

*Meditation on the
Twenty-First Major Arcanum of the Tarot*

Let no one deceive himself.
If any one among you thinks that he
is wise in this age,
let him become a fool
that he may become wise.
For the wisdom of this world
is folly before God.

(I Corinthians iii, 18-19)

Folly is a condition which prevents
that which is true from being grasped.

(Plato, *Definitions*)*

. . .consciousness succumbs all too easily
to unconscious influences, and these are
often truer and wiser than our conscious
thinking. . . Personality need not imply
consciousness. It can just as easily
be dormant or sleeping.

(C. G. Jung,
Conscious, Unconscious and Individuation)**

LETTER XXI



THE FOOL

Dear Unknown Friend,

I owe you, in the first place, an explanation of the fact of having changed — apparently arbitrarily—the order of the Cards of the Major Arcana of the Tarot, by making the Arcanum "The Fool" follow the twentieth Arcanum "The Judgment". The Arcanum "The Fool" does not bear any number and therefore cor-

*Cf. Plato, *Dialogues apocryphes* in *Oeuvres completes*, vol. xiii, French trsl. by J. Souilhé, Paris, 1930. p 173

**Tran. R. F. C. Hull, *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, vol.9, part vi, London, 1959. pp 282-283.

responds to zero, whilst the Card of the Arcanum "The World" bears the number XXI in the Marseille Tarot pack. Thus, here is the reason—not for changing the number of the Card, but rather for why we have made the *meditation* on the Arcanum "The Fool" follow that on the twentieth Arcanum "The judgement" and before the *meditation* on the twenty-first Arcanum "The World":

The principal reason is that the meditation on the Arcanum "The Fool" cannot conclude the series of meditations on the Major Arcana of the Tarot, which series is a "school" of spiritual training, i.e. an organic "system" of spiritual exercises. For the meditation on the Arcanum "The Fool", *as a spiritual exercise*, is not of a nature to summarise the whole preceding series of twenty-one meditations on the Tarot, i.e. to play the role of the last "point of view" of the experience that the symbolism of the Tarot renders possible.

There are still other reasons. One of them is indicated by Paul Marteau in his book *Le Tarot de Marseille*, where he says:

This Card is not specified by any number, for it would be necessary to put '0' or '22'. It cannot be '0', otherwise the Fool would then represent the universal indefinite, when he is actually mobile and symbolises a passage of evolution. On the other hand, it cannot be characterised by '22', i.e. by two passivities, implying inaction, which is absolutely contrary to the bearing of the personage represented on the Card. (Paul Marteau, *Le Tarot de Marseille*, Paris, 1949, p. 93)

And here is a third reason: At St. Petersburg in Russia, around fifty years ago, there was a group of esotericists who composed the flower of the capital's "intelligentsia". This group was internally hierarchical, i.e. it comprised "grades"—Martinist, Templar and Rosicrucian. It was, properly said, a school of teaching and training comprising three "courses" or "classes"—first or Martinist, second or Templar, and highest or Rosicrucian.

At the head of the whole school was the professor of special mathematics from Pages College (*Pageskiy Korpus*) in St. Petersburg, Professor Gregory Ottonovitch Mebes.

Now, it was after the Bolshevik revolution (which, it goes without saying, put an end to this group and its work) that the one who is writing these lines met some members of this dispersed group and became friends with them. The friendship being true, i.e. based on unreserved mutual confidence, they (who belonged to the so-called "Rosicrucian" elite of the group) transmitted all that they knew and recounted everything concerning the work of their group, including the crises and painful experiences that they had undergone. This was in 1920. It was then that the one who is writing these lines—although he had already studied the masterly book by the engineer Schmakov, *Velikiye Arkany Taro* ("The Major Arcana of the Tarot"—a book almost twice as large as, for example, Oswald Wirth's

Le Tarot des imagiers du moyen age or Paul Marteau's *Le Tarot de Marseille*) and the book on the Tarot by P. D. Ouspensky in 1917—was struck to learn to what degree collective work on the Tarot can be fruitful for study, research, training and advancement in the esoteric domain. For the whole work of the Martinist-Templar-Rosicrucian group was founded on the Tarot. Study of the Cabbala, Magic, Astrology, Alchemy and Hermeticism was guided and inspired by the Tarot. This gave the whole work an exceptional coherence and organic unity. Every problem concerning the Cabbala, Magic, Astrology, Alchemy, etc., was treated as relating to a particular Arcanum of the Tarot. Thus, for example, one meditated on the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, in order to derive their Cabbalistic meaning, in the light of the twenty-two Major Arcana of the Tarot. And one came to the conclusion that each letter of the Hebrew alphabet—understood Cabbalistically—corresponds to a particular Major Arcanum of the Tarot. Now, it is the letter *Shin* (ש), the twenty-first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, which was attributed to the Arcanum "The Fool". It was said that this is the letter of the Arcanum "The Fool". And confidentially it was added that the *esoteric name* of the Arcanum "The Fool" is AMOR (Love). Although the teaching and the experiences of this group of St. Petersburg esotericists lives now in the soul of the author of these Letters only as a general impulse received in his youth to penetrate the symbolism of the Tarot more deeply—indeed, until now he has not at all drawn upon this teaching for these Letters (the Tarot having been revealed to him during the forty-five years which followed in a new light and surpassing, with respect to its significance and its depth, all that he had learnt from the teaching and experience of the St. Petersburg group)—there is however one exception, namely the one that I have cited above, i.e. that the Arcanum "The Fool" corresponds to the letter *Shin* and that consequently its number is twenty-one, and its esoteric name is *Love*.

This is why, dear Unknown Friend, the meditation on the Arcanum "The Fool" follows that on the Arcanum "The Judgement" and precedes the meditation on the Arcanum "The World". It is a matter, therefore, beyond the two reasons concerning the scope of meditative work on the Tarot and the significance of the number twenty-one, of putting a "memorial wreath" on the non-existent tomb (i.e. non-existent here below) of the group of St. Petersburg esotericists from the beginning of this century.

First of all, let us examine the Card. It represents a man in baggy dress who is walking, leaning on a staff and carrying a hanging bag on another staff that he holds on his right shoulder. In walking, he is attacked from behind by a dog who is in the process of ripping his trousers. The man is wearing a yellow bonnet topped by a red ball; he has a blue collar with points terminating in small bells; he is wearing blue trousers and red slippers. His over-vest is red with blue arms coming out of yellow sleeves; he has a yellow belt or girdle to which little bells are attached. In a word, he has the clothing of a traditional mediaeval clown or fool.

The Fool is walking from left to right. He holds his staff with his right hand,

and with his left hand he balances on his right shoulder the staff from which the bag is hanging. His head is turned three-quarters to the right. So it is the Fool who has the tendency to the right. . . the Fool of good, not of evil, which is also evident from the fact that he does not defend himself against the dog—which he could easily chase away by means of the staff.

The Fool of good... it suffices to say these words in order to evoke the pale and thin figure of Don Quixote de la Manche—the knight-errant who made everyone laugh and who, from his life, merits the epithet *El Loco* ("The Fool") and who, after his death, merits that of *El Bueno* ("The Good"). O Don Quixote, you emerge from the pages of Miguel Cervantes' novel as a literary figure, but you have taken on a singular life, much more intense and real than that of a literary figure! You haunt the imagination from one generation to another, to the point of visionary experience. At evening time in an arid and rocky land, when the shadows are lengthening does one not see you silhouetted in distorted profile, of tall and stiff stature mounted on an emaciated nag?

Imagination, vision. . . what am I to say? One can meet you often in historically difficult situations—which resemble the arid and distorted landscape—where hearts have become hardened and heads have become obstinate. It is you... it is your voice which resounded more loudly than the beating of drums around the guillotine, one day in the month of Thermidor or Fructidor in the year II or III (of the French Republican calendar), with a cry from the top of the scaffolding. "Long live the King!"—before your chopped-off head rolled to the ground. It is you also who, in the presence of the jubilant revolutionary populace, tore down from the wall and ripped up a red placard announcing to the people of St. Petersburg the dawn of a New Era in Russia. . . and who was promptly run through by the bayonets of the red guards present. It is you again who declared openly to the German military authorities of the invaded and occupied Netherlands in 1941 that Germany, by occupying the land, was infringing the Hague Conventions that Germany herself had signed thirty years previously. . . -

Don Quixote de la Manche *acts*. For Cervantes did not at all invent him, but only described him such as he appeared to him in Castille in the time of the twilight of the knighthood. Don Quixote existed and acted long before Cervantes, just as he continues to exist and act long after him. For he lives—from century to century—the life of an *archetype*, by revealing himself during the course of the ages through lots of people in lots of ways. Cervantes depicted him as a knight-errant, and the anonymous image-makers of the Middle Ages present him to us as the Fool of the Tarot. As an image, the Fool is mediaeval. This is obvious. But as an idea, as an archetype, and, lastly, as an Arcanum, what might his origin be? Greek? I should think so. Egyptian? I readily admit it. More ancient still? Why not?

Ideas, archetypes, arcana are ageless. It is only their representation, their imaged symbol, which can be attributed to a determined epoch. And this applies not only to "The Fool", but also to "The Magician", "The High Priestess", "The

Empress", "The Emperor", "The Pope", "The Lover", "The Chariot", "Justice", "The Hermit", "The Wheel of Fortune", "Force", "The Hanged Man". . . For the Arcana of the Tarot are more than symbols and even more than spiritual exercises: they are magical entities, active initiating archetypes.

Not only Don Quixote, but also Orpheus, the wandering Jew, Don Juan, Tiji Uelenspiegel, Hamlet and Faust haunt the imagination of the western world.

Orpheus—such was the suffering of separation from the soul of his deceased love that it became magic, magic surpassing the river of sleep, forgetfulness and death which separates the dead from the living. Orpheus is present always and everywhere where the love of a soul torn away by death is not content with pious and resigned commemoration, but aspires to find and meet the departed one beyond the threshold of death. Such was Orpheus' love for Eurydice and such, also, was Gilgamesh's love for his friend and brother Eabani. And who can say how many human hearts have beaten, beat today, and will beat in the future, in union with that of Orpheus and that of Gilgamesh, the Babylonian hero?

