebrated and where their marriage is consummated.

The Mystery (i.e. it is more than an arcanum) is whole and indivisible: tears, sweat and blood. But certain people seek and would grasp the Mystery only in tears. Others hope to find it only in sweat. Still others have a presentiment that, beyond all inner experiences and endeavours, the alliance exists through the blood and in the blood, and they do not want to know or recognise the other two aspects of the Mystery.

Here we have the inner reasons for the three principal heresies (for every serious heresy is a truth over-accentuated at the expense of the whole truth, i.e. at the expense of the *living organism of truth*). For those who seek only tears are inclined to quietism or illuminism; those who prefer sweat, i.e. effort of will, easily fall into the Pelagian heresy of denying grace; and those who seek the Mystery only in the blood often arrive at the Lutheran heresy where work, i.e. effort, counts

for nothing. But the Mystery, I repeat, is whole and indivisible: tears, sweat and blood—engagement, trial and wedding—faith, hope and love.

Concerning tears. . . this is what flows between the two vases—that of the image and that of the likeness—which are held by the guardian Angel of the Card of the fourteenth Arcanum of the Tarot. The fourteenth Arcanum therefore teaches the spiritual exercise dedicated to the *mystery of tears*.

"Tears"—like "sweat" and "blood"—signify, both as an expression and as a fluidic substance, more than the physical body-fluid secreted by glands in the eyes. They signify also the subtle fluid of a spiritual and psychic nature which emanates from the heart, i.e. the "twelve-petalled lotus" of man's super-physical organisation. The expression "to have tears in one's voice" already points to inner tears, and the expression "to lament one's weaknesses" goes further in the same direction.

The fact that there are tears of sorrow, joy, admiration, compassion, tenderness, etc., signifies that tears are produced by the *intensity* of the inner life. They flow—whether inwardly or outwardly is not important—when the soul, moved by the spirit or by the outer world, experiences a higher degree of intensity in its inner life than is customary. The soul who cries is therefore more *living*, and therefore fresher and younger than when it does not cry.

The "gift of tears" was always considered by the masters of Christian spirituality as a grace from the Holy Spirit, for it is thanks to this gift that the soul surpasses itself and ascends to a degree of intensity of life which is certainly above that to which it is accustomed.

Now, the "gift of tears" is a comparatively recent spiritual phenomenon in the history of human spirituality. In the ancient world one wept only *ritually*, i.e. through verbal lamentations and through prescribed gestures of mourning or grief. and it was amongst the chosen people, Israel, that *real* weeping began. It was as a manifestation of the share that the chosen people had in the mission of preparing for the coming of Christ—who wept at the time of Lazarus' resuscitation and who sweated sweat and blood the night in the Garden of Olives—that real weeping came to have its rudimentary origin from the womb of this people. And to the present day the Jews preserve, cultivate and respect the "gift of tears". In fact, every revelation in the narrative of the *Zohar* is preceded or accompanied by the weeping of the one who had it and who comes to share it with the others. And more recently, it was the same with the *tsaddikim* (righteous ones) of the Hassidim of eastern Europe. And the weeping wall in Jerusalem. . .

Therefore we owe to this people not only the Bible, not only Christ in the flesh, and not only the work of the apostles, but also the gift of tears—warm and sincere—which is the vivifying fluid that emanates from contact between the image and the likeness in us. Antisemitism. . . Good Lord! Ought not elementary gratitude suffice to grant the place of honour at the table of European culture to the Jews—or rather to humbly ask them to accept it—since this place is due to them by human and divine right? "Honour thy father and thy mother," says the divine commandment. And provided that we are not illegitimate children

or foundlings, who are our spiritual parents—whom we are bound to honour—if not the Jews? . . . but I believe that in writing these things I am acting like a man who wants to force an open door. For I cannot imagine that your sentiments, dear Unknown Friend, are not identical to mine in this matter.

