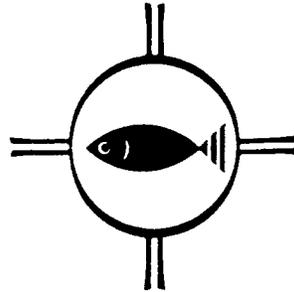


LIBERAL CATHOLIC INSTITUTE OF STUDIES



UNIT 2

PREPARATIVE : MEDITATION

PAPER 1

PART III

CHRISTIAN MEDITATIONS

FIVE EXERCISES

020.001 · 3

THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MEDITATION

Liberal Catholic Institute of Studies

1. SILENCE

“But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.” (St. Matthew 6:6)

A seed in the womb of mother earth lies in silence absorbing nourishment and other natural blessings until it, expanded, bursts forth into blossom. The Christ Child, nurtured in the bosom of quiet contemplation, awaits patiently its appointed hour of awakening. Silence, the great-unseen power, the miracle of life, works upon our character with strange contrast. At times it overwhelms us with its oppressive stillness, and again it falls upon our heart as a shower of refreshing raindrops on a sultry summer day. How often silence acts as a tonic, invigorating and revving our dull mood. Then, at other times, its effect upon us is like that of a narcotic, putting our life's energies into a state of morbid sleep...

All great forces of nature work in contrast.

In our world of Religion and philosophy the practice of silence plays a most vital part. It creates an atmosphere and enables you, the seeker, to find access to an inner sanctuary entirely hidden from the restless and turbulent material world. Whenever we are listening to fine music, if someone speaks or makes a noise, we are distracted, and jarred by it, and often we lose the subtle beauty of the music. Similarly, in spiritual study, if our attention is diverted we receive little or no benefit. This is the reason why the idea of complete silence before spiritual study was and is strongly advocated by many great schools of thought. We can easily see its technical reason, how it aids us in the act of concentration, but its more profound significance is in the unfoldment of our higher nature. We can never hear the language of the soul if our ears are filled with the loud noises of the world.

Even in secular education the necessity of silence is recognised. Unless the mind is receptive, any amount of time expended in study is of very little avail. It is interesting to note how the Montessori system of education advocates this idea.

The aim of silence is not to free our mind from thought and assume a state of emptiness and passivity. On the contrary, silence becomes a definite factor for our efficient and concentrated thought. Silence means coordination of our body, our mind, and all our faculties to such an extent that every particle moves in one rhythm. In this state all our aspirations and ideals work in harmony, so much so that there is no friction. You can verify this in connection with machinery; that, which voids friction most, makes the least

noise and endures the longest. In our world of life and all forms of activity, we find this to be true. The life that moves without in harmony and friction is the most efficient life.

A person whose mind is well ordered and whose system is well organised always finds something of interest within. He, or she, does not offer a personal opinion to others because he, or she, has found something within. He, or she, has become quiet, and through his, or her, balance of mind and attitude is always discovering an inner interest. No one can study successfully unless there is that power of concentration and coordination, and this power cannot be achieved unless we come to an attitude of silence. A silent being is a very restful being. Even in a household we find that a person who is calm, composed and thoughtful radiates a powerful influence.

One of the most interesting phenomena that takes place in connection with the practice of silence is, that the mind evolves creative genius. For instance, when a person who is used to intense activity and outer diversion is confronted suddenly with his own inner resources, if he is not thwarted by it, his, or her, mind will have a peculiar reaction and he, or she, will discover an inherent reserve and originality. In our previous papers we have invited your attention to the necessity of focus on a single objective and nothing is more efficacious towards this end than the practice of silence. Gradually we realise that the deeper part of our nature can only become known to us in waking consciousness when our outer being is still. We frequently misunderstand people who retire from crowds, who are not constantly active, we may even imagine that their lives are less useful because they are not forever engaged in outer occupation – but, we can never measure the good that radiates from a calm and contemplative spirit until we have experienced it ourselves.