The wandering Jew, or Ahasverus, is the archetype of the "other immortality"—that of crystallisation, which was in question in the letter on the thirteenth Arcanum of the Tarot "Death". He represents the principle and the soul of magic— aspiring to the coagulation of the vital body (etheric body) to the point where it becomes "stone"— too hard for death's scythe. The formula underlying this magic is the reverse of that of life and grace; it is *Tu es non dignus ut intres sub tectum meum* ("You are not worthy to come under my roof), i.e. the reverse of the formula *Domine, non sum dignus, ut intres sub tectum meum: sed tantum die verbum, et sanabitur anima mea* ("Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only speak the word and my soul will be healed"). This is the last secret and the "great arcanum" of those who sculpt themselves into stone and who want, with the resulting stones, to build the temple of humanity (cf. the meditation on the sixteenth Arcanum "The Tower of Destruction"). It goes without saying that it is only a handful amongst them who know this; the others, the majority, do not suspect it at all.

Don Juan is not purely and simply a blasphemous dissolute; he is rather a hierophant of this small god of great power known in antiquity under the name of Eros or Amor (Love). It is the magic of Eros that he represents, and it is the mysteries of Eros over which he presides in the capacity of a priest.

For if it were not thus so, if he were only a dissolute, pure and simple, how could he have exercised such power upon the imagination of poets such as Moliere, Thomas Corneille, Lord Byron, Lorenzo da Ponte. Mozart (in music) and Alexis Tolstoy? It is above all the mystery poem of the latter which reveals the profound essence of Don Juan who, according to Alexis Tolstoy, was neither a blasphemous dissolute nor a false-hearted seducer, nor even a brutal adventurer, but rather an obedient and courageous servant of this childlike divinity who loves and commands elan, enthusiasm and ardour, and who detests and forbids the weighing, measuring and calculating of reason with its laws of utility and advantage, circumspection

and respect for conventions and, lastly, its priority of a cold head over a warm heart. However, love has not only its right to exist, but also its transcendental metaphysics, philosophy and mysticism. For Alexis Tolstoy, Don Juan was more than a victim or dupe of love— this apparently capricious goddess. He embraced her philosophy and mysticism and was therefore her conscious collaborator, her hierophant initiated into her mysteries. And it is thus that he has become an archetype — *the archetype of love for its own sake*, the lover *par excellence*.

Don Juan lives through the energy of amorous influence for the energy of amorous influence— by nourishing it and maintaining it like a fire which should never be extinguished. This is because he is conscious of the value of this fire and of the mission that this fire has in the world. In the eternal conflict that there is between law—of right, of reason, and of the divine —and love, he takes the side of love, for which courage is necessary. And it is thus that Don Juan represents an idea, an archetype, an arcanum. He represents the young man on the Card of the sixth Arcanum of the Tarot "The Lover", who has chosen the fire of love as such and multiplicity instead of the unicity of the love of his eternal sister soul — since Babylon, the woman appointed to the mysteries of erotic magic, has convinced him.

Tijl Uelenspiegel, the Flemish tramp from Damme, near Bruges —the hero of numerous popular accounts of mystification and farce, and also the tragic hero of the epic by Coster —is the archetype of revolutionary anarchism who, as aeon-sequence of complete disenchantment in human authority, has neither faith nor law. His is the spirit of rebellion against all authority in the name of the freedom of the individual —the freedom of a vagabond who has nothing, who obeys no one, who is afraid of nothing, who expects no recompense and who fears no chastisement, beyond as well as here below. . . the mocking spirit who, at the same time, turns the temples and altars of humanity upside down, making them collapse by means of his magic wand: ridicule. This wand, in touching things, transforms them: the solemn into the pompous, the moving into the sentimental, the courageous into the presumptuous, tears into snivelling, love into passing fancy . . . For this wand, also "has no other aim than to condense a great quantity of fluid emanated by the operator . . . and to direct the projection of this fluid onto a determined point" (Papus, *Traite methodique de la magie pratique*, Paris, 1970 p. 204). And this "condensed fluid" of the operator is the operator's condensed faith that everything is only a great farce.

Tijl Uelenspiegel is an archetype because he is at work with his wand always and everywhere whenever a mocking spirit thinks of himself as being "enlightening" by turning the things, ideas and ideals to which others hold into ridicule. Thus not only the poetic verses of the Russian Bolshevik militant atheist Demyane Bedny, but also the works of such a respectable writer and thinker as Voltaire, show the presence and influence of Tijl Uelenspiegel. However, Tijl Uelenspiegel—in so far as he is an archetype — is not only purely and simply a mocker. This is only one side of his being. There is another side to him —it is that of militant anarchism:

the revolt of the humbler people against those who give the laws and prescribe what they should and should not do. The following act of a comparatively recent date is an example of this:

The sailors of a Russian Baltic fleet brought success to the Russian Bolshevik revolution in October 1917 by opening cannon fire from the cruiser "Aurora" upon the last nest of resistance of troops loyal to the democratic government (a battalion of women volunteers) at the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg, and taking it by assault. Thus they were the incontestable and celebrated heroes of the October revolution. However, it is a no less incontestable fact—although never celebrated—that the same sailors of this Baltic fleet rose up in February 1921 against the regime that they had decisively helped to establish in 1917. They took possession of the naval fortress at Kronstadt and a regular war of siege ensued. After a month of siege Kronstadt was taken by assault from the elite of the red guards-cadets or *coursants* (students of the Bolshevik naval school).

Now, to what was this radical change of attitude of the sailors of this Baltic fleet due? It was due to the fact that the sailors were fighting in October 1917 for anarchic freedom—for the Soviets (councils) of workers, peasants, soldiers and sailors, without generals and admirals, without ministers, i.e. without those placed above the Soviets. What they desired was the re-establishment of the community of comrades which existed in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries known under the name *Sietch' Zaporozhskaya* (cossaks of the Ukraine)—the ideal of the communist anarchist community. However, in 1921 they realised that they had been mistaken. It was not a community of brothers and comrades which arose from the October revolution, but rather state control with a new, strong, dictatorial, police-regulated state, governed by a clique who had the say of everything in the face of a mass who had the say of nothing. The sailors of Kronstadt, having well understood the deception, took recourse to arms. And it was again Tyl Uelenspiegel who was invisibly at their head, just as he was at the head of the crowd who took the Bastille, and just as he was the author of the *carmagnole*, the revolutionary round danced in 1793, and of the song which accompanied it. . . .

Soren Kierkegaard, the Danish religious thinker who initiated the philosophical and psychological current known under the name "existentialism", said:

In modern philosophy there has been more than enough talk about speculation beginning with doubt, but on the other hand, as far as I have been able to concern myself occasionally with such reflections, I have sought in vain for illumination upon the point of difference between doubt and despair I will here attempt to throw light upon this distinction. . . . Doubt is a despair of thought, despair is a doubt of the personality; hence it is why I hold so stoutly to the category of choice, which is my solution, the very nerve of my views on life. . . . (Soren Kierkegaard. *Either/Or*; trsl. W. Lowrie, vol. ii, London, 1944, pp. 177-178)

The existential philosophy of our time thus differs from traditional speculative philosophy in that it is founded on despair, i.e. upon the doubt of the whole personality, whilst speculative philosophy is founded on doubt, i.e. on the despair of thought alone. Now all despair, all doubt of the personality, amounts to—and is summarised by—Hamlet's famous question: "To be or not to be?" For just as Kierkegaard, the Danish thinker, is the author of modern existentialism, so is Hamlet, the prince of Denmark—hero of Shakespeare's drama and of the legend recounted by Saxo Grammaticus—the very archetype of existentialism, the despair of the personality. He is the archetype of the isolation of completely autonomous consciousness, cut off both from Nature and the spiritual world—man at the zero point between two fields of gravitation: terrestrial and celestial.

Doubt is more than a psychological state of indecision; it is the soul's sojourn in the intermediary sphere between the two fields of attraction—terrestrial and celestial—from which there is no other means of escape than a pure and simple act of faith, issuing from the soul itself without heaven and earth taking any part in it. It is therefore a matter of an act of the free personality in the face of complete silence from heaven and earth. Now, Hamlet is the archetype of this trial, where the following is at stake: either an act of faith, or despair and madness.

Doctor Faust is the synthesis of the forms of madness and wisdom of the *six* archetypes whom we have mentioned above: as Don Quixote he is in pursuit of unparalleled exploits; as Orpheus he is searching for a return to the light from the darkness of death from centuries past of Helen of Troy, whom he loves passionately in spite of the centuries and the threshold of death which separate him from her; as Don Juan he "sees Helen in every woman" and is searching for the "eternal feminine" (*das Ewig-Weibliche*) in and through particular loves; as Ahasverus he rejuvenates himself by means of dark magic so as to begin another life and a new terrestrial biography without interruption through death, i.e. a new incarnation without a preceding period of disincarnation; as Tijl Uelenspiegel he does away with every allegiance and all religious, scientific and political authority, and in Mephistopheles' company he mocks moral and other restraints impeding the freedom to dare and to will; as Hamlet, lastly, he has the trial of great existential doubt whether "to be or not to be" in the guise of the question "to live or not to live".

But beyond all that which he has in common with these six archetypes, Faust represents—at least, as Goethe conceived him—yet another archetype, an eternal archetype, namely that of the one who is tried and tempted: *eternal Job*, whom we find in the Bible. Faust is Job in the epoch of humanism, i.e. at the dawn of the modern age. Just as with the Biblical Job, he is the stake in a wager proposed to God by Mephistopheles, and accepted. But Faust's trial and temptation differs from that of the Biblical Job in that it does not consist in the reverse of fortune and in ill luck, but rather in favourable results and success. Mephistopheles has full power, accorded to him from above, to satisfy all Faust's desires. And the trial of which it is a matter here amounts to whether the relative and transitory

world can for ever satisfy Faust — the man issuing from the modern age, the modern man. . . whether all pleasures here below, in detail and in general, can anaesthetise man's aspiration to the absolute and eternal by rendering him wholly satisfied and happy. Job demonstrated that the sorrow that the world can inflict is incapable of tearing the human soul away from God; Faust demonstrated that this is so also with the joy that the world can offer.