Above I said that the personages of the *Zobar* cry when they grasp a profound spiritual truth. The following is what there is to say on this subject from the point of view of Christian Hermeticism: There are three principal modes of authentic spiritual experience: *vision*, *inspiration* and *intuition*—or, perception of spiritual phenomena, spiritual communication and spiritual identification. Vision presents and shows us spiritual things, inspiration infuses us with understanding of them, and intuition reveals to us their essence by way of assimilation with our essence. Thus St. Paul had the *vision* of Christ on the way to Damascus, from whom he received *communications* that he obeyed and the carrying out of which constituted his apostolic work—including his journeys—and when he said, "I live, but it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Galatians ii, 20), this was knowledge through identification or *intuition*.

Now, vision augments experience; inspiration augments knowledge just as it does understanding; and intuition is the metamorphosis and growth no longer of what one experiences and understands, but rather of what one *is*. Through intuition one *becomes* another, through inspiration one apprehends new ways of thinking, feeling and acting, and through vision one's domain of experience is enlarged—one has a revelation of new facts inaccessible to the senses and to intellectual invention.

In practice it is not so that vision, inspiration and intuition are successive stages following the order—vision, inspiration, intuition. For there are those on the spiritual path who have only the experience of intuition, and still others who are only inspired, without ever having visions. But whatever the kind of mode of spiritual experience may be, at the final count it is always a matter of *becoming*, i.e. intuition. Thus one can say that *in principle* vision and inspiration are only means for arriving at intuition. Now, intuition takes place in the *blood*, inspiration in *tears*, and vision in *sweat*. For an authentic vision always entails an increase of effort in order to *bear* it, in order to remain upright in the face of it. Vision has a weight, sometimes overwhelming, which demands a great effort on the part of the soul in order not to give way under the weight of the vision.

Authentic inspiration always entails an inner upheaval. It *pierces* the soul like an arrow in wounding it and in making it experience that profound emotion which is a synthesis of sorrow and joy. The symbol of the Rose Cross—a cross from the centre of which a rose blossoms out—renders the essence of the experience of inspiration in the best way that I know. The Rose Cross expresses the mystery of tears, i.e. that of inspiration, with force and clarity. It portrays the joy of sorrow and the sorrow of joy, which together comprise inspiration.

With respect to intuition, it is no longer a matter either of the weight of riches or of the romance of the engagement of the Rose and the Cross, but rather of consummating the marriage of life and death. What lives, thereby dies; and what

dies, thereby is re-born. Thereby blood is mingled with the Blood and is transformed alchemically from the "fluid of separation" into the "fluid of union".

There are three ways of "seeing" the Cross: the Crucifix, the Rose Cross, and the Gilded Cross bearing a rose of silver. The Crucifix is the greatest treasure of *vision*. It is the vision of divine and human love. The black Cross with a rose blossoming from it is the treasure of *inspiration*. This is divine and human love *speaking* in the soul. The Gilded Cross bearing a rose of silver is the treasure of *intuition*. This is love *transforming* the soul.

But the Mystery of the Cross is one and indivisible. Whoever does not worship the Crucifix cannot be inspired by it to the point of *accepting* it (which is inspiration) and still less can he *identify* himself with it (which is intuition). It is a matter of a single Cross—a single indivisible Christian Mystery. Therefore someone would certainly be in error if, instead of seeing in the Crucifix *the way, the truth and the life*, he were to think of founding, for example, a community or "fraternity of the Resurrection" with the Gilded Cross and rose of silver as its symbol, replacing the universal symbol of Christianity—the Crucifix. He would be in error, I say, because the Gilded Cross or the Rose Cross in no way replace the Crucifix, but are included and implied in it. It is the Cross of the Crucifix which becomes inspirative (the Rose Cross) and which is transformed into solar light (the Gilded Cross) bearing the receptive soul (the rose of silver). Resurrection is only crucifixion having reached the stage of fructification. It is *realised* crucifixion.

Therefore one should not—one cannot!—separate from one another the mortal *sweat* of the Crucifix, the inspirative *tears* of acceptance of the Cross (Rose Cross), and the *blood* transmuted through identification with the Cross (the Gilded Cross bearing the rose of silver). The mystery of sweat, tears and blood is *one* and indivisible.