What is meant by “silence” is not getting away from the crowd; it is not breaking away from the noisy part of life. It requires something more than running away from people. You may enter the forest’s untravelled depths and yet you may find no quiet if your mind is noisy, if your own attitude is distracted or if you have not harmony within your own personality. There are disappointments and unexpected happenings, but in spite of all these upheavals we can carry ourselves safely and with poise if we have acquired the silent attitude of mind and habit. You may believe intellectually that it is a wrong thing to be angry, it is wrong to be impatient, wrong to speak harshly; but the words come unexpectedly, and before you realise it you have spoken unkindly. But, you CAN order your mind in such rhythm and connect your life with higher forces to such an extent that these things will never happen again.

The great secret of success is that we work with our whole being, are fully aware, and we cannot do this without being absolutely still and concentrated. These are simple facts of life, but not easy to accomplish. Especially, you cannot expect somebody else to do it for you. The words you read here will remain merely...words unless you bring into practice that which you understand. Even the greatest mind cannot think for another; another mind and another brain cannot think out our problems because it is not aware of our unique situation. We cannot give a true picture to anyone no matter how we may try; but, there is a way of finding your own solution, and that is by learning to enter within our own depth.

The very fact that you have enrolled in this course gives witness that you are aware of a great ideal: that of human progress and perfection. You decide that you must know more about it, and that you want to assist in that great Plan that God has for humanity. And so you are counselled to think, reflect and to meditate, to go into the very depth of your being from where alone comes fruition. This does not come to anyone in haste, to the person who wants everything at once. For there are no shortcuts. Only the things we acquire by long, steadfast, devoted effort are the things that last and bring into our life the great richness we can share with others. Therefore, be patient with yourself. You may recognise many defects in your nature, but no matter how many blemishes we become aware of, how much disorder, it can all be removed, it will all be transformed. Go on working – silently. If you are willing to wait, that very attitude enables you to overcome seemingly insurmountable difficulties. Become impatient: You will lose the opportunity...Silence and patience go together. Silence has a wonderful creative power.

Therefore, if you have not done so already, form the habit of devoting a certain time to silent relaxation of the personality, focussing on a high ideal or thought of your choice; it will have a very definite beneficial effect upon both your physical and moral being. When, in the course of our daily round of duties we find ourselves growing physically tired or mentally tense, if we can take an attitude of relaxation and coordinate our thoughts, discarding all feelings of vexation and unrest, we shall feel restored and refreshed.

There are delicate things in our lives, most potent and most vibrant, which we fail to perceive because of the personal noise we generate, by which we are distracted. But in that time of silent coordination, when all our faculties are in perfect tune, we shall realise that we are part of the cosmic Being. It is in this time set aside for your meditation that you find the fullness of your life, for then your life becomes known to you as being united with the Great Life, and our personal mind a channel through which to touch the Divine Mind. And at such moments, when the finite and Infinite are so co-mingled, does our mind reflect Truth in speechless Silence and unspoken wonder.

What sleep does for our body and nervous system; silence does for our mind and soul. All discordant conditions in our life are greatly due to our lack of coordination of both physical and mental forces. The practice of physical silence restores our body and sense organs. The practice of mental silence refreshes our mind and quickens all our inner faculties. As only still waters reflect the perfect image, so only on the surface of the silent heart do we receive the unbroken image of Truth. When we begin to live the spiritual life, trying to practice the precept of “living in the world but not being of the world” we must cease to judge from the surface.

All differences are to be found only on the surface, on the periphery of our being, and one who lives constantly on the surface cannot see the connecting link between man and man, between one soul and another, or the perfect Oneness of Spirit; but when we have learned to focus on the Centre of Being, we see the unity everywhere. Our whole being becomes centred in God, so that, whether we speak or do not speak, we express the thought of God in accordance with our several abilities. Knowing that the Infinite can

never find full expression in finite words, it is realised that the glory of God is beyond mind and speech.