Oswald Spengler, the author of *The Decline of the West*, calls modern man "Faustian man" (*der faustische Mensch*) — and he was right to call him so. For Faust is indeed the dominant archetype of the epoch following the Middle Ages, which is characterised by the enormous growth of mankind's power over Nature and of the facilities for satisfying his desires — comprising those of the boldest of magicians of the past: flying through the air, seeing and hearing at a great distance, travelling without horses (e.g. by car), the evocation of living images and sounds of past events or events at a great distance, etc. It is just as if the prince of this world has obtained full power to satisfy, one after the other, all the desires of contemporary mankind, so as to demonstrate for himself that the power and enjoyment of the relative and transitory world here below can make man forget the absolute and eternal, can make him forget God. . . and with respect to God, it is so as to demonstrate to the hierarchies of evil that man is of another calibre than the relative and the transitory, that whatever the power and enjoyment is here below it can never satisfy him. The trial of our epoch is that of Faust. It is the trial of satisfied desires.

The most recent phenomenon of our epoch is communism — or, if you wish, social and collective state control. It openly pursues the aim of satisfying as completely as possible the needs and desires of as large a number of people living on the earth as possible. Well, let us suppose that it succeeds in Russia. Everyone will have well-furnished accommodation with a telephone, a radio, a television set, a refrigerator, a washing machine. . . And what then? Yes, cinema, theatre, concerts, ballet, sport. . . And what then? Yes, science will furnish new occasions and directions for activity, for the imagination and for. . . desire. One will visit the moon, the planets. . . And what then? There will be unparalleled adventures to experience and to know about, which as yet we cannot imagine — as, for example, the discovery of the existence of other intelligent beings, other "mankinds" on the planets. . . And what then? No answer.

No, there is certainly an answer: it is given by the parable of the prodigal son. What is the value of television sets, washing machines, supersonic aircraft, space-ships, flights to the planets and galactic exploration in comparison with the loving embrace of the Father upon the return of his son to the parental home?

The trial of our time is that of satisfied desires. This applies not only to communists, capitalists and materialists, but also, and no less, to — I shall not say esotericists. but — occultists and magicians. For they also are under the sign of the same trial.

Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, for example, took part in the operations of cere-

monial magic in the circle of Martinez de Pasqually's disciples. This magic proved itself to him to be effective and real. And it was after having been convinced of the reality and efficacy of ceremonial magic that—in full knowledge of what he was doing—he turned his back on these magical practices and embraced the mysticism of Jacob Boehme: the world of ineffable experiences, of relationships between the soul and God. Therefore he passed through the trial. Magical phenomena—the "passes"—did not succeed in arresting him on his path towards the absolute and the eternal, whilst his former companion and co-disciple, Jean Baptiste Willermoz, although spiritually orientated and sincerely believing, remained devoted to ceremonial magic and initiation ritualism until his death.

Eliphas Levi, the author of *Dogme et rituel de la haute magie*, was without doubt the pioneer of the theory and practice of the ceremonial magic of the nineteenth century. It was he who had the courage—or the audacity, if you wish—to present magic to the light of day as something real and, at the same time, as something intelligible. . . and this after the vogue for the enlightenment and in the midst of the vogue for materialism! Can one reproach him for lack of courage? However, Madame H. P. Blavatsky reproached him. She said that he had subsequently disavowed his own magical teaching and turned to Christian mysticism—for fear of the ecclesiastical authorities taking him amiss. The truth is, however, that Eliphas Levi—this intrepid magician who evoked Apollonius of Tyana in London—having surpassed the bounds of ceremonial magic, concentrated on the mysticism and gnosis of Christian Hermeticism. He passed through the Faustian trial, just as Saint-Martin did. For this reason, what Saint-Martin wrote to Kircher, Baron of Liebisdorf, on the reasons for his conversion from ceremonial magic to mysticism is applicable also in Eliphas Levi's case:

.. .the initiations I passed through in my first school, and which I have long since left behind me, to attend to the only initiation which is truly after my own heart... I can assure you I have received by the inward way, truths and joys a thousand times higher than those I have received from without. . . there is no initiation, but that of God only, and his Eternal Word within us. . . (L. Schauer and A. Chuquet, *La correspondance inedite de Louis Claude de Saint-Martin*; transl. E. B. Penny, letters XIX and CX in *Saint-Martin's Correspondence*, Exeter, 1863, pp-77-78, 375)

This applies also to Paul Sedir (Yvon de Loup), who was also devoted to practical magic and for two years utilised to this effect a room that he rented on the ground floor of 4, rue de Savoie in Paris (cf. Dr. Philippe Encausse, *Sciences occultes ou vingt-cinq annees d'occultisme occidental. Papus, sa vie, son oeuvre*, Paris, 1949, p. 49). He was a member and dignitary of at least twenty fraternities, more or less secret—for example, the Cabbalistic Order of the Rose Cross, the Order of Martinists, the H. B. of L., the E T. L., etc. But in January 1909 (his activity in

this domain began in 1888) he retired from these fraternities, forsaking all the posts and titles that had been conferred on him. This surprised friends of his of long standing.

But there was in his life an outward circumstance, a solemn and decisive event, which made him grasp the emptiness of secret sciences and societies, and which placed him for ever upon the sole way of the Gospel. (Dr. Philippe Encause, *Le Maitre Philippe de Lyon*, Paris, 1958, p. 80)

This event was his meeting with Maitre Philip of Lyons. Sedir himself wrote in a letter to "L'Echo du Merveilleux" in May 1910 (reprinted in *Bulletin des Amities Spirituelles*, April, 1933):

... For my reckoning I have, together with some companions, done the rounds of all esotericisms and explored all crypts with the most fervent sincerity, with the most vivid hope of success. But none of the certainties that I eventually grasped appeared to me to be the Certainty.

Rabbis have communicated unknown manuscripts to me; alchemists have admitted me to their laboratories; Sufis, Buddhists and Taoists have lead me, during long late-night sessions, to the abodes of their gods; a Brahmin let me copy his tables of mantrams; a yogi gave the secrets of contemplation. But, one evening, after a certain meeting, all that these admirable men had taught me became for me like the soft haze which rises at dusk after an over-warm day. (Dr. Philippe Encause, *Le Maitre Philippe de Lyon*, Paris, 1958, pp. 80-81)

Papus also had the decisive meeting mentioned by Sedir. It was no less decisive for him than for Sedir, concerning the relationship between certainties and the Certainty, between values and the Value. But—being a doctor, and accustomed in the first place to consider the good of the patients who put their confidence in him—he did not forsake any of the responsibilities accepted in the past and did not retire from any group for which he had assumed responsibility, although his heart was already elsewhere. What changed for him was the priority of Christian spirituality, which he showed in a radical way—which won him the reproach of "having a soft spot for Catholicism" on the part of Robert Ambelain and merited his being treated as an inevitable "Jesuit" by certain Freemasons. But Papus' evolution—whatever one says, and whether it pleases one or not—was nothing other than the Faustian trial crowned with success.

These examples, although we could cite several more, suffice to illustrate the nature and experience of the Faustian trial in the domain of occultism. Every occultist must undergo this trial. For it is only after having passed through it, i.e.

after having known arbitrary magic, that an occultist finds the divine magic, gnosis and mysticism of Christian Hermeticism. Then he will transform himself from a scholar into a sage, from a magician into a mage, from a gnosticiser into a gnostic and from an amateur in the mysteries into a mystic. So be it.

The Faustian trial and the human prototype of Faust are prefigured in antiquity by the personality—whether legendary or real is not important—of Cyprian the Mage, who became a Christian and who, subsequently, was bishop of Nicodemia and, lastly, was martyred under the emperor Diocletian. The following arc- some extracts from the Coptic version of his "Confession" (the legend of Cyprian comprises three works: Conversion, Confession and Martyrdom):

This is the repentance (μετάνοια) of Cyprian the Mage (μύγος) who became a Christian thanks to the virgin Justina; who was, subsequently, bishop in the town of Nicodemia; and who, lastly, with Justina, obtained the crown of a martyr under the king Diocletian, on 20th Phaopi, in peace, AMEN.. .

I am Cyprian, he who was consecrated, from his adolescence, in the temple of Apollo, and who was instructed from childhood in the deceptions that the Dragon (δράκων) accomplishes. For, having not yet attained seven years of age, I was already devoted to the Mysteries of Mithra. . . And when I was fifteen years old I served Demeter and I walked before her, bearing torches in the procession. With respect to her daughter, who is called the "virgin" (παρθένος) I bore her mourning attire, clothed in brilliant clothing. . . I went to Olympus. . . that is called "the mountain of the gods". I was initiated into the secrets of the Image (εἰκόν), into her way of speaking, which consists of a succession of noises, which are produced regularly at the time of a manifestation (φαντασία) of demons, when they reveal themselves. . . And I also saw the hearts of the demons—some singing, others, in contrast, setting traps, beguiling, and provoking trouble. And I saw arising before me the escort of each of the gods and goddesses. I passed 40 days and 40 nights in these places, nourishing myself solely from the sap of trees, after sunset. . . When I attained the age of fifteen, I was instructed by the priests, the seven prophets and the prophetess of the Devil (ἀντεκείμενος) with whom this latter they had mouth to mouth conversation. It is they, in fact, who procure work for each of the demons. . . The Devil (διάβολος) taught me how the earth is firmly established on its foundations. He taught me the law of the Air and the Ether. I visited the Sea as far as Tartar (τάρταρος). Lastly, I went to Argos; I celebrated the festival of Hera, and there I learnt how one separates women from their husbands and how one sows hate between brothers and friends. I learnt of the unity of the Air and the Ether, and of the way

in which the Earth enters into combination with Water and, on the other hand, how Water does so with the Ether.