It is the same with Christianity. It is *one* and indivisible. One should not—one cannot!—separate from so-called "exoteric" Christianity its gnosis and mysticism, or so-called "esoteric" Christianity. Esoteric Christianity is entirely *within* exoteric Christianity; it does not exist—and cannot exist—separately from it. Christian Hermeticism is only a special vocation within the universal Christian community—the vocation specific to the *dimension of depth*. Just as there are in the universal Church vocations to the priesthood, monastic life, religious knighthood, etc., so there is a vocation—as irresistible and irrevocable as the others—to Hermeticism. This is a vocation to a life lived in consciousness of the *unity* of cult (or Christian sacred magic), revelation (or Christian sacred gnosis) and salvation (or Christian sacred mysticism), just as the unity of the whole of mankind's authentic spiritual life throughout its entire history always was, is, and always will be *Christocentric*. Hermeticism is the vocation to live the universal and eternal truth of the prologue to St. John's Gospel:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . All things were made through him and *nothing* that has been made was made without him. In him

was the life, and the life was the light of men. . This was the true light *that enlightens every man coming into the world.* (John i, 1-4, 9)

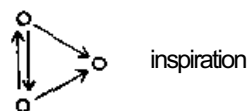
Now: *unity* of the light in the whole past, in the present, and in the whole future; *unity* of the light in the East, West, North and South; *unity* of the light in magic, gnosis and mysticism; *unity* of the light, lastly, in cult, revelation and salvation —this is the Hermetic vocation which is, I repeat, as irresistible and irrevocable as that of priest, monk or religious knight.

I may add that it is to you who are irresistibly and irrevocably called to Hermeticism that I address these Letters and that it is you whom I call "dear Unknown Friends". I acknowledge that I have also "Known Friends". But with respect to these latter, they are for the most part to be found in the spiritual world. All the more do I address myself to them in these Letters.. .and how many times, in writing these Letters, I have felt the fraternal embraces of these Friends, including here Papus, Quaita, Peladan, Eliphas Levi and Louis Claude de Saint-Martin!

Friends, Friends here and there, the Mystery is one and indivisible—sealed by sweat, tears and blood! You, Friends who are *there*, now you know that there is only *one* truth, *one* light, *one* Christ, *one* community—and that there is neither separate exotericism and esotericism nor separate exoteric and esoteric communities. May the Friends who are *here* know this also!

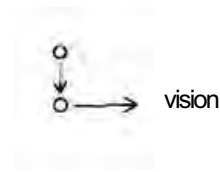
Tears are the element proper to inspiration. And he who is moved to weep— inwardly or outwardly is not important— before a Crucifix is already inspired by it. He then contemplates the Rose Cross in the Crucifix. And he who fixes his eyes on the Crucifix at the supreme moment of agony, where his blood begins to chill, he— in drawing from it a new warmth to replace the warmth which is leaving him — *lives* intuition. He already contemplates the Gilded Cross bearing the rose of silver. ..

Inspiration is the principle acting in tears. Just like weeping, inspiration takes place in the guise of "flowing between two vases". In inspiration, whatever its true source of origin may be, a flow is active, which is produced between the higher Self or image and the lower self or likeness. Here there is a flow which results from the *simultaneous collaboration* of the "higher eye" (or "ear") and the "lower eye" (or "lower ear"). This means to say that higher understanding and lower understanding, being in contact, vibrate in unison, each with its own voice and in terms of its own language, and thus together produce a concrete inspiration.

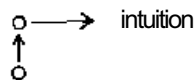


The "technique" of *vision* differs from that of inspiration in that in vision it is not a matter of the simultaneous collaboration of two "eyes" (or "ears")— higher and lower—but rather of the passive *imprint* that the lower self, alone, receives

from above. As it is not a matter of the collaboration of two "understandings", it can be that the lower self (the personality) experiences a vision without understanding it. It can, therefore, remain incomprehensible for a long time.