TO PONDER UPON:

This figure represents a number of concentric glass globes illuminated by a central light. The smallest globe, which is translucent contains on its surface a number of very small holes or circles that are transparent and allow the light from the centre to pass through the surface of the globe in the form of 'pencils', which produce their corresponding patches of light on all the globes. Now, the point to note in this diagram is, that, within the innermost globe the light emanating from the centre is one, and the same light when it goes from the innermost globe is broken up into a number of separate 'pencils' of light. The breaking up of the one light into many lights is produced by the mechanism of the innermost globe. In fact it is possible not only to break up the one light into many lights but also to impart to the different 'pencils' of light the character of individual uniqueness by changing the shape and size of the holes in the innermost globe.

(INSERT DIAGRAM)

This figure illustrates to some extent how the same Reality can appear as one undivided consciousness or as an innumerable number of separate units of consciousness, which are essentially of the same nature but have different external expressions. Which particular view of Reality will appear valid will depend upon the point from which it is seen. Jesus, the Christ: The Son of Man; the Second Person of the Trinity. Mary, Mother of Jesus, Mary, Our Heavenly Mother, the Face of the Deep.

2.

"WHOSE IS THIS IMAGE AND INSCRIPTION?"

St. Matthew 22: 20

This question is suggestive of the deeper meaning of public worship in general and is especially brought out in the long form of the Holy Eucharist, and that is the recognition that the material universe is the visible thought of God. That Creative Intelligence, exercising volition, that Parent Mind, has impressed His image and inscription upon all that is. Everything in the physical world is what it is by reason of a mind-form that relates it to the Universal Mind, and the Universal Mind is that Divine activity, which St. John calls the Word, the LOGOS, the Originator in creative activity. "Through every grass blade," says Carlyle, "the glory of the present God still beams". And thus all we see manifest in nature deserves our reverent mental recognition of the intense nearness of God.

So – our first thought of the day should be that the world is ruled by Mind – and not by matter, that "there is a soul in all things, and that soul is God", that in the true

philosophy of Creation every atom, every germ, has within it a principle, a Life, a Purpose, a degree of consciousness appropriate to its position in the scheme of things, or, as we call it, the Great Plan. That consciousness differs in magnitude and its different manifestations; higher in the insect than in the vegetable, higher in the animal than in the insect, and occasionally we find in the animal a shrewdness that implies observation and close reasoning. Here is an extreme example:

There is in Christchurch, Hampshire, England, a unique museum of birds where a collection of every forty eggs placed by cuckoos in nests of other birds gives us something to thin about. It is well known that the cuckoo makes no nest of its own, so – in order to deceive the bird amongst whose eggs the cuckoo intends to place its own egg, the cuckoo causes the egg it is about to lay to assume the colour and markings of the eggs of the small bird who is to be the foster-mother. That collection contains over forty cuckoos' eggs, each one coloured to imitate the natural egg of the bird whose nest the cuckoo had commandeered. This had been done with extraordinary accuracy, from the bright blue of the hedge-sparrow's egg to the dull olive of the nightingale's egg, and even the peculiar markings, like notes of music, of the yellow-hammer's egg, had been imitated.

Consider the extraordinary mental power applied. The cuckoo has first to “decide” which nest she will lay under contribution. She has then to “study” the colouring of the eggs in that nest; then, with some amazing exercise of the creative power of thought, she causes her unlaidd egg to assume that colour. She then lays it on the ground, and carrying it in her beak, carefully places it amongst the eggs of the little foster-mother. What an intense, ever-present reality is the Infinite Mind...! What a glorious thought it is that the Eternal Purpose is everywhere.

When the heart is discouraged and the hands weary, how sustaining is it to know that there is no chance, no mere machinery – everywhere is purpose, intelligence, evolution, love!

Obviously, the operation of the Originating Mind in all is that it differs in quality of self-realisation in proportion to the receptive capacity of the matter in which it is immanent. Please read this sentence over and over again until the reality of it touches YOU. It is not sufficient to intellectually affirm the immanence of God in a blade of grass, but it is for you to carry the thought higher and higher, and not to rest until you have realised that Divine immanence in a far more intense degree in yourself.

Man is the crown of Creation, and when the Lord took the coin in his hand and asked the question “Whose is this image and inscription?” He was stimulating thinkers to consider man's unique place in the cosmic order, and man's true relationship to the universal Originating Spirit; and when you have really found that, you are well on your way to the awareness of understanding and realisation.