And I left also for a town called Thalís (Elide?) which is in the country that is called Lacedemon. I learnt to know the mysteries of Helios and Artemis, the law of light and darkness, of the stars and their orbits. .. Subsequently, I went to the people that are called Phrygians. From them I learnt to know divination . . . And I knew also of the members of the body which make sudden convulsive movements, of the nerves which retract, provoking itching, and of others which get caught up in one another; I knew of the art of setting a trap with words, of the numbers that one obtains when one throws the fingers forward and also the numbers which fly away suddenly from the lips of men. I created things with my words, and I established that they were real... I also went to Memphis and Heliopolis... I visited their hidden underground chambers where the demons of the air enter into union with the demons who dwell on the earth; I learnt to know how they lead men into temptation. .. and how the spirits (πνεύματα) struggle with demons. And I learnt to know how many Archontes of darkness there are, and the relationships that they have with souls and bodies deprived of reason, down to and including the fish; and I knew what work is accomplished by them (the Archontes); the one provokes the shunning of a man; another acts on his intelligence so that the man gives himself up to him; another acts on his memory; another inspires terror in him; another proceeds by way of guileful ruses; another by surprise; another provokes forgetfulness; another acts upon the crowd so that they revolt; and many other phenomena which are produced in the same way. . . I saw the souls of giants imprisoned in darkness —burdening the shadow of the earth — who appear like one who is bearing a heavy load. I saw dragons enter into contact with demons and I felt the bitter taste of venom coming out of their mouths. . . venom which the spirits (πνεύματα) of the Air make use of to cause all these ills for human beings. . . I lived in these places: the spirit (πνεύμα) of lying appearing in numerous aspects; the spirit of lewdness having a threefold face. . .; the spirit of anger which is like a hard stone... the spirit of trickery with a great number of sharpened tongues.. .the spirit of hate who is like a blind man, with eyes placed at the back of the head, all the time fleeing from the light. . .; the spirit of spitefulness who presents himself like a dried up bone... I saw also the appearance of the vainglory, virtue and sterile justice with which the demons deceived the Greek philosophers; they are, in fact, totally impotent and without force. Certain are like dust, whilst others are

like shadows. . .The number of demons who acted as idols, leading the Greek philosophers into error, is 365. I could not tell you about all these things one by one without writing a number of books; but I shall tell you of some which will make the intensity of my blasphemy apparent.

When I attained thirty years of age, I left Egypt for the country of the Chaldeans, in order to learn how the Ether is. The people there say that it is established above the Fire; but the Sages among them claim that it dwells above the Light. . .the 365 parts of the Ether were enumerated to me. each part of which possesses its own nature and enters into contact with the force of material substances which are our body. . .Certain amongst them, however, do not obey the Word of Light, and maintain an attitude contrary to it. Likewise I was taught how one persuades them to participate in the designs of material beings, how one makes them know the Will of the Light and how they obey it. And I saw also the Mediators (μεσίτης) who are found amongst them. I was surprised by the number of spirits of darkness who are found in the air. . . I learnt to know the conventions (διαθήκη) that they elaborate amongst them and I was very astonished to learn that they are obedient to them. In this place there exists a constitution (διάθεσις), a good will (σπουδή), a commandment (ἐντολή) and a good sense allowing them to enjoy life in common. . . If you really want to believe me, I have seen him—the Devil—face to face. I made him appear before me through offerings. If you take my word to be the truth, I greeted him mouth to mouth. I spoke to him and he thought of me that I was one of the great ones before him. He called me "(a) gifted young man who is easy to instruct" and, also, "(a) little prince worthy of my society". . . He said, "I will help you through them (all the powers—ἐξουσίαι) in your life (βίος)", for I was highly thought of by him. . . As I was going to leave, he cried out my name, "O very zealous Cyprian, be a strong and persevering man in all that you do" . . . And his appearance was similar to a flower of joy, adorned with precious stones; on his head he had a crown studded with these very stones, whose gleam was diffused throughout the whole place. And his clothing (στολή) radiated so strongly that the place where he sat moved. . . (R. P. Festugiere, O. P., *La revelation d' Hermes Trismegiste*, vol. i, appendix 2. Paris, 1950, pp. 374-382)

Following this narrative of repentance, the account of Cyprian's conversion, properly said, begins. Well, here is one rich in experience and knowledge, for whom might be said (to use Paul Sédir's words):

. - after a certain meeting (with the Christian virgin Justina), all that the sages of Greece, Phrygia, Egypt and Chaldea had taught him became like the soft haze which rises at dusk after an over-warm day.

Furthermore, after having met face to face the master himself of the wisdom of this world, he renounced the wisdom of this world to give himself up to the wisdom of divine love—which is folly in the eyes of the sages of this world. . .

In other words Cyprian, the bishop and martyr—with the magical wand, cup, sword and pentacle of Cyprian the mage in a bag—took it on his shoulder and set off, without defence against the dogs who attacked him, and as a ridiculous clown in the eyes of the world, *en route* towards. . . the martyrdom which awaited him. His Greek, Phrygian, Egyptian and Chaldean co-initiates must have said: "There goes the Jester". Educated people and those of common sense of the society of his time would have said: "There goes the Fool". For in their eyes Cyprian had turned his back on the very principle of human culture and civilisation—the intellect. . . the intellect whose ruling genius himself he had met face to face and who had called him "(a) gifted young man who is easy to instruct". For the spirit of "knowledge for its own sake" spoke to him mouth to mouth and exhorted him to be "a strong and persevering man in all that he does".

Now, Cyprian proved to be stronger than the strength of arbitrary magic and more persevering than the perseverance required for "knowledge for its own sake". He surpassed arbitrary will itself and devoted himself to a higher science—to divine science, i.e. to the science of divine love. It is the Tarot Arcanum "The Fool" which is the decisive step that he made. Here lies its meaning and its actualising magic.

The Arcanum "The Fool" teaches the "know-how" of passing from intellectuality, moved by the desire for knowledge, to the higher knowledge due to love. It is thus a matter of transition from the consciousness that theosophical literature calls "lesser *manas*" to the consciousness that it calls "greater *manas*" (= "*manas-buddhi*")—which corresponds to the transition from ego consciousness to the consciousness of the spiritual self (= spirit-self) in anthroposophical literature. In other words, the Tarot Arcanum "The Fool" is related to the transformation of personal consciousness into cosmic consciousness, where the self (ego) is no longer the author of the act of consciousness but is its receiver—obedient to the law of poverty, obedience and chastity.

Now, the Arcanum "The Fool" has a double meaning. Indeed, it can be understood in two different ways: as a model and as a warning at the same time. For on the one hand it teaches the freedom of transcendental consciousness elevated above the things of this world, and on the other hand it clearly presents a very impressive warning of the peril that this elevation comprises—lack of concern, inadequacy, irresponsibility and ridicule. . . in a word, madness.

The Arcanum "The Fool" has in fact these two meanings. It teaches transcendental consciousness and it warns of its peril. It deals with two modes of sacrificing

the intellect (*sacrificium intellectus*). For the intellect can be sacrificed in two different ways: it can be *placed in the service* of transcendental consciousness or it can be simply *abandoned*. Hermeticism chooses the first way of passing beyond intellectuality, whilst many a mystic — Christian or otherwise — has chosen the second way. However, let these two different attitudes not be confused with mystical ecstasism, pure and simple, on the one hand, and so-called "sober" mysticism, i.e. reasonable and prudent, on the other hand. St. John of the Cross was ravished in many bouts of ecstasy which went as far as levitation of the body; however, he was the author of books on mysticism whose clarity, profundity and sobriety of thought are hardly to be surpassed.

With St. John of the Cross, as he said himself, the intellect was silent in face of the divine Presence. It became absorbed by the divine Presence (for the length of time determined by the latter) in order to become active again — *more* active, in fact, than before — after which it comes out again from being immersed in the absolute light whose clarity dazzles the intellect and appears to plunge it into darkness. But this being plunged into the darkness of absolute light does not remain without a profound effect for the intellect: the latter comes out of it endowed with new tendencies, imprinted from the Arcana above. Each ecstasy of St. John of the Cross was therefore an initiation, i.e. the direct imprint of divine, absolute truth not in the domain of conscious thought but rather in the domain of the "will underlying thinking", i.e. that which *produces* conscious thoughts. Thus, it is not a matter of the antinomy: ecstasy—progressive growth of consciousness. No, in the passing beyond the intellect it is a matter of choosing between the decision to *replace* the intellect once and for all with the "breath from above" and the decision to *place* the intellect in the active service of this "breath", whether it produces ecstatic raptures or not. Thus, a whirling dervish who resorts to dance so as to exclude intelligence, or a Buddhist monk of the Zen sect who lives in a mindless state of "meditation" (where he meditates on nothing but simply stays awake with an empty consciousness without falling asleep—in the expectation of a sudden illumination), this dervish and this Zen monk, I say, have made their choice: they have decided not to pass beyond intellectual consciousness, but rather to dispense with it.

It is different in the case of a Christian contemplative monk who meditates, for example, on the stages of the Lord's Passion — and who wants to understand, feel and deepen himself in it to the point of identification with it—when he arrives at the state where his thought and imagination halt before the high pitch of the light. He passes beyond the intellect and the imagination, the activity of which halt after having attained their limit. But this halt is in reality only apparent; for just as a wheel turning with great speed appears to be immobile, so does the intellect and imagination of a soul in ecstasy appear to be immobile to ordinary consciousness—although they are (or, rather, because they are) overactive.

To pass beyond the intellect is therefore to render it overactive, whilst to bypass

the intellect is to reduce it to complete passivity. These are the two quite different ways of sacrificing the intellect (*sacrificium intellectus*).

Now, I repeat, Hermeticism professes to the active surpassing of the intellect. This is why it comprises not only mystical experiences but also gnosis, magic and esoteric science. If it were not thus so, it would consist only of exercises or practical methods aspiring to illumination due to the suppression of intellectuality. The entire history of Hermeticism through the course of the ages is that of continuous inspiration from century to century, on the one hand, *and* the active response of human intelligence from century to century, on the other hand.

The twenty-first Arcanum of the Tarot is therefore that of the Hermeticist's method of sacrificing the intellect to spirituality in such a way that it grows and develops instead of becoming enfeebled and atrophied. It is the Arcanum of the marriage of opposites (*coniunctio oppositorum*, i.e. the conjunction of opposites)—namely discursive intellectuality and illuminative spirituality; or, in other words, it is the alchemical work of the union of human wisdom, which is folly in the eyes of God, with divine wisdom, which is folly in the eyes of man, in such a way that the result is not a double folly but rather a single wisdom which understands both that which is above and that which is below.