Concerning intuition, this is due, likewise to a *single* active principle. Here the lower self identifies itself with the higher Self, i.e. it raises itself to the latter and effaces itself (in the higher Self) to the point of becoming a passive and mute presence. And then it is the higher Self alone which is active.



These three schematic representations represent at the same time the arcana of tears, sweat and blood. In intuition, where the lower self experiences a kind of death, which is transformed into life in the higher Self, the mystery of blood, symbolised by the Gilded Cross with the rose of silver, is accomplished. In vision, where the weight of revelation from above falls on the lower self and must be supported by it, it is a matter of the mystery of sweat, symbolised by the Cross of the Crucifix—the Cross that the Crucified One had to carry to Calvary, under the weight of which he fell three times. And in inspiration, where the unblemished image and the fallen likeness unite to give birth to a new word, it is a matter of the mystery of tears, symbolised by the Rose Cross.

It is the mystery of tears—and of inspiration—that the fourteenth Arcanum of the Tarot aims at in particular. It is the spiritual exercise dedicated to inspiration.

Inspiration, as follows from the whole of the preceding and as is evident from all authentic experience of it, is not something which simply *happens*, as in the case of vision. Nor is it something which results from the sum total of all efforts at self-sacrifice, mortification, and the reduction of oneself to nothing, as is the case with intuition. Rather, *it is a co-activity*, the concerted activity of the higher Self and the lower self. It is essentially the flow emanating from two vases at once.

The practical *arcanum* of inspiration is therefore the knowledge how to be active and passive at the same time: active—in what concerns the *question* or demand; passive—in what concerns the *answer* or solution. It would be false simply to formulate inwardly a question and subsequently assume a passive—though calm and silent—attitude of waiting for an answer through inspiration. One can thus certainly listen and wait for a long time—as a rule, nothing happens. It would be equally false to make a great effort at discursive thought and "divining" imagination so as to force inspiration as if it were a "salary for work done".

No, it is neither passivity in waiting nor, equally, activity of thought and im-

agination which realises the state of soul appropriate for inspiration; it is a matter of *simultaneous* activity and passivity. Let us try to explain.

Eighteenth century rationalism advanced the formula: what is clear is true. To which is added the corollary: what is not clear is not true. Now, we have inherited these two formulae, consciously or instinctively, from a century when thinking *modo geometrico* ("in a geometrical mode") was the ideal. Certainly we no longer believe that *everything* which is clear is true, but all the same we postulate that what is true should at the same time be clear. We demand that truth must entail clarity. Guided by this principle we endeavour to be *precise*, i.e. to delineate clear lines around the subject which occupies us. But in so doing we effect an intellectual *enclosure*. That which is enclosed is clear, yes, but it is separated by the enclosure from the great flood of truth (of which we have taken possession of only a drop). The drop is clear, but it is only a drop taken from the flood, i.e. from the great context of truth.

Having understood this, we can be prompted to think in another way. We can try to *think with the flood*, i.e. no longer to think *alone*, but rather *together* with the anonymous "choir" of thinkers above, below, yesterday and tomorrow. "*I think*" then gives way to "*it thinks*".

This "thinking together" is active and passive at the same time. It is active in so far as you are thinking, and it is passive in so far as "something" thinks with you. There are *two vases* from which thought flows—yours and also another. And this is precisely the state of soul that is necessary in order to have inspirations. The arcanum of inspiration, the fourteenth Arcanum of the Tarot, is that of *two* sources and *two* simultaneous currents of thought, which mingle, unite, and constitute authentic *inspiration*.

I have described above the process of "thinking together"—or that of inspiration—wholly as a kind of *special technique*. I had to do so for the sake of clarity. But clarity and truth are not identical. I must therefore correct what I had to sacrifice of the truth in favour of clarity. What follows is the correction.

