

*Meditation on the
Twelfth Major Arcanum of the Tarot*

THE HANGED MAN

LE PENDU

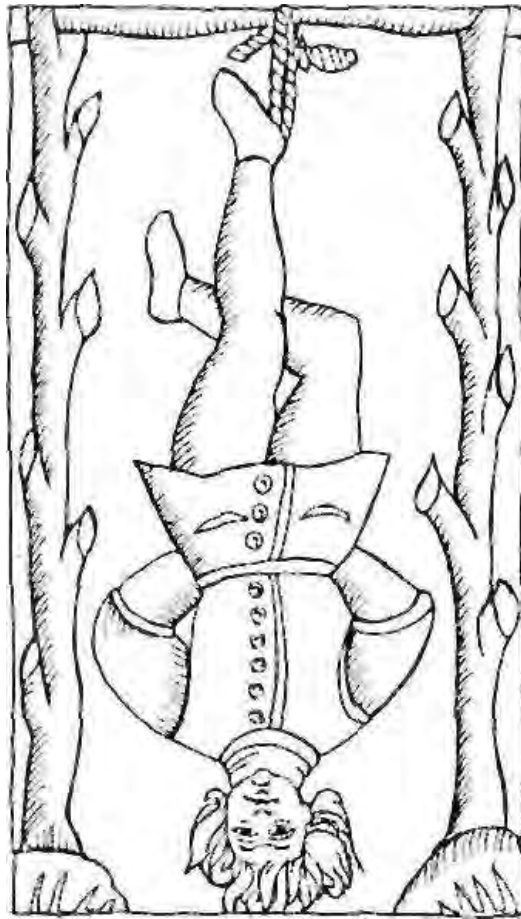
Truly, truly, I say to you,
unless one is born anew,
he cannot see the kingdom of God. . .
Truly, truly, I say to you,
unless one is born of water and the Spirit,
he cannot enter the kingdom of God. . .
The wind blows where it wills,
and you hear the sound of it,
but you do not know whence it comes
or whither it goes;
so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.
(John iii, 3, 5, 8)

Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests;
but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head.
(Matthew viii. 20)

Then the righteous will shine like the sun
in the kingdom of their Father.
(Matthew xiii, 43)

That which I had to say
about the operation of *sol*
is completed.
(*Tabula Smaragdina*, 13)

LETTER XII



THE HANGED MAN

Dear Unknown Friend,

Here before us is the Card of the twelfth Arcanum of the Tarot, the Hanged Man. It represents a young man suspended by one foot between two trees, with branches cut close to the trunk, from a transversal beam that they support, thus forming a porch.

The position of the man—upside down, head below, hanging by one foot in a porch, with his free leg folded back at the knee and his arms bound behind his back— at first naturally evokes ideas of gravitation and of the torture that conflict with it can inflict on man. Therefore, our first impression of the Card plunges us into the heart of the problem of the relationship between man and gravitation, and the conflicts that this relationship entails.

Gravitation—physical, psychic and spiritual—occupies a central place as a regulating factor in the solar system, in the system of the atom, in the biological cell, in the biological organism, in the mechanism of memory and the association of ideas, in the relationship of the sexes, in the social organism, in the formation of communities according to way of life, doctrine and ideal, and, lastly, in the process of biological, psychic and spiritual evolution, where a centre of gravity—or universal prototype as the final cause—is at work across the ages, just as the sun, in so far as it is the centre of gravity of the planetary system, operates across space. The whole world manifests itself to us as a comprehensive system of gravitation constituting a number of particular gravitational systems—such as atoms, cells, organisms, planets, individuals, communities and hierarchies. Each one of us is placed in the cosmic gravitational system which determines our freedom, i.e. what we are able and not able to do. The domain of our freedom itself, our spiritual life, shows the real and active presence of gravitation of a spiritual order. For what is the phenomenon of religion if not the manifestation of spiritual gravitation towards God. i.e. towards the centre of spiritual gravitation of the world? It is significant that the term "the Fall"—chosen for the primordial event which brought about the change of man's state from that named "paradise" to the terrestrial state of toil, suffering and death—is borrowed from the domain of *gravitation*. In fact, there is nothing against the conception of the Fall of Adam as the passage from a spiritual gravitational system, whose centre is God. to a terrestrial gravitational system, whose centre is the serpent (that we have characterised in the preceding Letter as the "principle of electricity"). The Fall, as a phenomenon, can certainly be understood as the passage from the one gravitational field to the other.

Now, the domain of freedom -the spiritual life—is found placed between two gravitational fields with two different centres. The Gospel designates them as "heaven" and "this world", or as the "kingdom of God" and the "kingdom of the prince of this world". And it designates those whose will follows or is submitted to the gravitation of "this world" as "children of this world", and those whose will follows the gravitation of "heaven" as the "children (or the sons) of light".

The Manichaeans straight away drew the conclusion from this that the invisible world, or heaven, is good and the visible world of Nature is bad. wholly forgetting the fact that evil is of spiritual origin, and is therefore invisible, and that good is impressed into created Nature, and is therefore also visible. Although the two gravitational fields are interpenetrating and one could not, or should not, identify them simply with visible Nature and the invisible spiritual world, they are nevertheless certainly real and *morally* quite discernible. For just as there is a "discernment of spirits", which the apostle Paul speaks of, so there is a discernment of the phenomena of Nature, which manifests, for example, in medical diagnosis, in the choice of remedies from the kingdoms of Nature, in the domain of physical and psychic hygiene, etc.

The human being participates in these two gravitational fields, as the apostle Paul had in mind when he said:

For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh: for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would. (Galatians v. 17)

These "opposing desires" are the tendencies through which the two gravitational fields manifest themselves. The man who lives in the grip of gravitation of "this world" at the expense of the gravitation of "heaven" is the "carnal man"; he who lives in equilibrium between the two gravitational fields is the "psychic man"; and, lastly, the one who lives under the sway of the gravitation of "heaven" is (he "spiritual man").

It is this latter who constitutes the subject of the twelfth Arcanum of the Tarot, for it is an upside-down man that the twelfth Card represents. The Hanged Man represents the condition of one in the life of whom gravitation from above has replaced that from below.

Firstly, it should be said that attraction from above is as real as that from below, and that the condition of a human being who has passed, whilst living, from the field of terrestrial gravitation into that of heaven is indeed comparable to that of the Hanged Man of the Card. This is at one and the same time a benefaction and a martyrdom; both are very real.

The history of the human race bears witness to the reality of attraction from above. The exodus into Egyptian, Palestinian, Syrian and other deserts inaugurated by St. Paul of Thebes and St. Anthony the Great were nothing other than the manifestation of irresistible attraction from above. The desert fathers, pioneers of this exodus, had no programme or plan to found any communities or schools of Christian spirituality comparable to the schools of yoga in India. No, what happened to them was the irresistible appeal from above to solitude and a life given up entirely to spiritual reality. Thus, St. Anthony the Great said:

As fish who remain on dry land die, so do monks who linger outside of the cell, or who pass time with people of the world, slacken the tension of solitude. Therefore it is necessary—as fish do to the sea—that we return to the cell, so as not to forget, through dallying outside, our interior vigil. (St. Anthony the Great, *Apophthegmata*, x)

Thus, the "tension of solitude" is the element proper to souls under the sway of attraction from above. It was "as fish seeking the sea" that they sought solitude where they found the "tension", i.e. the relationship between the gravitation of

heaven and that of earth, which was as right for them as water is for fish. It was in solitude that they could *live*, i.e. develop spiritual temperature, breathe spiritual air, quench their spiritual thirst and satisfy their spiritual hunger. Outside of the solitude and tension that the "interior vigil" meant to them, the desert fathers felt cold, were unable to breathe, and suffered spiritual hunger and thirst.

This, therefore, is really something quite different from programmes and plans: the reality of the attraction of heaven at work in the lives of the desert fathers.

They were pioneers. Before long, still during their lifetime, the deserts of Thebais. Neutra and Ceuta were peopled with anchorites. Then, in Upper Egypt, St. Pachomius founded cenobites, the prototypes of the monasteries that we know, where several hermits lived together under a superior or abbot. This form of life was, much later, adapted and perfected by St. Basil in the East, and by St. Augustine, St. Cassian and St. Benedict in the West.

Although all this immense subsequent development was present in germ in the solitary lives of St. Paul of Thebes and St. Anthony the Great, this was not at all the conscious motive for their retreat into the desert. This motive was solely the desire for solitude caused by the irresistible attraction of heaven.

The attraction of heaven is so real that it can take hold of not only the soul but also the physical body. Then the body is carried up and no longer touches the ground. The following is what St. Teresa of Avila, who had this experience, wrote in her "Life" (her autobiography):

Then the cloud rises to heaven taking the soul with it, and begins to show it the features of the kingdom He has prepared for it. I do not know whether this is an accurate comparison, but in point of fact that is how it happens. In these raptures, the soul no longer seems to animate the body, its natural heat therefore is felt to diminish and it gradually gets cold, though with a feeling of very great joy and sweetness. Here there is no possibility of resisting. . . rapture is, as a rule, irresistible. Before you can be warned by a thought or help yourself in any way, it comes as a quick and violent shock; you see and feel this cloud, or this powerful eagle rising and bearing you up on its wings. You realise, I repeat, and indeed see that you are being carried away you know not where. . . We have to go willingly wherever we are carried, for in fact, we are being borne off whether we like it or not. In this emergency very often I should like to resist, and I exert all my strength to do so, especially at such times as I am in a public place, and very often when I am in private also, because I am afraid of delusions. Sometimes with a great struggle I have been able to do something against it. But it has been like fighting a great giant, and has left me utterly exhausted. At other times resistance has been impossible; my soul has been carried away, and usually my head as well, without my being able to prevent it; *and sometimes it has affected my whole body.*

which has been lifted from the ground. . . It seemed to me when I tried to resist that a great force, for which I can find no comparison, was lifting me up from beneath my feet. It came with greater violence than any other spiritual experience... I confess that in me it aroused a great fear, at first a very great fear. One sees one's body being lifted from the ground; and though the soul draws it up after itself, and does so most gently if it does not resist, one does not lose consciousness. At least I myself was sufficiently aware to realise that I was being lifted. . . (The Life of St. Teresa of Avila: transl. J. M. Cohen, London, 1957. pp. 136-138)

This is a simple and veracious testimony of the reality of the irresistible attraction from above and of the passage from the field of terrestrial gravitation to the field of celestial gravitation. St. Teresa had the experience where the body was "drawn up after the soul" which was, in its turn, under the sway of attraction emanating from the centre of spiritual attraction which was, for her, the Lord.