In order to understand better what the issue is here, let us first of all look at the byways of the relationship between intellectuality and spirituality, between knowledge and revelation, on the historical plane. Thus St. Paul wrote:

.. Jews demand signs (*semeia*) and Greeks seek wisdom (*sophian*), but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles—but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks: the power (*dynamis*) of God and the wisdom (*sophian*) of God. (I Corinthians i, 22-24)

Here he states precisely the state of things in the relationship between pagan intellectuality and the Jewish prophetic spirituality of his time. Because the aspirations of the best of the pagans—the "philosophers"—all converged on the "logos of the cosmos" (i.e. the "cosmic intelligence"), whilst Jewish spiritual leaders lived in expectation—and from expectation—of a miracle transforming the world: the manifestation of the power of the Celestial King through his Anointed One, a terrestrial king. The former wanted to understand the world, whilst the latter awaited its miraculous magical transformation. Now, the preaching of Christ crucified clashed with the philosophers' fundamental idea that the entire world is the incarnation of the Logos, as well as with the fundamental thesis of Jewish prophetism that the Celestial King is seated above the world and intervenes in worldly events only by emitting lightning-flashes of his power—through the prophets, through thaumaturgists, and through the Messiah—from his throne above the world.

The crucified Christ therefore satisfied neither those who were desiring to understand the world—being only a particular phenomenon amongst other phenomena of the world—nor those who were awaiting the magical transformative manifestation of the power of God—the death on the Cross being a failure and not a triumph of divine power. . "a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Greeks". But St. Paul did not despair: Christ crucified, he said, revealed the power of God and the wisdom of God to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, i.e. the Cross of Christ can be understood only through the cross of revelation (miracle) and wisdom (immanent Logos). Thus St. Paul set a problem to be solved—or rather a task to be accomplished—by mankind. And mankind's spiritual history since then consists only of stages crossed in the accomplishment of the task of the union of revelation and knowledge, of divine wisdom and human wisdom. The stages are as follows:

Initially there is pure and simple *opposition*, such as St. Paul stated it:

If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. (I Corinthians iii, 18-19)

Subsequently this opposition becomes *parallelism*, admitted and tolerated—a kind of "peaceful coexistence" of the spiritual and intellectual domains. The Gospel statement: "The sons of this age *{tou aionos toutou}* are wiser (*phronimoteroi*) in their own generation (*eis ten genean ten heauton*) than the sons of light (*huoi tou photos*)" (Luke xvi, 8) formulates admirably the fundamental idea underlying the parallelism of spirituality and intellectuality. This parallelism manifests itself historically in the admitted and tolerated duality of "philosophy" and "theology". Later, the parallelism was gradually replaced by *cooperation* between spirituality and intellectuality. The "wisdom of the Greeks"—above all the thoughts of Plato and those of Aristotle—which at the time of St. Paul saw only "folly in the preaching of Christ crucified" became an ally of revelation. First of all the Greek fathers (above all Clement of Alexandria and Origen), and also St. Augustine, did not hesitate to resort to the help of Platonic thought, and then it was St. Albertus Magnus and St. Thomas Aquinas who opened the way for the entrance of Aristotelian thought, also, in the domain of revealed truths.

It is above all the Dominicans to whom mankind's spiritual history owes the crossing of the stage in the gradual bringing together of spirituality and intellectuality which is the phenomenon called "scholasticism". Scholasticism signifies a great human endeavour, sustained through the course of centuries, aiming at an as complete as possible cooperation between spirituality and intellectuality.

Whilst endeavouring to render revelation intelligible, i.e. to understand it through intelligence, scholasticism made use of the latter only as an instrument for backing up revelation by means of argumentative or philosophical thought. The fundamental thesis of scholasticism was that philosophy is the servant of

theology (*philosophia ancilla theologiae*). Intelligence certainly cooperated, but it played only a subordinate role. Thus, scholasticism did not succeed in achieving the alchemical work of the *fusion* of spirituality and intellectuality—the work of the "marriage of the sun and moon"—the result of which is a *third principle* called the "philosopher's stone" in alchemy.

The "philosopher's stone" of spiritual alchemy is described in the *Emerald Table* of Hermes Trismegistus as follows:

The father thereof is the sun, the mother the moon.
 The wind carried it in its womb; the earth is the nurse thereof.
 It is the father of all works of wonder (*thelema*) throughout the
 whole world.
 The power thereof is perfect, if it be cast on to earth.
 It will separate the element of earth from that of fire, the subtle
 from the gross, gently and with great sagacity.
 It doth ascend from earth to heaven.
 Again it doth descend to earth, and uniteth in itself the force
 from things superior and things inferior.

(*Tabula Smaragdina*. 4-8)*

This means to say that the process of induction (which "ascends from earth to heaven") and that of deduction (which "descends to earth"), the process of prayer (which "ascends from earth to heaven") and that of revelation (which "descends to earth")—i.e. human endeavour and the action of grace from above—unite and become a complete circle which contracts and concentrates to become a point where the ascent and descent are simultaneous and coincide. And this point is the "philosopher's stone"—the principle of the identity of the human and divine, of humanism and prophetism, of intelligence and revelation, of intellectuality and spirituality. It is the solution of the problem posed by St. Paul, or rather the accomplishment of the task given by him, when he wrote of the Cross being folly to the Greeks and a stumbling block to the Jews, but which "to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, is the power of God and the wisdom of God" (I Corinthians i, 22-24).

Now, the historical and evolutionary mission of Hermeticism is to advance the progress of the alchemical work engaged in developing the "philosopher's stone" or the *union* of spirituality and intellectuality. It is called to be the crest of the wave of contemporary human effort aspiring to the fusion of spirituality and intellectuality. This effort and aspiration is larger than the group of Hermeticists, properly said, who are dispersed in the world. There are probably more people who are not avowed Hermeticists and who are engaged in the endeavour aiming at the fusion of spirituality and intellectuality than there are Hermeticists, prop-

*Tisl. R. Steele and D. W. Singer, *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine* xxi. 1928, p. 42.

erly said. Neither Vladimir Soloviev, nor Nicolas Berdyaev nor Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, nor Carl Gustav Jung, for example, were declared Hermeticists, but how much they have contributed to the progress of the work in question! Christian existentialism (Berdyaev), Christian gnosis (Soloviev), Christian evolutionism (Teilhard de Chardin), and depth psychology of revelation (Jung) are, in fact, as many inestimable contributions to the cause of the union of spirituality and intellectuality. Although they did not make Hermeticism their calling, they served its cause and were inspired from the same sources from which Hermeticism is inspired. Hermeticism has, therefore, more than a few allies and collaborators beyond the ranks of its adherents. The Spirit blows where it will, but the task of the Hermetic tradition is to maintain—without pretension to a monopoly, God forbid! — the ancient ideal of "the *thelema* of the whole world.. .which ascends from earth to heaven. . .descends to earth, and uniteth in itself the force from things superior and things inferior". Its task is that of *guardian* of the great spiritual work.

To be a guardian signifies two things: firstly, the study of and practical application of the heritage of the past, and secondly continuous creative effort aiming at the advancement of the work. For the tradition lives only when it is deepened, elevated and increased in size. Conservation alone does not suffice at all. It is only a corpse which lends itself to conservation by means of mummification.

The great spiritual work—seen always on the historical plane—takes place under simultaneous action stemming from two contrasting sources: from above and from below, i.e. under the action of continuous revelation and that of the effort of human consciousness. In other words, it is the product of the collaboration of revelation and humanism, or of Avatars and Buddhas — to say it in terms of the Indo-Tibetan spiritual tradition. This latter awaits both a new wave of revelation, the culminating point of which will be the Kalki Avatar, and the manifestation of a new Buddha—the Maitreya Buddha. At the same time esoteric Islam (*batin*) — Shi'ism and Sufism — awaits the coming (*parousia*) of the twelfth Imam "who, at the end of our era, will bring the full revelation of the esotericism of all divine revelations" (Henri Corbin. *Histoire de la philosophie islamique*, Paris, 1964, p. 21), and believing Jews await the coming of the Messiah. We need hardly mention, also, the widespread expectation of the second coming of Christ.

Thus, there is a climate of expectation in the world — expectation sustained, contemplated and intensified through the course of the centuries. Without being nourished and directed from above, this energy of human expectation alone would have exhausted itself long ago. But it is not exhausted; rather, on the contrary, it is growing. This is because it aspires to a reality and not an illusion. And this reality is the historical accomplishment of the great work of uniting spirituality and intellectuality, revelation and humanism, on the vast scale of the whole of mankind.

Seen on the level of the history of the whole of mankind, this work presents itself as follows:

We mentioned above the oriental notions of Avatars and Imams, on the one

hand, and that of Buddhas, on the other hand. Avatars and Imams represent personalities who are culminating points of the revelation from above, whilst Buddhas (Gautama Buddha being only one in a series of Buddhas) represent the culminating points of certain epochs of human history—not of revelation from above, but rather of the awakening of human consciousness. The word "Buddha" signifies "awakened", whilst that of "Avatar" signifies "descent"—"a descent, the birth of God in humanity, the Godhead manifesting itself in the human form and nature, (this is) the eternal Avatar" (Sri Aurobindo Ghose, *Essays on the Gita*, Madras, 1922, p. 190). Therefore, if Avatars are *descents* of the divine, Buddhas are *ascents* of the human—they are culminating points of stages of *humanism* in the process of evolution. The difference between the "revelatory ones" (Avatars and Imams) and the "awakened ones" (Buddhas) is analogous to that between "saints" and "righteous men" in the Judaeo-Christian world. Here "saints" correspond to Avatars in that they represent the revelation of divine grace through them and in them, and "righteous men" correspond to Buddhas in that they bring to evidence the fruits of human endeavour.

Thus Job was not a saint, but a righteous man—one of those righteous men who "maintain the world" through their merits. Righteous men show how great the value is of human nature when its very essence is awakened and revealed. Righteous men are the true humanists—the flowers of pure humanism. They bear witness to the fact that the essence of human nature is in the image and likeness of God. This was the witness borne by Job and it was also the witness borne by Socrates. The German philosopher Immanuel Kant bore witness also, by declaring loudly that, however bereft the human soul might be of illuminating grace from above and revelation from above, it bears in itself the *categorical imperative*—immanent moral law (called *dharma* by the sages of India)—which makes it act and think as if it were eternal, immortal, and aspiring to infinite perfection. Thus Kant bore witness to the fundamental nobility of human nature—and this was his contribution *to faith in man*, whatever his limitations, and even errors, in the metaphysical domain may be. For just as there are two loves—love of God and love of neighbour—which are inseparable, so there are *two faiths* which are also inseparable—faith in God and faith in man. Saints and martyrs bear witness to God and righteous men bear witness to man, as being the image and likeness of God. The former restore and strengthen faith in God and the latter restore and strengthen faith in man. And it is faith in Jesus Christ, in the God-Man, which unites faith in God and that in man, just as love for Jesus Christ unites love of God and love of neighbour.