There is, truth to tell, no technique in the intimate and spiritual domain of inspiration—just as no technique exists in the domains of vision and intuition. In these domains everything is essentially *moral*. For in order to "think together", one thing before everything else is required—and this is *humility*. In thinking, in order to "think together". I have to bow before an intelligence surpassing mine, and to do so not in general terms and in an abstract way but, rather, concretely—by yielding the "author's exclusive rights" to the anonymous co-thinker. "Thinking together" means to say *thinking on one's knees*, i.e. humbling oneself before the other—diminishing oneself so that he may increase. This is thought-prayer or prayer-thought.

Neither the concentration exercises of Raja-yoga nor the breathing (and other) exercises of Hatha-yoga will render us inspired. It is humility alone, due to poverty, obedience and chastity—the three universal and eternal vows—which renders us "inspirable".

It cannot be helped. . . the spiritual world is essentially moral. And inspiration

is the fruit of humility in effort and of effort with humility. *Ora et labora* is therefore the key to the door of inspiration, as it is the key to many other doors besides.

What I have said concerning humility as the preliminary condition for inspiration calls for, in its turn, a further detail, if not a correction. For humility can sometimes prove not only sterile with respect to inspiration but can even be an obstacle put in its way. Thus, it is humility which paralyses the aspiration to knowledge of the truth and to perfection in the exercise of virtues and capabilities. Someone who humbly says the following will not receive inspiration: "I am not occupied with divine things and with the spiritual world, because for that one has to be a saint and a sage, and I am neither one nor the other." Preoccupation with the soul's salvation alone can certainly advance the soul quite far on the path of purity and innocence, but it can at the same time leave it in complete ignorance with respect to the world, history, and problems of mankind's spiritual life. Many an authentic saint did not know much concerning the world and its history, on account of the humility which protected him from going out from the circle of what is strictly necessary for salvation.

Hunger and thirst for the truth — which comprises God, the world and mankind — nevertheless underlie the inspiration which falls under the law of *ora et labora*. The Hermeticist, also, will not be inspired if he is not humble. But no more will he be inspired if he does not apprehend, in the aspiration to the truth, the art of forgetting himself. Whatever he may be — humble or presumptuous, innocent or sinful — he must be driven by hunger and thirst for the truth concerning God, the world and mankind.

One should know how to ask and one should dare to ask, whilst forgetting one's humility and one's presumption. Children know how to ask and dare to ask. Are they presumptuous? No, because each question that they pose is at the same time an avowal of their ignorance. Are they humble, therefore? They are in so far as they know and sense their ignorance, and they are not in so far as they are driven by hunger and thirst to know and understand to the point of forgetting themselves—including all humility and all presumption in them. In this the Hermeticist imitates the child. He wants to know "who", "what", "how" and "why", concerning life and death, good and evil, creation and evolution, history and the human soul... People in the natural sciences whose hair is grey through study and research have abandoned these questions. "Childish questions", they say. They resign themselves to a single question: that of the technical "how". The "why" and the "what", not to speak of the "who", are pre-scientific questions which they leave to theology and the *belles-lettres*.. .

Still, we Hermeticists have conserved the whole repertoire of questions from our childhood—the "what" and the "how", the "why" and the "who". Are we backward? Have we progressed beyond others? Backward or progressive — it does not matter—we have kept living the hunger and thirst for knowledge and understanding from our childhood and it is this which leads us to ask things that mature people of contemporary civilisation no longer ask.

What? Have we not learnt from the history of civilisation that these questions are unknowable, that the *ignoramus* ("we do not know") of today was preceded by the heroic effort of innumerable generations aspiring to answer these questions, and that it was after this unfruitful effort that one resigned oneself to the *ignoramus* ("we do not know")? What chance, therefore, what hope remains for us after all this?

Our chance, our hope. . . is *inspiration*. And it is precisely because we ask in the way that children do that we have the hope — no, the certainty — that our Father who is in heaven will give us the answer, that he will not give us a stone instead of bread, or a serpent in place of a fish. Inspiration — the two vases from whence flows the living water held by a winged Angel — is the hope and the chance for the survival of Hermeticism in the centuries to come!