But when the centre of spiritual attraction, when the Lord himself, is clothed in a body—which was the case in the earthly life of Jesus Christ—what happens then? There is then no question of being carried off in a rapture, because to what place could the Humanity of the Lord be carried off—the "rapturing" and "carrying off" principle, the centre of spiritual gravitation, being in itself?

Now, the Gospel clarifies this point for us. It says:

When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea. got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The sea rose because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat. They were frightened, but he said to them: It is I; do not be afraid. (John vi, 16-20)

And Peter answered him: Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water. He said: Come! So Peter got out of the boat *and walked on the water and came to Jesus*. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out: Lord, save me! Jesus immediately reached out his hand *and caught him*, saying to him: O man of little faith, why did you doubt? (Matthew xiv, 28-31)

The key to the answer is found above all in the words. "It is I; do not be afraid". The accepted translation of *ego eimi. me phobeisthe* in Greek, or *ego sum. nolite timere* in Latin, is: "It is I; do not be afraid". This is right and there is nothing to be said against it — *ego eimi* And *ego sum* mean literally "I am", but in the given context signify "It is I". The context bears this out. This is why the translation "It is I" is not only justified, but also—in view of the context—necessary. It is however legitimate, without questioning the rightness of the accepted transla-

tion, to *understand* the words *ego eimi (ego sum)* more literally, and, at the same time, more profoundly. For *two* questions are implied in the fear and confusion of the disciples. "*Who* is the one who we see walking on the water?" and "*How* is he able to walk on the water?"

Now, "It is I" is the answer to the first question, and "*I am*" is the answer to the second. For "I am" reveals an esoteric truth (i.e. profound and not immediately obvious), whilst "It is I" is an exoteric or factual answer. It *hides* and *contains*, as its kernel, the esoteric answer. What is, therefore, the esoteric truth that the words "I am; do not be afraid" reveal?

"*I am*" is the formula of revelation in the world of the *existence* of the divine *essence* of Jesus Christ. The whole Gospel is the history of this gradual revelation, the stages of which it summarises through the diverse aspects of the comprehensive "*I am*", such as "*I am* the true vine", "*I am* the way, the truth and the life". "*I am* the door". "*I am* the bread of life", "*I am* the good shepherd", "*I am* the light of the world" and "*I am* the resurrection and the life".

Now, the words "I am; do not be afraid" spoken by the one walking on the water amount to the statement: "*I am gravitation*, and he who holds to me will never sink or be engulfed". Because *fear* is due to the menace of being engulfed by elemental forces of gravitation of a lower order, i.e. of being carried away by the play of blind forces from the agitated "sea" of the "electrical field" of *death*. "*I am; do not be afraid*" is therefore the message of the centre, or Master, of celestial gravitation, demonstrated by the action of support with regard to Peter, who was saved from sinking. Thus, there is another field of gravitation than that of death, and he who unites himself with it can *walk on water*, i.e. transcend the agitated element of "this world", the electrical gravitational field of the serpent. This message contains not only the invitation to have recourse to the "kingdom of heaven", but also the solemn declaration of the *immortality* of the soul, in so far as the soul is capable of transcending the engulfing gravitation and "walking on the water".

Peter, who "got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus", experienced the same elevating rapture that St. Teresa describes. He *got out* of the boat, which means—in view of all the laws of reason and memory—that he was taken out of the domain of ordinary consciousness, i.e. that of reason, memory and sense perception, and he walked on the water, *drawn by Jesus*. He experienced, therefore, the same elevation of the soul which draws the body up after it as spoken of by St. Teresa. He even experienced the same fear which St. Teresa confessed took hold of her in seeing "one's body being lilted from the ground". And just as she was drawn by a hand extended from above, so did Peter have the experience of help from the same hand.

Now, St. Teresa and St. Peter—the one and the other—had the same experience of psycho-somatic ecstasy (as, moreover, many other saints have had). But the question which occupies us is that of the state of Jesus Christ himself, walking on the water. Was it an ecstasy for him also?

No. And this is why: ecstasy is the going out of the soul from the domain of the powers of discursive reason, memory and imagination - sometimes followed by the body. Both Peter and St. Teresa passed in their rapture through the stages: "*You are*"; "*I draw near to You*"; "*It is not I, but You who lives and acts in me*". It is therefore the attraction of the *divine You*, resulting in union with him, which constitutes the essence of their psycho-somatic ecstasy, whilst Jesus Christ walked on the water not by virtue of *ecstasy*—not by going out of his Humanity—but rather by virtue of *enstasy*, i.e. centering in himself, which is the active virtue of the formula "*I am; do not be afraid*". The Humanity of Jesus Christ walking on the water did not lead to a *You* attracting and supporting it, but rather to the *divine I* of the Son of the eternal Father present in itself.

ECO SUM; nolite timere—means to say therefore: I am gravitation; just as the sun in the visible world bears itself and attracts the planets, so am I the true sun of the invisible world who bears himself and attracts and supports other beings. "*Do not be afraid, for I AM!*"

Yet Jesus Christ walking on the water reveals still another mystery than that of the sun of the spiritual world, the centre of celestial gravitation. For not only did he *stand on* the water—which would suffice to reveal and demonstrate this truth—but he also *walked on* the water, i.e. he moved in a quite definite direction in the horizontal sense. He walked towards the boat in which his disciples rowed. There, in his walking towards the boat, is already contained in germ—essentially revealing it—his whole work, temporal and eternal, i.e. his sacrifice, his resurrection, and all that is implied in his promise: "Lo, I am with you always, until the end of the world" (Matthew xxviii. 20).

The boat with his disciples is, therefore, and will be until the end of the world, the aim of the *I am* walking on the water. His *enstasy*, his profound centering in himself, does not distance him from the navigators on the agitated sea of history and evolution, and does not make him disappear into the other sea—the calm sea of *nirvana*—but rather, on the contrary, it entails that he walks, until the end of the world, after the boat with his disciples.

The hermits of the desert, the psycho-somatic ecstasy of St. Teresa and St. Peter, Jesus Christ walking on the water—the totality of these facts should bring to the light of our minds the spiritual and manifest *reality* of celestial gravitation. At least, it is to this end that we have dwelt upon these things.

It is necessary, nevertheless, to add here a consideration of facts which appear to belong to the sphere of celestial gravitation but which are, in reality, of a contrary nature. The facts that I have in mind are those of "levitation", i.e. instances of elevation of the body from the ground, which one could be tempted to regard as being of the same nature as the psycho-somatic raptures of St. Teresa and St. Peter, or even as the walking of Jesus Christ on the water.

Thus, legend attributes to Simon Magus that he could elevate himself physically in the air. Cases of the elevation of spiritualist mediums are also known in our time. It is characteristic that even Gerard van Rijnberk, who truly ought to have

known better, did not distinguish the levitation of mediums from that which accompanies the rapture of saints. This is what he says concerning the "levitation of mediums":

The phenomenon of levitation has been affirmed for several holy personages of the Hindu, Buddhist and Christian religions. They raised themselves in the air several feet and hovered for some time without any means of support. This fact has been established for a number of saints of the Catholic Church * I restrict myself to naming the great Teresa (sixteenth century), her contemporary John of the Cross, Peter of Alcantara, also of the same period, then a little later Joseph of Copertino (1603-1623), who was seen flying through the air several times. . . This phenomenon has been related also of several mediums, but unfortunately almost without exception this has taken place in complete darkness. Home alone accomplished it once in the full light of day. It is necessary to reserve judgement on these facts which certainly seem quite incredible. (Gerard van Rijnberk. *Les metasciences biologiques — metaphysiologie et metapsycho- logie*, Paris. 1952, pp. 154-155).

This is all that this author "who for half a century studied occultism with profound respect" (Gerard van Rijnberk, op. cit., p. 205) had to say on the subject of levitation.

There is room here, however, to say something more. There is in the first place a distinction between elevation of the body due to *celestial attraction* and elevation of the body effected by electrical *repelling action* directed from below. The difference as such is comparable to that between the flight of a balloon filled with warm air and the flight of a rocket due to repulsion effected by the current that it emits. An example of the second kind of levitation is known to me at first hand:

A middle-aged gentleman (he was American) was talking with a travelling companion in a compartment on an international train in Europe. The conversation revolved around the diverse currents and methods of contemporary occultism. The American advanced the radical thesis that there is a practical occultism and a literary or verbal occultism, and that the latter is hardly

*In fact, one finds the following cases of levitation cited in Joseph von Görres, *Die Chmtliche Myslii* (5 vols.; Regensburg. 1836-1842): St. Ambrosius Sensedonio (i, p. 324); St. Philip of Neri (ii, p. 9); St. Teresa of Avila (ii, p. 122); St. Thomas Aquinas (ii, p. 208); St. Saviour of Horta (ii, p. 214); St. Thomas of Villanova (ii, p. 253); St. Catherine of Sienna (ii, f. 426); Joan of Carniola (ii, pp. 493-494); St. Mary of Agreda (ii, p. 520); St. Peter of Alcantara (ii, pp. 523. 529); Christine the Admirable (ii, p. 535); Adelaide of Adelhausen (ii, p. 536); Esperance of Brenegalla and Agnes of Bohemia (ii, p. 537); St. Colette, Dalmatius of Gerona, Anthony of St. Reine, St. Francis of Assisi, Bernard of Courlcon and St. Joseph of Copertino (ii, p. 539); Joan Rodriguez (ii, p. 548); St. Dominique of Jesus-Maria, the Blessed Gerardcsca of Pisa and Elisabeth of Falkenstein (ii, p. 549); Damian of Vicari, Agnes of Chatillon, Michael Lazar and Peter of Regolada (ii, pp. 551-552).

to be taken seriously, and that it is only the former kind of occultism that is worthy of its name. As his interlocutor would not let himself be convinced that facts of visible realisation are the sole criteria of truth and value, the American believed it right to convince his interlocutor by a demonstration of fact—which he announced. Having announced it, he stretched out on his couchette (there were only these two people in the compartment) and stared to breathe deeply, keeping complete silence. In one or two minutes his body, extended as it was on the couchette, slowly rose in the air to a height of several inches and remained hovering for close to a minute. This demonstration having evoked in his interlocutor only a profound disgust, the anonymous master of levitation left the compartment before long and did not show himself again.