In Jesus Christ we have the perfect union of divine revelation and the most pure humanism. Which means to say that not only all Avatars but also all Buddhas of the past and of the future are summarised in Jesus Christ—being the Logos made flesh, and his Humanity having realised the most complete awakening of all that which is of divine essence in human nature. For Jesus Christ is the revelation that God is love, and he bears witness that the essence of human nature is

love. And can one conceive of, can one imagine, anything more divine than love and anything more human than love? For this reason all Avatars (including all prophets and all Imams) and all Buddhas (including all sages, all initiates and all Bodhisattvas) were, are, and will be only degrees and aspects of the divine revelation and the human awakening realised in Jesus Christ.

This truth, evident for everyone whose head and heart are united in thought (i.e. for one who uses *moral logic*), is nevertheless very difficult for those making use of *oi formal logic*—in the domain of mankind's history or in the domain of philosophy—to understand and accept.

Now, the following words of Krishna in the *Bhagavad-Gita* relate to the doctrine of Avatars:

Many births of yours and mine, O Arjuna, have taken place. . . .
 Though I am unborn (having no birth), though I am imperishable, though I am master of the elements, yet out of my *maya* (power of illusion) I take birth, resting on (material) Nature. Whensoever, O Bharata, virtue (*adbarmasya*, the law of righteousness) languishes and sin predominates, I create myself (I take birth). I take birth age after age, for the liberation of the good and the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of piety (true religion). (*Bhagavad-Gita* iv, 5-8; trsl. M. N. Dutt. *Bhishma Parva* xxviii, 5-8 in *The Mahabharatavi*, Calcutta, 1897, p. 37)

In commenting on this, Sri Aurobindo says:

The Avatar comes as the manifestation of the divine nature in the human nature, the apocalypse of its Christhood, Krishnahood, Buddhahood, in order that the human nature may, by moulding its principle, thought, feeling, action, being on the lines of that Christhood, Krishnahood, Buddhahood, transfigure itself into the divine. The law, the Dharma which the Avatar establishes is given for that purpose chiefly; the Christ, Krishna, Buddha stands in its centre as the gate, he makes through himself the way men shall follow. That is why each Incarnation (Avatar) holds before men his own example and declares of himself that he is the way and the gate; he declares too the oneness of his humanity with the divine being, declares that the Son of Man and the Father above from whom he has descended are one, that Krishna in the human body. . . and the supreme Lord and Friend of all creatures are but two revelations of the same divine Purushottama, revealed there in his own being, revealed here in the type of humanity. (Sri Aurobindo Ghose, *Essays on the Gita*, Madras, 1922, pp. 190-191)

Nothing could be clearer and more convincing! Avatars are therefore periodic incarnations of the Divine; they incarnate periodically with a view to re-establishing the law, just like prophets, who arise to the same end, and they are, each time, doors and ways—Sons of God and Sons of Man who are one with their Father in heaven. And Sri Aurobindo concludes:

Nor does it matter essentially in what form and name or putting forward what aspect of the Divine he (the Avatar) comes; for in all ways, varying with their nature, men are following the path set to them by the Divine which will in the end lead them to him and the aspect of him which suits their nature is that which they can best follow when he comes to lead them; in whatever way men accept, love and take joy in God, in that way God accepts, loves and takes joy in man. (Sri Aurobindo Ghose, *Essays on the Gita*, Madras, 1922, p. 226)

All this appears as the breath of pure reason—the most resolute ecumenism and universal tolerance. But is not this tolerance, this ecumenism and this reasonability of the doctrine of Avatars, such as it is professed by Sri Aurobindo, in principle identical with the reasonability, ecumenism and tolerance manifested by the leaders of the Roman empire who conceived of the idea of a temple for all the gods, i.e. the Pantheon? . . . the Pantheon with a place of honour given to Jesus Christ alongside Jupiter, Osiris, Mithras and Dionysius? For all these gods have this in common, that they are immortal and superior to man. And is not Christ immortal, since he resurrected from the dead? . . . and is he not superior to man, as his miracles prove? Therefore he belongs to the category of gods and has the right to be admitted to their ranks at the Pantheon.

Theoretically there are ten Avatars of Vishnu in Hinduism (e.g. Matsyavatara, Varahavatara, Narasimhavatara, Vamanavatara), but Rama and Krishna are the most popular and most celebrated amongst them. With respect to the Avatar to come, Kalkin or Kalki, he is spoken of in the *Kalki-Purana* as the Avatar who will mark the end of the age of iron; he will be clothed in the form of a giant, with the head of a horse—a symbol which appeals to our faculty of meditative deepening. Sri Aurobindo mentions—and this on many occasions—only Christ, Krishna and Buddha.

Nevertheless Buddha (whom, it is true, Hinduism has included in its pantheon, just as Islam sees in Jesus Christ one of the prophets, the last of whom was Mohammed) does not in any way correspond to the fundamental characteristic of Avatars given by Sri Aurobindo, namely:

. . . each Incarnation (Avatar) holds before men his own example and declares of himself that he is the way and the gate; he declares too the oneness of his humanity with the divine being

. . . that the Son of Man and the Father above from whom he has descended are one. . . (Sri Aurobindo Ghose, *Essays on the Gita*, Madras, 1922, p. 191)

It is an incontestable fact that Sakyamuni, the historical Buddha, never declared the identity of his human being with divine being (not to mention that he never declared himself to be one with the Father in heaven). The *Dishanikaya*, a long collection of Buddha's discourses in Pali, contradicts it on each page and uses a multitude of arguments and facts to the sole end of persuading the reader (or listener to the Buddha's discourses) that Buddha was the *awakened man*, i.e. he became completely conscious of the common and ordinary human experience on earth — that of birth, sickness, old age and death — and drew from it practical and moral conclusions which are summarised in his eightfold path. The point shown by the *Dishanikaya* is that it is not the extraordinary experience of a mystic or gnostic revelation which made the prince of Kapilavastu a Buddha, but rather that he awoke to a new understanding of ordinary human experience — of the human condition as such. It was a man — and not a messenger from heaven — who awoke from the sleep of passive acceptance, habit, the stupefying influence of transitory desires, and the hypnotic force of the totality of human conventions.

The Buddha's teaching is that of a human spirit who took account, in a state of complete lucidity, of the human condition in general and of the practical and moral consequences to be drawn from it. It is an analysis of the reality of human life, and an establishment of the unique consequences which result necessarily from this analysis, by a human spirit five centuries before Jesus Christ, who was placed beyond the Jewish and Iranian prophetic tradition. The Buddha's teaching is therefore humanism pure and simple, which has nothing to do with the revelation from above by prophets and Avatars.

It is necessary, therefore, to eliminate Buddha from the three Avatars mentioned by Sri Aurobindo — "Christ, Krishna and Buddha".

Concerning Jesus Christ, he did not come solely "for the liberation of the good and the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of the throne of justice" (*Bhagavad-Gita* iv, 8), but above all to vanquish evil and death, for the establishment of the throne of love. Jesus Christ was not only a divine *birth* but also — and above all — the divine *death*, i.e. resurrection — which is not the mission of any Avatar, of the past or yet to come. The work of Jesus Christ differs from that of Avatars in that it signifies the *expiatory sacrifice* for completely fallen mankind. This means to say that mankind, who before Jesus Christ had only the choice between renunciation and affirmation of the world of birth and death, is put in the position, since the mystery of Calvary, of transforming it — the Christian ideal being "a new heaven and a new earth" (Revelation xxi, 1). The mission of an Avatar, however, is "the liberation of the good" in this fallen world, without even attempting to transform it. It is a matter in the work of Jesus Christ of universal salvation — the work of divine magic and divine alchemy, that of the transforma-

tion of the fallen world —and not only of the libetation of the good. The work of Jesus Christ is the divine magical operation of love aiming at universal salvation through the transformation of mankind and of Nature.

As well as Buddha, therefore, it is necessary to eliminate Jesus Christ, also, from the abridged list of Avatars given by Sri Aurobindo. Thus, only Krishna remains who is, in addition to Rama, the Avatar *par excellence* of Hinduism.

Although we refute Sri Aurobindo's classification of Buddha and Jesus Christ in the category of Avatars, we should do justice to this Indian sage: his idea of Jesus Christ is infinitely more elevated and nearer to the truth than that of self-styled Christian theologians of the so-called "liberal" Protestant school who regard Jesus Christ as a simple carpenter from Nazareth, who taught and lived the moral ideal of love of God and neighbour. Even every muezzin of Cairo or Baghdad has a notion of Jesus Christ that is more just than that of these theologians, since the former regard him as a prophet inspired by God. With respect to Sri Aurobindo, he regards Jesus Christ as a divine incarnation and makes it understood — by always placing Jesus Christ at the head of the other Avatars ("Christ, Krishna, Buddha")— that he, personally, considers him as a light of the first magnitude in the heaven of divine Avatars!

But let us now return to the Arcanum of the alchemical work of the fusion of spirituality and intellectuality, as seen on the historical plane.

After Jesus Christ —the God-Man, who was the complete unity not only of spirituality and intellectuality, but also of divine will and human will, and even of divine essence and human essence —the work of the fusion of spirituality and intellectuality can be nothing other than the germination of the Christie seed in human nature and consciousness. In other words, it is a matter of the progress of the *Christianisation* of mankind, not only in the sense of a growing number of baptised people, but above all in the sense of a qualitative transformation of human nature and consciousness. This latter will work in conformity with the law: general aspiration and longing; culminating point of success in an individuality; general diffusion spread out over a number of generations, i.e. the climate of general expectation will lead to the particular realisation which will subsequently become general. This is why Buddhists await the coming of the Maitreya Buddha and Hindus that of the Kalki Avatar. They await him having in view a step forward in mankind's spiritual evolution which will be crossed as a consequence of the manifestation of the new Buddha and the new Avatar. And this step forward will be nothing other than the fusion of spitituality and intellectuality.