Dear Unknown Friend, say to yourself that you know *nothing*, and at the same time say to yourself that you are able to know *everything*, and — armed with this healthy humility and this healthy presumption of children — immerse yourself in the pure and strengthening element of the "thinking together" of inspiration! May the winged Angel be present in this enterprise of yours, and may he hold the two vases from which inspiration will pour!

The arcanum of inspiration is of vital practical importance not only for Hermeticism but also for the spiritual history of mankind in general. For just as in the individual human biography there are decisive moments of inspiration, so there are in mankind's biography — which is history — decisive points where far-reaching inspirations enter into the spirirual life of humanity. The great religions are such inspirations. In ancient India the Rishis had inspiration, which became the source of the Vedas. In ancient Persia the great Zarathustra ("golden star") had inspiration, which became the source of the Zend-Avesta. Moses and the prophets had inspiration, which became the source of the Old Testament in the Bible. The Event of the life, death and resurrection of Chrisr was followed by the inspiration which was the source of the written Gospels — of which each author is twofold: man and inspiring Cherubim. Lastly, Islam refers to no other source than the inspiration that Mohammed received from the Archangel Gabriel, which became the source of the Koran.

With respect to Buddhism, which is the religion of humanism pure and simple, it also regards as the source of its origin the spiritual event in the soul of Gautama Buddha under the Bodhi tree, where the four sacred truths of Buddhism were revealed in a sudden way, excluding all doubt, i.e. by way of *inspiration*.

The great religions are therefore the inspirations of mankind. And the history of religion is that of inspiration. Misunderstandings with regard to inspiration and ignorance of its practical *arcanum* will also have distressing and tragic repercussions in mankind's history. There will be people who will believe that inspiration is obtained through effort, and others who will believe that it is produced only in complete passivity of the soul. Thus all forms of *Pelagianism* and *quietism* will arise in the history of religion. All those who do not know that the arcanum

of inspiration is that of activity and passivity simultaneously will fall necessarily either into Pelagianism or into quietism.

Individual psychological experiences—including the experience of setbacks and disillusionments—in the realm of aspiring to inspiration have played an enormous role in the catastrophic upheavals which have taken place in the history of Christianity. Thus, an Augustinian monk of the sixteenth century ardently desired inspiration. To this end he practised the rigorous asceticism of fasting, mortification of the flesh, and vigils of prayer. He believed that effort would procure inspiration for him; but... he had none. Then, disillusioned as he was, he advanced the doctrine of the vanity of work, of all effort. Faith alone suffices for salvation. Here lies the origin of Lutheran Protestantism.

In the same century a doctor of law underwent a sudden conversion, from which he concluded that inspiration is the work of God and God alone, without any participation of human effort and freedom. It is God, and God alone, who has chosen for all eternity those whom he has predestined to salvation amongst the mass predestined to perdition. Here lies the origin of Calvinist Protestantism.

If Martin Luther and John Calvin had known that inspiration is activity *and* passivity—or effort and grace simultaneously—the one would not have seen man as only a sinner and the other would not have conceived of God as a cosmic tyrant.

St. John of the Cross was needed to show that one can pass by the darkness and aridity of the senses and of the mind without drawing back and without despair, just as one can effect a profound reform—in the sense of the practice of the poverty and moral radicalism of the Gospels—without at the same time attacking the unity of the Church. In truth, St. John of the Cross *atoned tot* Martin Luther.

Yer another saint, Ignatius of Loyola, was needed to demonstrate that man can choose God and his cause in the full freedom of love, instead of being chosen by God—and that just as Jacob wrestled until the break of day, saying "I will not let you go, unless you bless me" (Genesis xxxii, 26), so can each free human will, chosen or not, embrace the cause of God *voluntarily* and will be blessed by God. St. Ignatius of Loyola *atoned* for John Calvin by living in the voluntary obedience of love for the God of love, instead of the obedience of a poor wretch before the power of the Almighty.