What merits drawing attention to—other than the fact of levitation effected by the will—is that the thing was done through a considerable effort. The experimenter had to be silent and concentrate himself entirely on a centre in his organism in order to make a current of energy emanate which, acting in consecutive waves, repulsed him from the couchette and thus made him rise in the air. He did not elevate himself very high, because, it seems, elevation to a greater height would require an excessive effort. The demonstration having been made, the experimenter had a fatigued look and had no further desire to converse. A loss of energy in him was quite evident.

With respect to spiritualist mediums—no matter whether their levitation takes place in darkness or in the full light of day, visibility being in no way the sole means of control—there is nothing, from the Hermetic point of view, against admitting the possibility and even reality of their levitation. If there are cases of levitation of objects such as tables, attested through photography, why should it not be possible for mediums themselves to be able to be elevated in the air, as physical objects, by the same force which works for other physical objects? It is said that the driving energy producing physical phenomena at mediumistic seances emanates from the medium. But why should this energy, once exteriorised from the medium, not be able to elevate the medium himself—or herself? Why can it not also support the body of the medium?

Human electricity coming out from the organism of the medium can certainly make it the object of its action—which, moreover, "is narrated of several mediums" (Gerard van Rijnberk, *op. cit.*, p. 155). But what is important to draw attention to in the case of the levitation of mediums is that the agent that levitates mediums is the same as that which effects the levitation of tables and other physical objects and that, consequently, it is not—and cannot be—a matter of the effect of the spiritual or "celestial gravitation" which acts in the case of the rapture of saints.

There are therefore *three* categories of levitation of the human body: rapture due to "celestial gravitation", levitation due to a current of human electricity

emitted wilfully (arbitrary magic), or involuntarily (mediumistic levitation). According to tradition, Simon Magus —whom St. Peter, through prayer, caused to tall—is attributed with levitation achieved through arbitrary magic. Levitation through arbitrary magic and mediumistic levitation have this in common, that both are effected by electrical force emanating from the human organism and acting by repulsion; in this they differ from the levitation of saints, which is due to attraction from above.

Concerning the centre from which is made to emanate the current necessary for "Simonian" levitation. it is that of the "four-petalled lotus" (*muladhara chakra*), where the "serpent power" (*kundalini*)— latent electrical force—is found. Now, this "serpent power" can be awoken and directed either above (yoga) or below and outside (arbitrary magic). In the latter case it serves as the agent in levitation. It is thus that the American occultist, whose demonstration of levitation we recounted above, accomplished this phenomenon. One can, without going into details, mention in this context the excursions in the countryside of witches and sorcerers, of whom it is said that they make use of "broomsticks" for this end. Now, the repulsing current emanating from the centre at the base of the spine certainly produces the impression of a beam in the form of a broomstick; sorcerers, when splitting themselves off from, and leaving behind, their physical body, move after the fashion of modern rocket reactions. Thus in Estonia, people in the country possess a special term for this phenomenon which, moreover, is more adequate than "broomstick", namely *tulehant*, which means to say "beam of fire".

It follows, therefore, from the foregoing, that one must not cast all in the same mould: the levitation of saints, "Simonian" levitation, and that of mediums. It is truly not something superhuman to distinguish them with sufficient clarity so that they are in no way confused, provided that one takes the trouble.

Returning to the subject of the man who lives under the law of celestial gravitation — the Hanged Man — let us see what it is to live on the earth whilst being, at the same time, under the sway of the "celestial gravitational field".

The law of terrestrial gravitation, evolution and earthly life in general is *enfoldment*, i.e. the coagulation of mental, psychic and physical stuff around relative centres of gravitation, such as the earth, the nation, the individual, the organism — whilst the law of celestial gravitation, evolution, and spiritual life in general is *radiation*, i.e. the extension of mental, psychic and physical stuff rising up to an absolute centre of gravitation. "Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matthew xiii, 43) — this is a precise and comprehensive characterisation of the law of celestial gravitation.

The corresponding formula expressing the essence of the law of terrestrial gravitation is found in chapter six of Genesis; "The *giants* were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came into the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. These are the heroes who were famous in antiquity" (Genesis vi, 4).

The "sons of God" (*bene ha-elohim*), i.e. entities who lived in the field of divine

gravitation, changed gravitational field in giving way to the attraction of *possession* or *enfoldment*, and gave birth to beings endowed with a great *force of enfoldment*— the "giants" (*nephelim*). They exchanged radiation (the state of the sons of God) for enfoldment (the state of the giants on earth). And since this time the world of enfoldment has tended to produce the *strong hero* (*gibbor*), whilst the world of radiation has tended to give birth to the herald of radiation, the *righteous man* (*tsaddik*), on the earth. It was not so long ago that Friedrich Nietzsche loudly proclaimed himself champion of the ideal of the *gibbor* or "superman" (*Uebersensch*). Moreover, having once birched the Righteous One, Nietzsche wove a crown of thorns, placed it on His head, and affronted and mocked Him in his books *F.cce Homo* and *Antichrist*.

The world is divided. There are those who worship the *gibbor*, the strong hero—Nietzsche manifested with force and talent that this is so—and there are those who love the *tsaddik*, the righteous man.

Yes, indeed, this is so. Terrestrial gravitation, "the flesh", pushes mankind towards the ideal of enfoldment, i.e. possession, power and enjoyment, whilst celestial gravitation, "the spirit", draws mankind towards the ideal of radiation, i.e. poverty, obedience and chastity.

May occultists, esotericists and Hermeticists take account of this state of things and may they understand that the only side they can take without betraying the soul of the Hermetic tradition is that of ranging themselves resolutely and without reserve on the side of radiation, i.e. to take the side of the righteous man, the Hanged Man! May they abandon the dreams and phantoms having to do with the "superman", which still haunt certain esoteric fraternities and societies either in the guise of a "Grand Master", or a "Great Initiate", or an "Arch Mage"! May our communities become those of people who learn from everyone instead of teaching everyone! May they recruit people who live in consciousness of having behaved wrongly towards God, neighbour and the world, rather than those who think they are in the right. In a word, may they be subject to celestial attraction, which acts in awakening the inclination towards and love for poverty, obedience and chastity!

We must not only see and think clearly, but also *will clearly*. For one cannot serve two masters at once.

I have moved away from the subject of the concrete state of the man who lives under the law of celestial gravitation. Let us return to this.

Two things characterise the state of the *spiritual man*: that he is *suspended* and that he is *upside down*. Here is what St. Teresa says about the first characteristic trait:

The soul seems to me to be in this state when no comfort comes to it from heaven and it is not there itself, and when it desires none from the earth and is not there either. Then it is as if crucified between heaven and earth, suffering and receiving no

help from either. (*The Life of St. Teresa of Avila*; trsl. J. M. Cohen, London, 1957, p. 140)

The soul is suspended between heaven and earth; it experiences complete *solitude*. For here it is no longer a matter of ordinary solitude where one is alone *in* the world, but rather of complete solitude where one is alone because one is *outside* of the world — the celestial as well as the terrestrial world.

Transported thus into this desert it seems that the soul can certainly, in all truth, say with the Royal Prophet, "I lie awake, I am like a lonely bird on the housetop." (Psalm 102, 7) It is possible that King David was experiencing this same loneliness when he wrote these words. This verse comes to my mind at these times in such a way that it seems to be fulfilled in me. It is a comfort to me to know that others have felt these extremes of loneliness, and an even greater comfort that they have been people of such quality. (*The Life of St. Teresa*: trsl. J. M. Cohen, London, 1957, P- 139)

This is the "zero point" between the fields of terrestrial and celestial gravitation. It is from there that the soul either is elevated in contemplation of divine and celestial things, or descends to act in the human and terrestrial domain, but this "zero point" is certainly the place of its permanent sojourn. After elevation or after the accomplishment of an act, it returns there. The solitude of the desert between the two worlds is its abode.

The other characteristic trait of the *spiritual man* is that he is upside down. This means to say, firstly, that the "solid ground" under his feet is found above, whilst the ground below is only the concern and perception of the head. Secondly, it means to say that his *will* is connected with heaven and is found in immediate contact (not by the intermediary of thought and feeling) with the spiritual world. This is in such a way that his will "knows" things that the head — his thinking—still does not know, and so that it is the *future*, the celestial designs for the future, which work in and through his will rather than experience and memory of the past. He is therefore literally the "man of the future", the *final cause* being the element activating his will. He is the "man of desire", in the sense of the book of Daniel and in the sense of Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, i.e. the man whose will is set high, above the powers of the head —above thought, imagination and memory.

Now, the normal relationship between thought, feeling and the will for a civilised and educated man is such that his thought awakens feeling and directs the will. Thought plays a stimulating role, by means of imagination, towards feeling, and an educative role, by means of imagination and feeling, towards the will. Having to act. one thinks, one imagines, one feels, and —lastly— one desires and acts.