This expectation is, moreover, not restricted to the Otient: theosophists made a considerable contribution to it by launching a movement of international scope aiming at preparing minds for the coming —supposedly at hand— of the new teacher. To this end they founded the Order of the Star of the East which numbered about 250,000 members, and which organised congresses, conferences and rallies all over the place, as well as publishing hundreds of books and brochures. Whilst spreading the idea of the imminent coming of a new teacher for mankind, the

Order of the Star of the East was, alas, too fixed on a particular personality—chosen not by heaven, but rather by the leaders of the Theosophical Society—who was extolled in advance so as to build up his prestige, which in the last analysis displeased this person, who disbanded the Order.

It was more discreetly, and without putting a particular person in the limelight as candidate, that Dr. Rudolf Steiner, founder of the Anthroposophical Society, predicted the manifestation—again in the first half of the twentieth century—not of the new Maitreya Buddha or Kalki Avatar, but rather of the Bodhisattva, i.e. the individuality in the process of becoming the next Buddha, whose field of activity he hoped the Anthroposophical Society would serve. A new disappointment! This time the disappointment was due not to an error with regard to the awaited individuality, nor even with regard to the time of the beginning of his activity, but rather to an overestimation of the Anthroposophical Society on the part of its founder—thus nothing became of it.

Be that as it may, the idea and the expectation of the coming of the new Buddha and new Avatar lives at present both in the western world and in the orient. There is much confusion concerning this idea, above all among theosophists, but there are also those who see clearly here. Rudolf Steiner, for example, saw very clearly: of all that has been written and said in public, the most correct is what was said by Rudolf Steiner. He was on the right track, at least.

Now, in following the same track—that leading to the culminating point of the fusion of spirituality and intellectuality—we arrive at the following synopsis:

Since it is a question of the work of the fusion of revelation and knowledge, of spirituality and intellectuality, it is a matter throughout of the fusion of the Avatar principle with the Buddha principle. In other words, the Kalki Avatar awaited by the Hindus and the Maitreya Buddha awaited by the Buddhists will manifest in a *single personality*. On the historical plane the Maitreya Buddha and the Kalki Avatar will be one.

This means to say that the awaited Avatar "with the body of a giant and the head of a horse" (Kalki) and the expected Buddha who will be the "bringer of good" (Maitreya) will be one and the same personality. And this personality will signify the complete union of the most elevated humanism (the principle of the Buddhas) and the highest revelation (the principle of the Avatars) of a kind that both the spiritual world and the human world will speak and act simultaneously and hand-in-hand through him. In other words, the Buddha-Avatar to come will *not only speak of the good, but he will speak the good*; he will not merely teach the way of salvation, but he will advance the course of this way; he will not be solely a witness of the divine and spiritual world, but he will make human beings into authentic witnesses of this world; he will not simply explain the profound meaning of revelation, but he will bring human beings themselves to attain to the illuminating experience of revelation, of a kind that it will not be he who will win authority, but rather He who is "the true light that enlightens every man coming into the world" (John i, 9)—Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, who is

the way, the truth and the life. The mission of the Buddha-Avatar to come will therefore not be the foundation of a new religion, but rather that of bringing human beings to first hand experience of the source itself of all revelation ever received from above by mankind, as also of all essential truth ever conceived of by mankind. It will not be novelty to which he will aspire, but rather the conscious certainty of eternal truth.

Maitreya-Kalki, the Buddha-Avatar, will represent the fusion of *prayer* and *meditation*, these two forms of spiritual activity being the motivating forces of spiritual religion and spiritual humanism. The apparent incompatibility of the state of consciousness represented by statues of the master of meditation, Gautama Buddha, plunged in meditation in the asana posture, and that of St. Francis of Assisi receiving the stigmata whilst kneeling in prayer—this apparent incompatibility, I say—will be surmounted by the Buddha-Avatar to come. The fire of prayer will unite with the limpid water of the peace of meditation; the alchemical marriage of the sun and moon, of fire and water, will take place in him.

The union of the principles of prayer and meditation which the future Buddha-Avatar will represent will be, in fact, the crowning of a long series of efforts aiming at this end through the course of the centuries — the result of a long preparation through the course of mankind's spiritual history. For not only was prayer introduced into the strictly meditative Indo-Tibetan Mahayana school of Buddhism — under the form of Lamaism — and into Hinduism under the form of Bhakti-yoga, but also meditation was introduced to the West in the guise of complementing and helping the life of prayer in the spiritual practice of the great religious orders. St. Bonaventura, for example, introduced it into the Franciscan Order, St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross introduced it into the Carmelite Order, and St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit Order, was a master not only of prayer but also of meditation. One could say that this latter to a large extent prefigured the fusion of spirituality and intellectuality, of prayer and meditation, which is the mission of the future Buddha-Avatar. The *calm warmth* of complete certainty, due to the cooperation of human effort and revelation from above, which St. Ignatius possessed and which his disciples (of his spiritual exercises) attained — where meditation and prayer are united — make an impressive prefiguring of the Buddha-Avatar to come.

I am well aware that St. Ignatius does not enjoy unreserved admiration either among Protestants or among Catholics themselves, and that neither among the former nor among the latter are there many who have much sympathy for him. At best he has gained the cold respect of the more perceptive intellectuals of the two confessions. But with regard to popularity or unpopularity there is good reason to say that it will not be popularity and general acclaim which will characterise the work of the Buddha-Avatar to come, but rather the fusion of spirituality and intellectuality, no matter whether this pleases or not. Without doubt there will be more opposition than appreciation, for neither the partisans of pure faith nor those of pure knowledge will hesitate to object that it is a matter of dangerously

effacing the line of demarcation between faith and science. Look at the controversy of our time surrounding the work of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin!

With respect to St. Ignatius of Loyola, it is not only his heroic effort to unite spirituality and intellectuality which interests us—we who are engaged in meditating on the Tarot Arcanum "The Fool"—but also, and above all, the fact that St. Ignatius began as a "fool in Spirit" and that he succeeded in attaining to the wisdom of perfect equilibrium between the world of mystical revelations and the world of human tasks and actions. He learnt and openly lived the lesson of the twenty-first Arcanum of the Tarot.

Indeed, was it not as a "fool in Spirit" (acting in the spirit of the Fool of our Arcanum) when he "left on a bank (close to the place of embarkation at Barcelona) five or six pieces of silver obtained by begging in Barcelona, putting all his confidence, all his hope and all his assurance in God alone"—before embarking on board a ship destined for Italy? (cf. *Monumenta historica Societatis Jesu, Scripta de Sancto Ignatio*, vol. ii, Madrid, 1904). And compare the Ignatius of the time of his pilgrimage to the Holy Land with the Ignatius in Rome as the head of the Order, directing the very different activities at first of sixty, then of four hundred, and lastly of three thousand spiritual sons! And the step made by him—although contrary in direction to that made by Cyprian the mage—is again the putting into practice of the Tarot Arcanum "The Fool". For this Arcanum is that of the "hygienic experience", so to say, of man placed as an intermediary between two worlds—the divine world and the human world. It is the Arcanum of crossing the threshold of these two worlds in two directions—from below above (which was the case with Cyprian) and to return (which was, in fact, the case with St. Ignatius). It is therefore the Arcanum of the transformation of mental turmoil—the schizophrenia of two consciousnesses not in harmony with one another—into wisdom.

We have spoken here of the Buddha-Avatar to come, because he will be the guide in the transformation of potential schizophrenic madness into the wisdom of the harmony of the two worlds and of their experience. He will be the example and living model of realisation of the Arcanum which occupies us. For this reason he is represented as a Buddha in canonical Buddhist art not in a meditation posture with crossed legs, but rather seated as a European—this latter posture symbolising the synthesis of the principle of prayer and that of meditation. And for this reason, also, he is imagined in Indian "mythology" (as an Avatar) as a giant with the head of a horse, i.e. as a being with the human will of a giant and, at the same time, intellectuality placed completely in the service of revelation from above—the horse being the obedient servant of its rider. Thus, he represents in prodigious measure three activities of the human will: seeking, knocking and asking—conforming to the saying of the Master of all masters, "Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matthew vii, 7). At the same time, he will not put forward personal opinions or reasonable hypotheses; for his intellectuality—his "horse's head"—will be moved

solely by revelation from above. Like the horse, it will be directed by the rider. Nothing arbitrary will issue forth.

This is the Arcanum at work on the historical plane. Concerning its application in the domain of the individual's inner life, it is analogous to the work of spiritual alchemy which operates on the historical plane. This means to say that the individual soul begins initially with the experience of the separation and opposition of the spiritual and intellectual elements within it, then advances to—or resigns itself to—parallelism, i.e. a kind of "peaceful coexistence" of these two elements within it. Subsequently it arrives at cooperation between spirituality and intellectuality which, proving to be fruitful, eventually becomes the complete fusion of these two elements in a third element—the "philosopher's stone" of the spiritual alchemy of Hermeticism. The beginning of this final stage is announced by the fact that logic becomes transformed from formal logic (i.e. general and abstract logic)—passing through the intermediary stage of "organic logic"—into *moral logic* (i.e. material and essential logic).

In order to illustrate the transformation of formal logic into organic logic and this latter into moral logic, let us take the example of the axiom of formal logic: "the part is less than the whole." It is an axiom because the notion itself of "part" signifies nothing other than a quantity less than that of the whole. This is evident, when it is a matter of *quantities*. But this axiom is no longer absolutely valid with respect to the *functions* of a living organism. Here the part—and even a small part—can be as essential as the whole organism. The heart, for example, is only a small part of the body, but remove it from the body and the whole organism will cease to exist as a living organism. For the domain of organic functions it is therefore necessary to modify our axiom in the sense that "*the part can be equal to the whole*". But if we proceed from the organic world to the world of *values*, the moral world, we are obliged to modify the axiom still further. Here it should be said that "*the part can be greater than the whole*", because Caiaphas' reasoning that "it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, that the whole nation should not perish" (John xi, 50) is right only with regard to the domain of quantities, but is false with regard to the domain of moral values. For this "one man" that he proposed to sacrifice in order to save the people was the very reason for the existence of this people: the Messiah. Moreover, history has shown that the measure taken on Caiaphas' counsel aiming at preventing military intervention by the Romans was in vain: the Romans came all the same in A.D. 70, destroying Jerusalem and the temple of Jerusalem after having massacred its inhabitants, which was exactly what Caiaphas wanted to avoid . . .