With respect to Christian Hermeticism, it has knowledge of the arcanum of inspiration and it will never range itself on the side of those who believe that inspiration is *made*, nor on the side of those who believe that it is merited by pure and simple passivity of the soul. Hermeticism knows the law of the "marriage of opposites" and it knows that inspiration is the marriage of activity and passivity in the soul.

Read Louis Claude de Saint-Martin and you will nowhere find either Pelagianism or quietism, but rather throughout is the twofold faith—in God *and* man, in grace *and* human effort. *Ora et labora* is truly the practical view which is evident in the whole of the work of Saint-Martin. And the mature Eliphas Levi? And Josephin

Peladan? And the mature Papus? They all professed to the twofold faith—in God and man, in grace and human effort. This amounts to saying that they knew the arcanum of inspiration—the arcanum which is found represented symbolically by the fourteenth Card of the Tarot.

I have mentioned some Hermeticists whom I suppose that you, dear Unknown Friend, know of. But there are many others who ought to be named as guardians of the ancient tradition of the arcanum of inspiration. But what will the name of Schmakov say to you, for example? Or the name Roudnikova? These are names which, like the yellow leaves of autumn, repose in forgetfulness beneath the immense white shroud of snow which covers pre-revolutionary Russia.

Be that as it may, there is a community of Hermeticists, known and unknown, but the majority of whose members are anonymous. And it is only a small part of this community which is composed of those who know one another and meet one another face to face in the full daylight of the world of the senses. Another part—still less numerous—is composed of those who know each other and meet each other face to face in *vision*. But it is *inspiration* which unites all members of the community of Hermeticists—without regard as to whether they are near to one another or far apart, whether they know each other or not, or whether they are living or deceased.

Inspiration, truth to tell, is what constitutes the Hermetic community. It is inspiration which is the link between its members and within which *all* its members meet one another. The community of inspiration—this is what in reality the community of Hermeticists is.

It is inspiration in common which underlies the mental and symbolic language common to Hermeticists—the language of analogy, the marriage of opposites, synthesis, moral logic, the dimension of depth added to those of clarity and breadth of knowledge, and above all the ardent belief that all is knowable and revealable, that the mystery *is* infinite knowability and revealability.. .

This common inspiration, this language that we have in common, is the inner *Word* which guides and impels us—inwardly and outwardly at the same time—in all our aspirations. The Papus of 1890 did not "know" what Papus would become in 1917, but he already directed his efforts towards what he would know, feel and realise—what he *would be*, in a word—in 1917. This was because he *knew* in 1890 what he did not "know". It was because the *inspiration* which underlies Christian Hermeticism was present and was working in him. And it was thanks to this inspiration that he broke with the neo-Buddhist stream of the Theosophical Society and that he preferred the intellectual Christianity of Saint-Yves d'Alveydre to the intellectual Buddhism of the Theosophical Society. And it was again thanks to this inspiration that he preferred the real Christianity of Maitre Philip of Lyons to the Christian intellectualism of his youth. Yes, the Papus of 1917, praying and working, was the product of the *inspiration* which guided and impelled the young student of medicine, subsequent enthusiast for occult science, subsequent bold magician, and again, subsequently, the lover of great intellectual syntheses. Here

we have a particular example of the gradual realisation of inspiration working from the days of youth.

"In the beginning was the Word" is the *law* not only of the world but also of the realisation of inspiration in each individual biography. And the entire community of Hermeticists lives under this law, under the *law of inspiration*.

Everyone lives under this law. The community of Hermeticists is distinguished from the rest of mankind only in that it is borne—in an irresistible way—to *be conscious of it* and *to know* what happens both to them and to the rest of humanity.

The *lot* of Hermeticists differs from that of every human being only in that the former hunger and thirst for comprehensive knowledge of that which the latter simply undergo. Their lot does not bring any privilege with it; on the contrary, rather, it is an added duty with which Hermeticists are charged, notably the inner duty to *understand* the totality of miracles and disasters which is life and the world. This duty makes them appear presumptuous or childish in the eyes of the world, but it is the arcanum of inspiration — the arcanum of the winged entity pouring living water from one vase into another—which renders them such as they are.