These Pharisees in the bible story (have you read the quotation by now?) were not ignorant. Some of them were Essenes, some Therapeuts, some that we consider Mystics; and when the Lord asked “Whose is this image?” some thinkers among them would

recall the profound declaration of human origin in the Book of Genesis: “So God created Man in His own Image, in the image of God created He him”. They must have sensed that the question was an invitation for a thought-excursion – which it is, even today. It is a key to the transcendent truth of the elemental inseparability of the Divine and Man. It is an appeal to a divine FACT in man; it is reiteration of His statement “the Kingdom of heaven is within you” – a re-affirmation of the Truth that nothing can ever really change the central current of man’s purpose, a Truth that regenerates man’s lower nature, gives us the clear recognition of our dignity, our responsibility, our potential, as a vehicle for the manifestation of God. If they brought to Jesus Christ some degraded specimen of humanity (and they virtually did this when they brought Him the woman taken in adultery), there could have been but one reply – “In the image of God created he him”; and that which God has once impressed with His image, though that image may be defaced and overlaid, is His forever, and the impress can never be obliterated. Remember Tennyson’s world:

*“For good ye are and bad, and like to coins,
Some true, some light, but every one of you
Stamped with the image of the King”.*

STAMPED WITH THE IMAGE OF THE KING...the thought touches human life at many points, mystical, personal, practical. The mystical lesson from the human coin stamped with the Divine Image should to us be as a stimulus to spiritual growth. It is the transcendent twin-truth of the Eternal humanity in God, and the External divinity in man; that, inasmuch all that is must have pre-existed, as a first principle, in the Mind of the Infinite Originator, and as the highest of all that is, so far as we at present can perceive, in Man is his attainment of Son of God (“Be ye perfect even as your Father who is in Heaven is perfect”), and that archetype must be in the hidden nature of the Infinite Mind.

Therefore, you, however buried and stifled for educative purposes in the “corruptible body”, are in your inmost ego indestructible, and inseparably linked to the Father of Spirits, and now this: Man is to God a vehicle of Self-Manifestation. “The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork” – have you looked up to the clear evening sky lately? For only man – mortal mental, volitional – can declare the nature of the godhead and manifest the qualities of God. As God’s Power is revealed in the wheeling planets, God’s nature is revealed in Man, the Thinker, who has proceeded from the Godhead into matter, and this image and inscription of the Creator remains forever indelibly impressed upon our inmost EGO, and must work in us, and will work in us until it unites our conscious mind fully with the Divine.

Each one of us is a responsible life-centre in which God has expressed His nature – and for the purpose of Evolution we must emerge triumphant from resistance, as every flower, every grape, every grain of corn has emerged triumphant from the soil that held it. Man is a composite being, possessing an animal nature, a lower region of appetite, perception, imagination and tendency. But, to carry on the analogy used by our Lord, there is a reverse side to every coin. Don’t overdo this analogy, but when you are looking at one side you cannot see the other. Generally, on the reverse side there is some device representing a myth, or tradition, or national characteristic. On the reverse side of the

denarius they brought to our Lord, was a representation of Mercury with the Caduceus. What does the caduceus represent to you as opposed to Caesar's image on the reverse... Let your mind wander into the process that made the coin what it is: the precipitation of the chemical constituents of gold in prehistoric times, when the planet was emerging from the fiery womb that bore it; the forcing of the metal into the cells of the quartz under incalculable pressure of the contracting, cooling globe; the ages upon ages of concealment in the depths of the earth; the smelting, the alloying; and, at last, the stamping with the image and superscription, or inscription of the reigning sovereign. And once stamped in the Mint it is an essential item in the economy of the country. It is legal tender – no one may refuse it in payment. At his peril does any man abuse it or steal it. The image and superscription gives it its dignity, its sphere of usefulness, even its name.

If we concentrate all our attention on the reverse side of the coin, if we persist in imagining that our animal nature is our real self, we forget that the King's Image is on the other side. We can, at our present level of awareness, only see one side at a time, and while we gaze at the reverse side, and the other side is hidden, doubt, depression, pessimism, sense of separateness are the result...