This is not so for the "spiritual man". For him it is the will which plays the stimulating and educative role towards feeling and thought. He acts first, then he desires, then he feels the worth of his action, and lastly he understands.

Abraham left his country of birth and went—in crossing the desert—into a strange country where, centuries later, a people descended from him was to find its native land and where, several centuries later on, the work of mankind's salvation was to take place. Did he know all this? Yes and no. Yes, in the sense that *he acted as if he knew*—his *will* being enamoured with these future things, and by their greatness and significance. No, in the sense that he did not have in his thoughts and imagination a plan or clear programme concerning how, when and through what stages, precisely, these things would be realised.

The certainty which in the first place takes hold of the will, from whence it takes its effect on feeling and thought, is precisely what the apostle Paul understood by the expression "faith" (*pistis, fides*). According to him:

Faith is the firm assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. . . By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; *and he went out, not knowing where he was to go.* (Hebrews xi, I, 8)

Abraham had therefore had "the *firm assurance* of things hoped for" after having experienced "the conviction of things not seen", i.e. his will knew, whilst his mind and imagination "did not see" or did not have the kind of assurance proper to them. All the same, he *obeyed* and left without knowing where he was going, i.e. he *acted* before his thought and imagination had understood the whole world implied in his action. When he left, therefore, his head followed his feet; his feet were then "above", in so far as they experienced the commandment of heaven, and his head obeyed them and was turned "below", in so far as it saw nothing but the privations, risks and perils of the enterprise. Abraham therefore found himself precisely in the condition of the Hanged Man of our Arcanum.

"By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called. .." Here is the key to the mystery of faith, or knowledge of the will: ", . . *obeyed when he was called.* .."

The will is an active force; it is not naturally an organ of perception. In order for it to be able to perceive it should not — it must not — become passive, for then it would fall asleep or fade away, because its very nature is activity, and in ceasing to be active it would cease to be will; no, it should change centre of gravitation, i.e. to transform "*my will*" into "*thy will*". It is the inner act of love alone which can accomplish the change of centre that the will uses or around which it gravitates. Instead of gravitating around the centre "me", it can orientate itself towards the centre "you". This transformation, effected by love, is what one calls "obedience".

Now, it is through obedience that the will is able to *perceive*. What it is able to perceive or be infused with is revelation from above, which inspires, directs and

strengthens. It is thus that the will of a martyr can sustain anything and that the will of a thaumaturgist can accomplish everything.

Abraham's *divine call* was such an act of infused revelation. "And he obeyed", says the apostle. It is nevertheless necessary to add here that he obeyed even before his departure. For the *divine call* itself presupposes obedience—the transcentration of the will which renders the will capable of receiving a divine call from above. For the will must already be in a state of obedience in order for it to be able to perceive the inspiration or intuition from above and to receive the imprint of the divine call, i.e. *the gift of faith*.

Faith, as a supernatural gift, which is the case here, is not the same thing as the natural, rational and morally founded confidence that one has in an authority. The confidence that one puts in a doctor, judge or priest is only natural. In fact, it is rational and in accordance with human justice to recognise the authority of experienced experts, and hence to place one's trust in them. St. Teresa had complete confidence in her confessors, who nevertheless were mistaken about the serious question of the source of her mystical, gnostic and magical experiences, notably whether they had their origin from God or from a demon. But in the conflict between supernatural faith and natural confidence—which took place in her when her confessors, and also theologians of authority, declared that her spiritual experiences originated from a demon—it was faith which prevailed. For it was a conflict between the immediate-and-authentic divine action on the will, and the confidence of human thought and feeling in an authority, who is only a second-hand source. It was not only in her that the authentic divine revelation prevailed, but also it brought the confessors and theologians in question to recognise its authenticity.

The raptures of St. Teresa were those of faith, i.e. the union of the *will* with God, which left behind the other powers of the soul, namely thought and imagination. Here is what she says concerning this:

I can only say that the soul conceives itself to be near God. and that *it is left with such a conviction that it cannot possibly help believing*. All the faculties (thought, imagination, memory") are in abeyance, and so suspended, as I have said, that their operations cannot be followed. If the soul has previously been meditating on any subject, it vanishes from the memory at once, as completely as if it had never been thought of. If it has been reading, it is unable to remember it or dwell on the words; and it is the same with vocal prayer. So the restless little moth of memory has its wings burned, and it can flutter no more. The will must be fully occupied in loving, but does not understand how it loves. If it understands. it does not understand how it understands, or at least, cannot comprehend anything of what it understands. I do not think that it understands at all, because,

as I have said, it does not understand itself. Nor can I myself understand this. . . Let it be observed too that however long the soul may enjoy this suspension of the faculties, the actual time is, in my opinion, very short. Half an hour would be a very long period of rapture, longer, I think, than any I ever experienced. Actually, it is very difficult to judge the time, since the senses are in abeyance. But I do not think that it can ever be long before one of them recovers. // *is the will that maintains the contact.* But the other two faculties soon begin to trouble it once more. But, as the will is calm, they become suspended again, and they are quiet for a little longer. But eventually they spring into life again. In this way some hours may be —and are —spent in prayer. For once the two faculties have begun to grow drunk on the taste of this wine, they are very ready to give themselves up again in order to enjoy some more. *Then they keep company with the will,* and the three rejoice together, (*The Life of St. Teresa*; trsl. J. M. Cohen, London, 1957, pp. 126-127)

The will united with God and the two other faculties suspended is the state of the soul in receiving the supernatural gift of faith, and it is certainly the faith thus experienced which triumphed for St. Teresa over scruples due to the confidence that she bore towards the theologians.

The state of soul described by St. Teresa corresponds overall still more to the condition of the Hanged Man of our Arcanum. For, like him, the soul of St. Teresa was "upside down", i.e. where the will precedes the head (understanding and memory) and is raised above it. The will then receives the divine imprint that the head at some time will understand —or not.

Now, practical Hermeticism has the aspiration that the two other powers keep company with the will at the moment when this latter is in the state of complete obedience towards the Divine, i.e. it aspires to the realisation of the last sentence of the above-quoted text:

Then they (the two other powers) keep company with the will,
and the three rejoice together.

Let us add: the three rejoice together in the joy of *union, knowledge,* and the future *realisation* of this experience-Hermeticism being a totality comprising mysticism, gnosis and divine magic.

Practical Hermeticism therefore applies itself to educating thought and imagination (or memory) to keep in step with the will. This is why it requires constant effort of thought and imagination combined in order to think, meditate and contemplate in *symbols* — symbolism being the sole means of rendering thought and imagination capable of not being suspended when the will submits to revelation

from above and enabling them to unite with it in its act of receptive obedience. so that the soul not only has a revelation of faith but also participates in this revelation with its understanding and memory.

This is the principal point of practical Hermeticism and, at the same time, its contribution to Christian mysticism. I say Christian mysticism and not Christian mystical theology, because theology rationalises the material of mystical experience in deriving rules and laws, whilst Hermeticism wants thought and imagination to participate in this experience. Its aim is found in the experience itself, not in the domain of explaining it or accounting for it.

Meanwhile, the Hermeticist is also a "Hanged Man". For him, too, faith predominates at the beginning and for a long time subsequently. This is because it is a difficult task, exacting inner asceticism for a long time, to render thought and imagination capable of being present and upright by the altar where the fire of faith is kindled and burns. But with time the gap between the certainty of faith and that of knowledge becomes narrower and narrower. Thought and imagination become more and more capable of participating in the revelation of faith to the will — until the day arrives when they participate in it on equal footing with the will. This is then the spiritual event that is designated *Hermetic initiation*.

Thus, I know a man who, being a soldier in the White Army and having been unjustly accused by two officers of the allied marines, "understood" in the space of an instant of time the relationship which exists between eternity and the instant. This was a lightning flash received from above both through the will and through thought and imagination. The three powers of the soul were taken hold of and illumined by it simultaneously.

Authentic Hermeticism can therefore never be in contradiction with authentic faith. It can contradict only the opinions of theologians, i.e. not the *faith* but the *confidence* that is borne towards the statements of theologians. The strange thing is that theologians are as a rule very modest and even humble people, but from the moment that they sit in the chair of their science and drape themselves with the mantle of its "primary and secondary conclusions"—and, above all, the "general consensus"—they change and are no longer recognisable. From the modest people that they are, they change all of a sudden into sources of divine oracles. This is because their science is the most pretentious of all sciences that exist, being interpretative of the absolute truth of revelation. In contrast, the representatives of the natural sciences are, as a rule, very pretentious people, but the discipline of their science renders them modest. This is because their science is modest, being interpretative of the relative truth of experience.

Thus we have a paradox: modest people become pretentious thanks to their science, and pretentious people become modest, again thanks to their science. The danger for the one is knowing too much; the danger for the others is to know nothing. Thus, from the mouth of one of its conscientious representatives, the physiologist Du Bois-Reymond, empirical science declared itself *ignoramus et ig-*

norabimus ("we do not know and we shall never know") with regard to the seven "enigmas" (*Welträtsel*) of the world:

1. the essence of matter and energy;
2. the origin of motion;
3. the origin of the senses (sense-perception);
4. the question of free will;
5. the origin of life;
6. the purposeful organisation of Nature;
7. the origin of thought and language.

(E. H. Du Bois-Reymond, *Ueber die Grenzen des Naturerkennens. Die sieben Welträtsel* Leipzig, 1882)

On the other hand, there is complete certainty for certain theologians not only with regard to the above enigmas but also with respect to the destiny of the soul after the death of the body, and to what then is—or is not—possible. Thus we read:

At its departure from the body, the soul is no longer in a position to change its moral orientation, nor to go back on its previous adherence to sin but, on the contrary, *it fixes itself* in the disposition of will found at the precise instant of death; it becomes henceforth inflexible, and rebels against every idea of retraction, conversion or repentance (p. 392); [and], Eternal punishment exists only in the function of the eternal perseverance of the perverse disposition of unrepentants on departing from the present life (p. 394) (Cardinal Louis Billot, *Etudes*, Paris, 1923, pp. 392, 394).