Moral logic, in contrast to formal logic and organic logic, operates with values instead of notions of grammar, mathematics, or biological functions. Thus, if formal logic can go only so far towards the idea of God as to postulate the necessity of admitting a beginning in the chain of cause and effect—postulating a First Cause (*primus motor*)—and if organic logic, that of functions, cannot come further than postulating in the order existing in the world the existence of God as

the ordering principle — the "law of laws" of the world — moral logic comes to the postulate that God is the "value of values", that he is love.

And, since hate and indifference are not creative, it is love which is the source, cause and motivation of the creation of the world. One does not create what one detests and one does not proceed to the creative act being moved by indifference, i.e. by lack of interest. God is, therefore, creative love — the creative Father of the visible and invisible world... "Father", i.e. he who gives being to created beings. And since being is his gift to beings, and not a temporary loan, he does not take back his gift — once given; beings created by the Father are therefore *immortal*. Immortality is thus a necessary conclusion of moral logic concerning the idea that God is love. . . and so on, until all the essential articles of faith are established from the moral postulates necessary to moral logic. What are initially postulates of moral logic are confirmed, amplified and deepened through spiritual experience, which will not hesitate to come to the aid of thought, when head and heart are equally engaged. Because moral logic is the language of the spiritual world, and to make use of moral logic is to begin a *dialogue* with the spiritual world. For the latter does not remain mute and indifferent when addressed in its own language.

Moral logic, as we have stated, is the logic of the head and heart united. It is therefore that which unites *meditation* and *prayer*.

Prayer — which asks, thanks, worships and blesses — is the radiation, the breath and the warmth of the awakened heart: expressed in formulae of the articulated word, in the wordless inner sighing of the soul and, lastly, in the silence, both outward and inward, of the breathing of the soul immersed in the element of divine respiration and breathing in unison with it. Prayer has, therefore, different aspects: a "magical" aspect, i.e. prayer in formulae; a "gnostic" aspect, when it becomes inexpressible inner sighing; and, lastly, a "mystical" aspect, when it becomes the silence of union with the Divine. Thus, it is never in vain and without effect. Even a prayer-formula pronounced rapidly in a detached and impersonal manner has a magical effect, because the sum-total of ardour put into this formula in the past — by believers, saints and Angels — is evoked solely through the fact of pronouncing the prayer-formula. Every prayer-formula consecrated by use has a magical virtue, since it is *collective*. The voices of all those who have ever prayed it are evoked by it and join the voice of he who pronounces it with serious intention. This applies above all to all the formulae of liturgical prayer. Each phrase of the Roman Catholic Mass or Greek Orthodox Liturgy, for example, is a formula of divine sacred magic. There is nothing astonishing about this, since the Mass and the Liturgy consist only of the prayers of prophets, saints and Jesus Christ himself. But what is truly astonishing is that there are — and always have been — esotericists (such as Fabre d'Olivet, for example) who improvise cults, prayer-formulae, new "mantrams", etc., as if something is gained through novelty! Perhaps they believe that the formulae taken from Holy Scripture or given by the saints are used up through usage and have lost their virtue? This would be a radical misunderstanding. Because usage does not at all deplete a prayer-formula, but

rather, on the contrary, it adds to its virtue. For this reason it is also deplorable that certain Protestant churches have the custom of the minister or preacher improvising prayers in their divine service—probably believing that it is the personal which is more effective and not the common and collective tradition.

One should know, dear Unknown Friend, that one never prays alone, i.e. that there are always others—above, or in the past on earth—who pray with you in the same sense, in the same spirit and even in the same words. In praying, you always represent a visible or invisible community together with you. If you pray for healing, you represent all the sick and all healers, and the community of sick people and healers then prays with you. For this reason the Lord's prayer is not addressed to "my Father in heaven", but rather to "*our* Father in heaven", and asks the Father to "give *us* this day *our* daily bread", that he "forgive *us our* trespasses", that he "leads *us* not into temptation" and that he "delivers *us* from evil". Thus, whatever the particular intention of the one who prays the Lord's prayer may be, it is in the name of the whole of mankind that he prays.

With respect to the prayer which is an inner, inexpressible sighing—which we have named "gnostic"—the difference from "magical" prayer in formulae is a transformation of the psycho-physical breathing in prayer. Thus it can be made permanent—day and night, awake and asleep, without interruption, as long as respiration lasts. This type of prayer (which is practised above all in the Christian Orient) has a virtue that is more than magical: it transforms man into a mirror of the spiritual and divine world. For this reason we have named it "gnostic"—gnostic experience being the reflection of mystical experience.

Concerning mystical prayer properly said, i.e. the state of the human soul united with the Divine, where it no longer has even its own breathing, but breathes in and through the breath of divine respiration alone, it is the profound silence of all soul faculties—intelligence, imagination, memory and will—which, for example, St. John of the Cross describes and explains in his works. It is the consummation of love between the soul and God.

Meditation, i.e. the gradual deepening of thought, also has its stages, which comprise pure and simple concentration on a subject, understanding the subject within the totality of relationships that it has with reality and, lastly, intuitive penetration into the very essence of the subject. Just as prayer leads to mystical union of the soul with the Divine, so does meditation lead to grasping a direct knowledge of eternal and immutable principles. Rene Guenon named this experience of the union of the particular intellect with the universal Intellect (the *nous* of Plotinus and the Stoics)—as well as the doctrines which result from it—"metaphysical". He summarised his leading ideas on this "metaphysics" in a conference on "oriental metaphysics" which he gave at the Sorbonne in 1925—which thesis one finds reproduced in Paul Sédir's book *Histoire et doctrine des rose-croix*:

Metaphysics is knowledge *par excellence*. It is not natural knowledge, either with respect to its object or with respect to the faculties by which it is obtained. More particularly, it has nothing

to do with the scientific and rational domain. It is not a matter of operating with abstractions but of taking knowledge directly from eternal and immutable principles.

Metaphysics is not human knowledge. Thus, it is not in so far as he is man that man can attain it; it is the grasping in effective consciousness of supra-individual states. The very principle of metaphysical realisation is identification through knowledge—according to Aristotle's axiom: a being is all that he knows.

The most important means is concentration. Realisation consists initially in the unlimited development of all possibilities contained virtually in the individual, then in finally going beyond the world of forms to a degree of universality which is that of pure being.

The final aim of metaphysical realisation is the absolutely unconditioned state, free from all limitation. The liberated being is then truly in possession of the fullness of his possibilities. This is union with the supreme Principle.

True metaphysics cannot be determined in time; it is eternal. It is an order of knowledge reserved for an elite. . . [an elite, let us add with Sedir, which is composed of beings who are only intelligence]. . . and then, all existing manifestations of the Absolute are not there for the sake of being ignored; to abandon them because they encumber us, as the yogi (*sic*) or the arhat does, is not noble or Christian. . . (Paul Sedir, *Histoire et doctrine des rose-croix*, Paris, 1964, pp. 13-14)

Metaphysics as "direct knowledge of eternal and immutable principles" and as the realisation of "finally going beyond the world of forms to a degree of universality which is that of pure being" is only one of the applications of meditation, and is by no means the only one. There are still others.

Since Orientals aspire to deliverance by taking refuge in the abstract point of origin of all spatial forms, they therefore employ meditation to this end. However, Jewish esotericists—the Cabbalists—want to arrive at the worship and love of God that is most worthy of him. This is why their meditative efforts aim at a deepening of the divine mysteries which are revealed in scripture and in the creation. The *Zohar* is an inexhaustible source of teaching concerning this school of meditation and its fruits.

Christian meditation, also, pursues the aim of deepening the two divine revelations: holy scripture and the creation, but it does so above all with a view to awakening a more complete consciousness and appreciation of Jesus Christ's work of redemption. For this reason it culminates in the contemplation of the seven stages of the Passion: the washing of the feet, the scourging, the crowning with the crown of thorns, the way of the cross, the crucifixion, the laying in the tomb, and the resurrection.

The meditation of Christian Hermeticism—whose aim is to understand and advance the work of the alchemical transformation of the spirit, the soul, and matter, from the state of primordial purity before the Fall, to the state after the Fall, and from the latter to that of the Reintegration (the fulfillment of salvation) — proceeds, for example, from the seven "days" of the creation according to Genesis to the seven stages of the Fall, then to the seven miracles of St. John's Gospel, and then to the seven sayings of Jesus concerning himself (I am the resurrection and the life; I am the light of the world; I am the good shepherd; I am the bread of life; I am the door; I am the way, the truth and the life; I am the true vine), in order to conclude with the seven "words" of Jesus Christ crucified and the seven stages of the Passion indicated above.

Meditation can thus serve as a means to attain diverse ends, but whatever its aim it is always the means to realisation of a more and more intense awakening of the whole consciousness (and not only of intelligence) with respect to particular facts, ideas, ideals and, lastly, the reality of the human terrestrial and spiritual condition in general. It is also the means of awakening consciousness with respect to revelations from above. To meditate is to deepen; it is to go to the heart of things.

For this reason the practice of meditation entails the transformation of formal logic into organic logic and this latter into moral logic. The latter, in its turn, is developed by going beyond comprehension, by contemplation of things which surpass understanding: mysteries which — not being unknowable — allow of an infinite knowledge that one can understand and know ever more deeply, without end. Having attained this contemplation of things surpassing actual understanding, meditation becomes *prayer*—just as prayer which attains the state of contemplation without words becomes *meditation*.

And it is this "alchemical marriage" of prayer and meditation — of the sun and moon of the soul's inner heaven—which takes place in the soul of the human being who is in the process of realising the Arcanum "The Fool".. .the Arcanum of the union of revelation from above and human wisdom, whilst avoiding madness. . .the Arcanum of the formation of the "philosopher's stone", where the twofold certainty of revelation from above and human knowledge is concentrated.

The foregoing are some glimpses that arise in the soul of one who meditates on the Card of the Arcanum "The Fool", representing a man walking, in the clothes of a buffoon, holding a bag and supporting himself with a staff, which he does not use to chase away the dog attacking him. Other—and more profound — glimpses are kept in reserve for those who will deepen their meditation on this Arcanum further than is indicated here. I greet them and hope that they may be able to make new light issue forth from their meditation on the Arcanum whose esoteric name is LOVE!