Accordingly, it is therefore the body and not the soul which bears within it the possibility of changing its moral orientation, going back on adherence to sin, being converted, and repenting; it is therefore the precise instant of death and not the totality of earthly life which determines for all eternity the moral disposition of the soul and therefore its eternal destiny; the body dying, the soul at the instant of death is thus made to depart like a rocket with a pre-fixed programme (a pre-set rocket programme) for eternity. The mercy of God therefore acts only at the instant of death of the body, the destiny of the soul subsequently being only a semi-mechanical deployment of the soul's disposition at the instant of its departure from the body.

These are undoubtedly monstrous conclusions. It is evident, however, that if the conscientious Du Bois-Reymond is too timid and, in consequence of this fact, opens the doors to scepticism, the zealous theologian is, in contrast, rash and, as a consequence of this fact, opens the doors to unbelief. For it is impossible to believe simultaneously Cardinal Billot's statement and that of the Gospel which says:

If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go in search of the one that went astray? . . . So it is the will of my Father who is in heaven that not one of these little ones should perish. (Matthew xviii, 12, 14)

One is bound to believe either that the mercy of God is limited, i.e. that it extends only to the instant of bodily death, or that it is infinite and never ceases, i.e. that it possesses the means of acting also after the instant of the soul's separation from the body. Here the love—no, the very justice—of God is in question.

Du Bois-Reymond ought to have said: "Being given the methods of contemporary science and the faculties of knowledge known up to the present time, the seven great world enigmas *seem to be insoluble*; but if the methods and faculties of knowledge change at some time without losing their scientific character, it could be otherwise with the enigmas in question." And would it not be better if Cardinal Billot had said: "In the Scriptures there are passages relating to the love of God and to the chastisement of sin which, given the present character of our reasoning and moral sentiment, seem to be contradictory. As it is impossible for them to be really contradictory, I have formed a personal opinion which seems to me to reconcile them in a satisfactory way. But I do not know if it is the only possible solution to the problem, or whether there are other and better ones. What is nevertheless certain is that freedom exists and that it entails the risk of eternal hell, whatever the exact sense of the word 'eternal' may be, this being a dogma of the faith. With respect to the mechanism of the realisation of this truth. I have the following opinion:" (and then he could give his opinion that earthly life is the domain of freedom, whilst the other world is that of fate—an opinion that he would still have to defend against pertinent arguments in favour of the contrary thesis).

Now, practical Hermeticism is—like Christian mysticism—based on the experience of authentic faith, i.e. the experience of the human being upside down, where the will is above intellectuality and imagination. Its practical aim is nevertheless to render the intellect and imagination equal companions of the will favoured by revelation from above. And here is how this is to be achieved:

One *moralises* thought in substituting *moral logic* for formal logic. One makes an entrance for moral warmth in the domain of "cold thought". At the same time, one intellectualises the imagination by disciplining it and submitting it to the laws of moral logic. This is what Goethe understood by "exact imagination" (*exakte Phantasie*), i.e. dispensing with imagination which *plays* according to free and arbitrary association, and instead applying it to *work* in accordance with the associations dictated by moral logic—in harmony with the laws of *symbolism*. It is thus that thought and imagination become capable of being attentive to and participating in the experience of the will receiving favours from above.

The statement: "One moralises thought in substituting moral logic for formal

logic" could be said to be very concise, and calls for an amplification. It means to say that formal logic—whether explicitly or implicitly operating with syllogistic forms is not important—cedes its function as the supreme court of appeal to the moral logic of conscience. (Syllogistic logic operates with forms of syllogisms, where two suppositions together constitute a common implication, and where the conclusion comprises that which is implied.) Thus the logic of Caiaphas' argument, which persuaded the assembly of the Sanhedrin to make a decision against Jesus Christ, was impeccable from the point of view of formal logic, but was at the same time a great violation of moral logic. "It is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish" (John xi, 50)—this was Caiaphas' argument. This argument is based on the logical principle that the part is less than the whole, the part being "one man" and the whole being "the nation". Being faced with the alternative—"If we let him go, all will believe in him, and the Romans will come to destroy our city and nation"—the decision was taken to sacrifice the part for the whole.

For moral logic, however, the *quantitative* principle that the part is less than the whole is not valid in a general sense; there are distinctions to be made. For already in a living organism where it is not the *size* but rather the importance of the vital *function* which counts, the principle in question would be: "the part is equal to the whole". Because, for example, the heart, which is only a small part of the whole human organism, cannot be sacrificed without sacrificing the life of the whole organism.

And in the moral and spiritual domain, where it is only quality which counts, *one* righteous man is worth more than the whole nation, if it is a question not of voluntary sacrifice but rather of the one who must be sacrificed. Thus in the spiritual and moral domain the above logical principle can be transformed into its opposite formula: "the part is greater than the whole".

Here is an example, therefore, of the operation of "moral logic" or *concrete and qualitative* logic, quite different from *formal and quantitative* logic. It is the conflict between the logic of the Logos and that of "this world", which the apostle Paul spoke of when he said:

. . . they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated — *of whom the world was not worthy* — wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. (Hebrews xi, 37-38)

"Moral logic" is the human analogy of that of the Logos "that enlightens every man coming into the world" (John i, 9). It is the logic of faith, i.e. the logic of thought which participates in the revelation accorded to the will. "Moral logic" introduces warmth into the light of thought, so that the latter becomes *solar*, instead of *lunar*, which is what it is when it has only light alone and is cold, without warmth.

"One intellectualises the imagination by disciplining it and submitting it to the laws of moral logic." This means to say that a kind of *asceticism* should be applied to the life of imagination in order to transform its arbitrary *play* into *work* inspired and directed from above. Here symbolism plays the leading role—one which is both preparatory and educational. For symbolism is simultaneously imaginative and logical, i.e. logical according to "moral logic".

Thus the Arcana of the Tarot with which we are occupied constitute a practical school of education for the imagination, with a view to rendering it capable of participating on an equal footing with "solarised" thought and "zodiacalised" will in the revelation from above. It is then intellectualised. i.e. it loses the feverish warmth which is normal for it and becomes luminous: it is "selenised" and becomes "lunar", just as the intellect was before its "solarisation" by moral logic. The prayer that is made for souls in purgatory — *locum refrigerii. lucis et pacis dona eis Domine* ("give to them, O Lord, a place of refreshment, light and peace")—expresses well that it is necessary for the imagination to become reflecting instead of fantasising.

The "zodiacalisation" of the will, the "solarisation" of thought and the "selenisation" (or "lunarisation") of imagination—we have chosen these three terms to signify the voluntary sacrifice of the soul's powers to *heaven*—means to say: that the will becomes an organ of perception and execution towards God, as the zodiac is in the macrocosm; that thought becomes both warm and luminous, as the sun is in the macrocosm; that, lastly, the imagination becomes reflecting towards truth, as the moon is towards the sun in the macrocosm.

It is a matter, therefore, of sacrificing the three powers of the soul to heaven. This sacrifice is nothing other than the three traditional and universal vows — that of obedience or the sacrifice of the will, that of poverty or the sacrifice of thought, and that of chastity or the sacrifice of imagination. It is thus that the will, thought and imagination become reflectors of the revelation from above, instead of being instruments of human arbitrariness.

This means to say. in terms of esoteric psycho-physiology, that the disposition of the crown centre (the "eight-petalled lotus")—which is always beyond the reach of human arbitrariness and which is constantly in a state of "divine repose", i.e. which is always at the disposal of heaven — extends to the other centres or "lotuses". One after the other they withdraw from the influence of human arbitrariness and immerse themselves in "divine repose", i.e. they become organs of pure revelation. The entire human psycho-physiological organisation thus becomes a divine instrument. *Sainthood* is achieved when all seven (or eight — in rare cases) centres are entirely at the disposal of heaven. The degrees of saintliness— from the point of view of the human psycho-physiological organisation —depend on how many and which centres are at the disposal of heaven.

With respect to Hermeticists, they do not as a rule attain to complete saintliness, where all seven centres are put at the disposal of the divine, since their work and mission—if there is a mission—entails and exacts efforts and labours which presuppose the preservation of human *initiative*, i.e. that at least the frontal centre (the "two-petalled lotus") remains at the disposal of the freedom (should the case arise)

of human arbitrariness. I say *at least* the "two-petalled lotus" remains at the disposal of the individual because it is the centre of *intellectual initiative*. It can certainly be taken hold of by revelation from above for some time—instant, minutes, even hours—but, as a rule, for the Hermeticist this must remain at his discretion. Indeed, it would be very distressing for him to be able to think only what is caused from above and to turn his intellectual gaze only towards what is determined from above.

I know a man who had thus "lost" the use of his centre of intellectual initiative, which is at the same time that of the direction of attention, and who—being a Hermeticist—suffered very much from this. He was able to comprehend very many great things—above all things of general significance—but he was as if paralysed concerning *his*, personal problems. He was not able to think about what he wanted to, nor to direct his attention to what he wanted to see and understand. This lasted some time until use of the centre in question was "restored" to him by the intervention of a benefactor from above. I would recommend people who have similar or identical difficulties to address themselves to the Holy Archangel Michael who is, it seems to me, a very special friend and protector of the kind of Hermeticists that I have in view in these Letters, i.e. people who want to unite saintliness and initiation, or who aspire to a Hermeticism that is holy and blessed from above.

The Card of the twelfth Arcanum of the Tarot, the Hanged Man, represents in the first place the man whose will is "zodiacalised", because here it is this which is the decisive spiritual event—the "solarisation" of thought and the "selenisation" of imagination being only consequences. The two trees, between which the Hanged Man is balanced, bear twelve scars left by their cut branches. They are twelve—these branches—because the zodiac has a twelvefold action and influence; and they are cut, because the Hanged Man is beyond their action and influence, and because their essence is *in him*. The twelve branches are cut and inactive outwardly, having become the *will* of the Hanged Man—the "zodiacalised" will, as we have said. The Hanged Man has absorbed the zodiac; he has himself *become* the zodiac. He is the *thirteenth*, in whose will the *twelve servants of God*, who are the twelve channels of His will, are present.

For *twelve* is the number of modalities of the will and its action; *seven* is the number of basic modalities of feeling and imagination; *three* is the numerical law of thought and word; and *one*, lastly, is the number of the Self who thinks, feels and wills. The monad therefore reveals itself through the *trinity* underlying thought and word, through the *septenary* underlying feeling and imagination, and through the *duodenary* underlying will and action.

The sum of the numbers of reality—one, three, seven and twelve—is twenty-two* This is the true reason for the fact that there are *twenty-two* Major Arcana of the Tarot, and no more or no less. Because the author—or authors, if we think

*Translator's note: In the German translation of this book the following explanation is given: "The sum of the numbers of reality—one, three, seven and twelve—is *twenty-two* {and not twenty-three, since One transcends the other and includes them in itself}" (*Die grossen Arcana des Tarot. Meditationen*. Basel. 1983, p. 353)

in terms of collaboration from the vertical dimension of three superimposed worlds—of the Tarot proposed to give articulated symbolic expression only to things which count. And how could he count less or more than twenty-two!? Could he omit the monad—the fundamental unity behind the worlds of the macrocosm or God, and the fundamental unity behind the states of consciousness of the microcosm, or the soul? Could he pass by the Holy Trinity of God the Creator, Saviour and Sanctifier? Or could he pass by the trinity of the human being, who is by analogy an image of God in his spiritual, soul and corporeal being? After that, could he neglect or remain blind to the action of the trinity in the four elements—radiation, expansion, mobility and stability, or fire, air, water and earth? And after having taken account of the action of the trinity *in* the quaternary of elements, how could he not pay attention to the real manifestation of the action of the trinity *through* the quaternary, i.e. the three times four (or twelve) modalities of action, being the three modalities of action of the trinity through the four means of realising it?

Not being able to suppress any of the four members of the sacred name or *Tetragrammaton*—which comprises four members or numbers: one, three, seven and twelve—the author of the Tarot conceived and designed the twenty-two Arcana. But twenty-two is four, and four is three revealing one. The Tarot is therefore unity elucidated in twenty-two symbolic ways.

Concerning the Hanged Man, the twelve branches of the two trees between which he balances are cut. This means to say—or indicate—that he has reduced the twelve to one and that it is himself, the Hanged Man, who is the sole manifestation of it. He has, so to say, "swallowed" the zodiac, which amounts to the fact that his will has become identical with the will of the Divine, which manifests itself in three times four ways.

He bears in himself—or rather, he is borne by it—the *synthesis* of the twelve modalities of action of divine and fundamental will. This is what is meant by "reducing the twelve to one". It is to be hanged; it is to be upside down: and it is to live under the sign of celestial gravitation instead of that of terrestrial gravitation.

We have said: the Hanged Man is the *thirteenth*. Now, to be the thirteenth can signify two things: either the reduction of the twelve to one—and then the Hanged Man represents the *fundamental unity* of the twelve modalities of will—or else the crystallisation of a *thirteenth* synthetic element. In the latter case, it would be a matter of a *skeleton*, which is the last synthetic crystallisation of "zodiacal" will, and which is both the principle and concrete image of *death*. As death and its relationship to the skeleton will be the subject of the following Letter on the thirteenth Arcanum of the Tarot, "Death", I ask you, dear Unknown Friend, to remember the context of the two problems—as indicated here—namely the problem of the identity of individual will with divine will and the problem of attraction from above in its double aspect of ecstasy and death. For it is both in ecstasy and in the case of natural death that the "zodiacalisation" of the will takes place.

With respect to the Hanged Man, he represents the first alternative, i.e. the fundamental unity of the twelve modalities of divine will, which are the effective and final causes of radiation, expansion, mobility and stability—spiritual, psychic and material.

One finds a profound and breathtaking feeling of these cosmic depths in the cosmogonic hymn of the *Rigveda*. It awakens in the meditant at least a feeling of the profundity of the fundamental cosmic incentive towards, or feeling for, "zodiacality". The hymn is as follows:

At first there was neither Being nor non-Being,
 no kingdom of air, no sky beyond it.
 Who straddled what, and where? who gave shelter?
 was water there, unfathomed depth of water?
 There was no death then, nor immortality,
 no sign of stirring, no curtain of day or night.
 Only one thing, Breath, breathed, breathing without breath,
 nothing else, nothing whatsoever.
 Also, there was Darkness, darkness within darkness,
 the darkness of undiscriminated chaos.
 Whatever existed then was void and formless.
 Then came the stirring of warmth, giving shape . . .
 Then rose Desire, primal Desire,
 the primal seed, the germ of Spirit.
 The searching sages looked in their hearts, and knew:
 Being was a manner of non-Being.
 And a line cut Being from non-Being transversely:
 What was above it, and what below it?
 Only mighty makers, mighty forces,
 action flowing freely and a fund of energy.. .

(*Rigveda* x, 129; trsl. P. Lal, "The Song of Creation"
 in *The Golden Womb of the Sun*, Calcutta, 1965)

This is what a Hindu soul felt one starry night more than thirty centuries ago, in beholding the universe. Is it not a commentary on the natural mysticism—*fiat lux* ("Let there be light")—of Genesis?

It is this profound sphere, from whence the anonymous author of the Vedic hymn drew his inspiration, in which the Hanged Man participates through his will. He is the link between being and non-being, between darkness and created light. He is found suspended between the potential and the teal. And it is the potential which is more real for him than the real properly said. He lives by authentic *faith*—what the Hermetic book *Kore Kosmu* designates as "the gift of black perfection" or "the gift of Perfect Night", i.e. the gift of perfect certainty drawn from the night of ultra-luminous darkness. For there is darkness and Darkness. The former is that of ignorance and blindness; the latter is that of knowledge go-

ing beyond natural human cognitive powers; it reveals itself to intuitive seeing. It is ultra-luminous in the same sense that ultra-violet rays go beyond the human eye's scale of natural visibility.

The following is a passage from the *Vita Antonii* (*Life of St. Anthony*) by St Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, relating to this subject:

And indeed, after this still others came. They were of those who among the pagans are supposedly wise. They asked him to state an argument for our faith in Christ. . . (Anthony said to them through an interpreter). . . "since, of course, you pin your faith on demonstrative proofs and this is an art in which you are masters, and you want us also not to worship God without demonstrative arguments—do you first tell me this: How does precise knowledge of things come about, especially knowledge about God? Is it by verbal proof or by an act of faith? **And** which comes first, an active faith or verbal proof?" When they replied that the act of faith takes precedence and that this constitutes accurate knowledge, Anthony said: "Well said! Faith arises from the disposition of the soul, while dialectic comes from the skill of those who devise it. Accordingly, those who are equipped with an active faith have no need of verbal argument, and probably find it even superfluous. For what we apprehend by faith, that you attempt to construct by arguments; and often you cannot even express what we perceive. The conclusion is that an active faith is better and stronger than your sophistic arguments. . . ." (St. Athanasius, *The Life of Saint Anthony*; trsl. R. T. Meyer, Westminster, 1950, pp. 81, 83-84)

Here we have a clear comparison of the certainty due to "active faith" and that due to the demonstration by reasoning. The difference between them is the same as that between a photograph of a person and a meeting with this person. It is the difference that there is between image and reality, between an idea that one makes of the truth and the truth itself, present and acting.

The certainty of faith springs from the actual meeting with truth and its persuasive and transforming action, whilst that of certainty due to sound reasoning is only a degree — raised to a greater or lesser extent — of *semblance of the truth*, because it depends on the validity of our reasoning, and on the completeness and exactness of the elements which serve as its basis. A new item of information can turn the whole edifice of our reasoning upside down, just as an item of information which is proved false or inexact can have the same consequence. This is why all conviction founded on reasoning is intrinsically *hypothetical* and implies the following reservation: "Provided that the items of information that I possess are complete and exact, and that there arise no others to contradict them, I am led by the following arguments to the conclusion that. . ." At the same time, the cer-

tainty of faith has nothing hypothetical about it: it is absolute. The Christian martyrs did not die for hypotheses, but rather for the truths of faith of which they were absolutely certain.

May I be spared the objection that communists also sometimes die for their Marxist-Leninism! Because if they do so voluntarily, it is not for the dogmas (concerning the supremacy of the economy, the ideological superstructure, etc.) that they have, but rather for the grain of Christian truth which takes hold of their hearts, namely that of human brotherhood and social justice. Materialism as such does not have—and cannot have—martyrs; and if it seems so, then those whom materialism accounts as such, truth to tell, bear witness *against* it. For their testimony is as follows: "There are values higher than economics, higher even than life, because we sacrifice not only material goods but also our very lives." Such is their testimony against materialistic Marxism. Now follows their testimony against Christianity: "We have lost the fullness of faith; there remains to us only a grain. But even this grain which remains is so precious that we give our lives for it. And you who have fullness, what is your sacrifice for it?" Such is their testimony against Christianity... in so far as the latter is also materialistic. For there is doctrinal materialism alongside the will influenced by faith, and there is on the other hand doctrinal spiritualism alongside the will influenced by materialistic interests.

It is this duality which produces heresies and sects. Thus the adherents to Arianism denied the divinity of Jesus Christ not because of it being contrary to reason, but rather because it seemed to them contrary to reason as a consequence of the fact that their *will* was opposed to it. The Messiah that they *wanted* was the Messiah wanted by Jewish orthodoxy. For this reason, just as this latter rejected the Christ and had him crucified, accusing him of having "made himself the Son of God" ("The Jews answered Pilate: We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he has made himself the Son of God"—John xix, 7), so did the followers of Arius advance the same accusation against the Church in declaring that it had made him the Son of God. The Arianists were in no way less instructed or less intellectually endowed than the orthodox believers. What they were lacking was the will illumined by revelation from above, i.e. authentic faith. It remained such as it was before Jesus Christ, such as it lived and acted in Jewish orthodoxy. In fact, the Arianists *wanted another* Messiah and, being Christian, they applied themselves to changing the Messiah so as to conform to their pre-Christian will.

Yet in the case where the will perceives the revelation from above and understanding follows this up, as in the case of the *Hanged Man*, certainty is absolute and no heresy could result, if we understand by "heresy" doctrines or maxims of prejudice to the cause *of* salvation or incompatible with the truths of faith. The Hanged Man can certainly be *accused* of heresy, but he can never be its perpetrator. His element is authentic faith — and how could authentic faith, or divine action in the human will, engender things contrary to itself?

Do you know what the *ex cathedra* infallibility of the pope in matters of doctrine and morality is? It is that he finds himself in the condition of the Hanged Man when he makes a declaration *ex cathedra* (i.e. in the condition of the Hanged Man) concerning things of faith and morality. It is the condition in which the apostle Peter was when he was able to say, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," and of which the Lord said in reply, "Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew xvi, 16-17). And just as a stone does not have its own motion, and can only be a moved object, so is the will of he who is found in the condition of the Hanged Man deprived of its own movement and can only be moved from above.

This is one side of the mystery of infallibility in (things of faith and morality). It is the arbitrary paralysed and reduced to nothing—the state of the stone—which safeguards the infallibility of judgement in this domain. It is above all a matter of the elimination of the source of errors—for, as a rule, the Roman pontiff making an *ex cathedra* statement does not do so as a prophet but as a pontiff.

The whole mystery of infallibility has, without doubt, still other aspects, including what we discussed in the fifth Letter on the fifth Arcanum of the Tarot, "The Pope", and still greater depths, but the aspect which is presented in the light of the Arcanum "The Hanged Man" is of a nature to bring to bear the most clarity on the problem in question—this Arcanum being that of authentic faith.

Now, authentic faith brings with it absolute certainty, above all when it is not limited to the will alone but succeeds in making understanding and imagination also participate in its experience. Then the soul becomes the seat of a kind of Christian faith-wisdom symbolism similar to the faith-wisdom symbolism of the *Zohar*, i.e. that of the Jewish Cabbala. The latter is then to the former as the Old Testament is to the New. And just as the Old Testament and the New Testament together comprise the Holy Scripture, so do the Jewish Cabbala and Christian faith-wisdom symbolism together constitute Christian Hermeticism. Just as in Christian theology one would not dispense with the Old Testament, similarly in Christian Hermeticism one would not dispense with the Cabbala. This is the law of continuity of the living tradition, or the commandment: "Honour thy father and thy mother". The mother of Christian Hermeticism is the Cabbala and its father is Egyptian Hermeticism, the Hellenistic writings of which we have received under the title *Corpus Hermeticum*—comprising twenty-nine (or more) treatises. The *Corpus Hermeticum* (works attributed to or inspired by Hermes Trismegistus) is the Egyptian-Hellenistic counterpart to the Jewish Zohar and the Jewish Cabbala in general.

Certainly, it is not a matter of "borrowing"—which is, moreover, always sterile—the method of historical and philological science, because although "Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts vii, 22), he nevertheless had a real and authentic meeting with "the Angel of the LORD who appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush" (Exodus iii. 2). It is this meeting which was the commencement of his mission.

No. things actually experienced cannot be borrowed. They follow one another, as human generations follow one another and are linked only by the profound ties of heredity, i.e. the continuity of the *life* of tradition through effort, problems, aspirations, suffering. Just as one generation passes to another the *organs* of knowledge and the *vital impulse* with respect to their use, so the stages in a spiritual tradition such as that of Egypt-Israel-Christendom are, so to say. incarnations of new souls who inherit only the organs and the impulse (body and blood) of their predecessors. Israel is a new soul in comparison with Egypt, and Christendom is a new soul in comparison with Israel. But Egypt aspired to the God of gods and succeeded in achieving a high knowledge — even authentic faith — of God, as the writings of the *Corpus Hermeticum* prove; Israel had intercourse with this God through the intermediary of Moses and the prophets; lastly, concerning Christianity. God was made flesh. From the sanctuaries of Egypt, through the desert of Sinai, to the cross of Calvary, there is a way—the way of divine revelation, on the one hand, and the historical way of monotheism in human consciousness, on the other hand. Christianity in no way "borrowed" the "idea of the Messiah" from Judaism, for Jesus Christ was not an "idea", but rather the Incarnation of the Word and the fulfillment of the hope of Israel. And the God of Moses and the prophets was no more "borrowed" from the sanctuaries of Egypt, for the clouds, the lightning and thunder on Mt. Sinai where He was revealed are not things that can be borrowed. And the vision of creative God in the Egyptian sanctuary, described in the Hermetic treatise *Poemander* is not "borrowed" from anyone. Its introduction is as follows:

My thoughts being once seriously busied about the things that are, and my understanding lifted up, all my bodily senses being exceedingly holden back, as it is with them that are very heavy of sleep. . . me thought I saw one of an exceedingly great stature, and an infinite greatness call me by my name, and say unto me, "*What wouldest thou hear and see? Or what wouldest thou understand to learn and know?*" (*Poemander i*, book II in *The Divine Pymander of Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus*; trsl. Doctor Everard, London, 1884, p. 7)

It is therefore evident that it is a matter of a spiritual *experience* and not of any teachings transmitted by word of mouth. A living tradition is not a current of word of mouth but rather a series of revelations and endeavours. It is the "biography" of *authentic faith*.

Authentic faith — the condition of the Hanged Man of our Arcanum — thus differs from knowledge due to reasoning in that it possesses absolute certainty, whilst reasoning results only in relative certainty. However, reasoning is not the only method of knowledge. There are also so-called occult or super-normal methods of knowledge. I have in mind the diverse forms of clairvoyance -corporeal, psychic

and spiritual. What is the relationship, therefore, between authentic faith and the experiences of clairvoyance?

It is necessary to say first of all that the whole domain of super-sensory experiences is divided into two intrinsically different parts, namely into that of perception of what is *outside of* the soul (horizontal perception) and that of revelation of what is *above* the soul (vertical revelation). The latter is trans-subjective and the former is extra-subjective or objective. St. Teresa called them "imaginary vision" (i.e. "imaged") and "intellectual vision" (i.e. non-'imaged"). The following is an example of "intellectual vision":

One day when I was at prayer— it was the feast day of the glorious St. Peter—I saw Christ at my side — or, to put it better, I was conscious of Him. for I saw nothing with the eyes of the body or the eyes of the soul. He seemed quite close to me and I saw that it was He. As I thought, He was speaking to me. Being completely ignorant that such visions were possible. I was very much afraid at first, and could do nothing but weep, though as soon as He spoke His first word of assurance to me, I regained my usual calm, and became cheerful and free from fear. All the time Jesus Christ seemed to be at my side, but *as this was not an imaginary vision* I could not see in what form. But *I most clearly felt* that He was all the time on my right, and He was witness of everything that I was doing. Each time I became a little recollected, or was not entirely distracted. I could not but be aware that He was beside me.

In great trouble, I went at once to my confessor to tell him about this. He asked me in what form I had seen Him, and I replied that I had not seen Him. He asked me how I knew it was Christ, and I replied that I did not know how, but that I could not help being aware that He was beside me. and that I had plainly seen and felt it... I had no way of explaining myself except by using comparisons; and no comparison, I think, can help one much to describe this kind of vision, for it is one of the highest possible kinds. This was told me afterwards by a holy man of great spirituality called Friar Peter of Alcantara. . . and other men of great learning have told me the same thing. It is. of all the kinds of vision, the one with which the devil can least interfere. . . For if I say that I do not see Him with the eyes of the body or the eyes of the soul, because this is no ordinary vision, how then can I know and affirm that He is beside me with greater certainty than if I saw Him? If one says that one is like a person in the dark who cannot see someone though he is beside him. or that one is like somebody who is blind, it is not right. There is some similarity here, but not much, because a person in the dark can perceive with other senses, or hear his

neighbour speak or move, or can touch him. Here this is not so, nor is there any feeling of darkness. On the contrary. He appears to the soul by a knowledge brighter than the sun. I do not mean that any sun is seen, or any brightness, but there is a light which, though unseen, illumines the understanding so that the soul may enjoy this great blessing, which brings very great blessings with it. . .

Then my confessor asked me: Who said that it was Jesus Christ? I answered: He often tells me so Himself, but before ever He said it. *it was impressed on my understanding that it was He*, and even before that He used to tell me He was there when I could not see Him. . The Lord is pleased to engrave it so deeply on the understanding that one can no more doubt it than one can doubt the evidence of one's eyes. (*The Life of St. Teresa* trsl. J. M. Cohen, London. 1957. pp. 187-189)

And the following is an example of "imaginary vision":

One day when I was at prayer. He was pleased to show me His hands only: their beauty was beyond description. This put me in great fear... A few days later I saw that divine face also, which seems to leave me completely entranced. I could not understand why the Lord was revealing Himself to me gradually like this, since He was afterwards to grant me the favour of seeing Him whole. . . Once when I was at Mass on St. Paul's Day, there stood before me the most sacred Humanity, in all the beauty and majesty of His resurrection body, as it appears in all the paintings . . . Although this vision was imaginary, I never saw it or any other with the eyes of the body, but only with the eyes of the soul. Those who know better than I say that my previous vision was more perfect than this one, while this in its turn is much nearer to perfection than those that are seen with the eyes of the body. . . if I were to spend many years imagining how I could invent anything so beautiful. I could not do it. I should not know how to begin. For in its whiteness and radiance alone it exceeds anything that we can imagine. It is not a dazzling radiance but a soft whiteness and infused radiance, which causes the eyes great delight and never tires them: nor are they tired by the brilliance which confronts them as they look on this divine beauty. . . it does not matter whether they (the eyes) are open or closed: if the Lord wishes us to see it. we shall do so even against our will. . . (Ibid., 196-198).

These examples suffice to give a clear idea of the nature of the *trans-subjective* experience or "intellectual vision"—as St. Teresa calls it—and of the *extra subjective*

experience or "imaginary vision". The former is the projection in the soul of a spiritual experience which takes place above it; the soul itself perceives nothing—it can only *react* to what the spirit experiences, which makes it participate in the fruits of its experience. It is *trans-subjective* because the revelation itself takes place neither outside nor within the soul but, rather, above it. i.e. in the spirit. In this way it happens that the soul has certainty as if it had seen, without having seen, and as if it had heard, without having heard. It is the spirit which projects into it certainty of its certain experiences. It is the spirit which "sees", "hears" and "touches" in its own way and which infuses the soul with the fruits of its experience—a certainty equal to, or even higher than, that which the soul would have if it had "seen", "heard" and "touched" itself.

With respect to the extra-subjective experience, or "imaginary vision", it is the soul itself which "sees", "hears" and "touches". It "sees" outside of itself, but with the "eyes of the soul", i.e. *not* as a hallucination of the bodily senses, but rather as imagination moved *from outside* instead of being moved by its own arbitrariness. Now the images caused from outside of the soul can be neither sensed nor defined other than as *perceptions*. And as they are not corporeal perceptions, one experiences and describes them as "perceptions of the soul". This is why St. Teresa speaks of vision with the "eyes of the soul".

The "eyes of the soul" of which St. Teresa speaks are what we call in modern Hermeticism the "lotus flowers" or simply "lotuses", and what Hindu yoga names "chakra centres" or "chakras".

The higher lotuses—the eight-petalled, two-petalled and sixteen-petalled—are organs which are made use of by the spirit (i.e. either the human spirit alone, or the human spirit united with the divine Holy Spirit, or, lastly, the human spirit united with another human or hierarchical spirit through and in the Holy Spirit) in the case of revelation from above, i.e. in the case of St. Teresa's "intellectual vision".

The lower lotuses—the ten-petalled, six-petalled and four-petalled—are the organs of horizontal perception, i.e. St. Teresa's "imaginary vision".

Concerning the *heart*, i.e. the twelve-petalled lotus, it participates in the two kinds of vision or, if you wish, it possesses a *thin/kind* of clairvoyant perception, which is the synthesis of the other two. For the "heart" is the centre or lotus of *love*—where, truth to tell, it is no longer a question of "above" or "outside" or even of "above" and "below", because love abolishes all distances and all distinctions of space (even distinctions of spiritual space) and has the power to make all things present. It is thus that God is present in a heart glowing with love.

The heart perceives diverse presences as impressions and nuances of spiritual *warmth*. It is thus that the hearts of the two disciples going to Emmaus recognised the One who went on the way with them before their eyes and their understanding did, and who said to one another after their eyes opened and they recognised him: "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the

road, while he opened to us the scriptures?" (Luke xxiv, 32). The heart burning in diverse ways—this is the kind of "vision" and spiritual knowledge which is proper to the heart.

Dear Unknown Friend, be attentive to your heart and towards the nuances of intimate warmth which arises from its depths! Who knows who may go on his way with you without your eyes and your understanding surmising it?

Now, the three higher lotuses are above all those of *infused certainty* or "imperceptible light", and these are the principal instruments (*instruments* and not *sources*) of "intellectual vision" or trans-subjective revelation.

The three lower lotuses are those of *certainty of experience at first hand*: they render us "eye-witnesses" to invisible things. They manifest them to us in "perceptible light" as forms, movements, colours, sounds and breath—concrete and objective - although incorporeal in the sense of the physical world.

And the central centre, the heart or twelve-petalled lotus, gives us the *certainty of authentic faith* — that which was born in the "fire of Emmaus"— through which the immediate presence of entities who warn to go on the way with us is manifested. This fire contains at the same time both the "imperceptible light" of "intellectual vision" and the "perceptible light" of "imaginary vision", in their synthesis, which we call here the "fire of Emmaus".

In addition to these two—or three—kinds of supersensible experience there is still another which often passes for spiritual, but which in reality is not. I have in mind the kind of clairvoyance which is due either to over-refinement of the senses or to their hallucinatory function. St. Teresa of Avila also mentions it in the text of her autobiography, from which we have quoted above. She says, notably, that "those who know better than I say that my previous vision ("intellectual") was more perfect than this one ("imaginary"), while this in its turn is much nearer to perfection than *those that are seen with the eyes of the body*. . ." (Ibid., p. 197).

It seems that it was generally admitted amongst "those who know" from the sixteenth century (that there are, in addition to "intellectual vision" and "imaginary vision", visions "that are seen with the eyes of the body", i.e. visions due either to over-refinement of the senses or to hallucination. Therefore the fact was known then, as it is today, (that there are people who can read a letter put in an envelope, see a playing-card of which only the reverse is shown to them, see coloured light around people, animals and plants ("auras"), etc. On the other hand, it was known—as it is known today—that the senses can function in two directions: (that they can receive *impressions* from outside and that they can project *expressions* of the soul outside. In the latter case it is a matter of hallucinations.

Now, there are illusory hallucinations and revelatory hallucinations. All depends on what the soul exteriorises through the channels of the corporeal senses. It is therefore quite possible—and in fact happens from time to time—that the soul transforms authentic and true perceptions into hallucinations, i.e. that it projects from the psychic—and even spiritual—plane onto the physical plane. It is then

an illusion with respect to the physical plane, but it is at the same time a revelation with respect to the higher plane to which the original of the hallucinated copy belongs.

"Hallucination" and "illusion" are not synonyms. When Martin Luther, as it is recounted, threw an inkpot at the figure of a demon (or the devil himself, as tradition would have it) which appeared to him, without doubt he acted under an illusion with respect to the plane—the inkpot not being on the same plane as the demon — but should one conclude from this that the demon was in no way present? . . . that there was nothing there and that it was all only a trick of the imagination, without cause or reason?

No, just as there is hysteria due to illusion and hysteria based on truth—as, for example, is the case with stigmata and wounds from the crown of thorns, which manifest themselves on the bodies of people who have had spiritual experience of the Lord's Passion — so also there are illusory hallucinations, due to fears or immoderate desires, and revelatory hallucinations, i.e. "hallucinations of the truth".

Let us now return to the question concerning the relationship between authentic faith and the experiences of clairvoyance, between the condition of the Hanged Man and the condition of the "seer". It follows from the preceding that authentic faith is above all the burning fire of the heart, which thus bears a witness to spiritual reality. The light which accompanies it is due to *revelation* from above by means of the three higher lotuses, which is, following St. Teresa, the grace and favour of "intellectual vision".

Concerning "imaginary visions"— and still more strongly so for visions due to over-refinement of the senses or to their inverse functioning (not in the normal direction "external world — brain", but in the reverse direction "brain — external world"), which takes place in the case of hallucination — they are in no way sources of authentic faith, and possess no more value than what authentic faith, moral conscience and (should it arise) reasoning are able to attribute to them. In any case: authentic faith precedes them, if they signify a revelatory contribution to the spiritual life of the soul; moral conscience precedes them, if they bring about an enrichment of the moral life of the soul: and reasoning precedes them, if they result in an increase of knowledge for the soul or the acquisition of new items of information of value to the soul.

For what one sees or hears must be understood. And one cannot understand without the revelatory "imperceptible light" and "Emmaus fire". One can also not understand and appreciate their value without the work of reasoning, if it is a matter of gaining items of information of a kind to augment knowledge. Reasoning is bound to compare the items of information furnished by clairvoyant experience, to classify them, and to look for relationships between them in order, lastly, to draw conclusions from them. Clairvoyant or not, all empirical experience is necessarily hypothetical. It is only *authentic faith* which has absolute certainty.

Thus, dear Unknown Friend, important above all else is the authentic faith of the "fire of Emmaus", then the same faith illumined by the "imperceptible light"

from above of "intellectual vision"— *after which* all will profitably serve your soul: both "imaginary visions" and visions due to over-refinement of the senses, experience of the senses, moral and logical reasoning, the study of all the sciences, and even hallucinations if they happen without you having arbitrarily sought and provoked them. Do not scorn anything or reject anything, if you have authentic faith. It is this, and this alone, which renders everything truly useful and which gives them value which they would not have without it.

This is the essential message of the Hanged Man, the upside-down man, whose feet are above and whose head is below, whose zodiacalised will is an authentic witness of the truths of the *twelve articles of faith*, and who lives suspended between two opposed fields of gravitation—heaven and earth.

Who is the Hanged Man? Is he a saint, a righteous man, an initiate?

He can certainly be regarded as all three, for all three have in common that their will is an organ of heaven, but what he is most especially, what he represents individually, is neither sanctity, nor righteousness, nor initiation, but something which is their synthesis. The Hanged Man is the *eternal Job*, tried and tested from century to century, who represents humanity towards God and God towards humanity. The Hanged Man is the *truly human man* and his lot is a truly human one.

The Hanged Man is the representative of humanity who is found between two kingdoms—that of this world and that of heaven. For that which is truly human in man and in humanity is the Hanged Man. And it is the Hanged Man who said, thousands of years ago:

Has not man a hard destiny upon earth,
and are not his days like the days of a hireling?
Like a slave who longs for the shadow,
and like a hireling who looks for his wages. ..
Oh that my words were written!
Oh that they were inscribed in a book!
Oh that with an iron pen and lead
they were graven in the rock for ever!
My foot has held fast to his steps;
I have kept his way and have not turned aside. .
For I *know* that my Redeemer lives,
and at last he will stand upon the earth.
And after my skin has been thus destroyed,
then from my flesh I shall see God,
whom I shall see on my side,
and my eyes shall behold, and not another.
My heart faints within me in expectation!
(Job vii, 1-2; xix, 23-24; xxiii, 11; xix, 25-27)

This is the discourse of the Hanged Man across the centuries.