What is the purpose of this paper? Well – the previous four papers really were complete in itself, inasmuch as, to quote St. Paul "If ye know all these things, happy are ye when ye do them" and if we would have succeeded to implement all directions, there would have been a TRANSFORMATION, which would make you a knower instead of a learner... Meanwhile, our efforts have met with its share of discomfort, discouragement and just plain laziness. Now hear this: those who have attained had the same problems, and by realisation that those problems were self-inflicted, they forced themselves to turn over, as it were, the coin that represented them; so, as St. Paul says "reckon yourself alive to god", forcibly detach your attention from the reverse side; think intensely into the other side. Say, "I am spirit, I am the Lord's; His image is stamped on me, his Life is in me, His eternal purpose is my perfection, my true EGO is His Divine Life; Spirit in His own image and likeness, and although yet subject to the vanity of human birth and in the bondage of the attributes of the personality, I WILL ATTAIN to the conscious liberty of true being. This body is not I, not the real I".

This thought, or one of similar nature, becomes creative when persisted in and restores the equilibrium; it helps the at-one-ment (atonement) of the "two sides of the coin", the human and the Divine, making, as the Apostle says, "of the twin one new man".

Those who have by now not yet established a comfortable routine of daily meditation are offered exercises which, if you choose to take their challenge, should be done to the very core of your present ability to concentrate.

(a) Read Chapter 15 of the Gospel of St. John in its entirety, several times, then meditate upon:

*“I am the true vine and My Father is the husbandman and ye are the branches.” **

“Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit: so shall ye be my disciples.”

“I shall no more drink of the fruit of the vine till the day I drink it new in my Father’s Kingdom.”

3.

“For while all things were wrapped in peaceful silence and night was in the midst of its swift course...”

Wisdom of Solomon 18:14

Because the same One who is begotten and born of the Father without ceasing in eternity is born within time, in human nature, we celebrate Christmas. St. Augustine says that this birth is always happening. If it would not occur in us, how could it help humanity?

This, then, is the saying: *“While all things were wrapped in peaceful silence...a secret word leaped from heaven, out of the royal throne, to me”*.

What is this silence and where is that word to be spoken? It is spoken in the soul’s most exalted place, in the centre, in the essence of its being. The central silence is there, where no creature may enter, nor any idea, either of itself or of anything else.

Whatever the soul does, it does through agents. It understands by intelligence. If it remembers, it does so by means of memory. If it is to love, the will must be used – and thus it acts always through agents and not within its own essence. Its results are achieved through an intermediary. The power of sight can be effectuated only through the eyes, for otherwise the soul has no means of vision on the earthly plane. It is the same with the other senses. They are effectuated through intermediaries.

In BEING, however, there is no action and, therefore, there is none in the soul’s essence. The soul’s agents, by which it acts, are derived from the core of the soul. In that core is the central silence, the pure peace, and abode of the heavenly birth, the place for this event: this utterance of God’s Word. By nature the core of the soul is sensitive to nothing but the Divine Being, unmediated. Here the Father enters the soul with all he has and not in part. He enters the soul through its core and nothing may touch that core except God himself. No creature enters it, for creatures are akin to the soul’s agents, from whence the soul harvests ideas, the essence of which are drawn into its core.

When the agents of the soul contact creatures, they take and make ideas and images of them and bear them into the self. It is by means of those ideas that the soul knows about external creatures. Nothing manifest can approach the soul from without except in this

* “My Father is the field labourer” says the Greek text, thus the earth was the field prepared beforehand.

way and the soul cannot reach what is manifest except it first conceives ideas and ideas are entities created by the soul's agents. Be it a stone, or a rose, or a person, or whatever it is that is to be known, first an idea is taken and then absorbed (and – alas – distorted), and in this way the soul connects with the phenomenal world.

But an idea, so received, necessarily comes in from outside, through the senses. Thus the soul knows about everything but itself. It is said that the soul can neither conceive nor admit any idea of itself. Thus it knows about everything else but has no self-knowledge, for ideas always enter through the senses and therefore the soul has no ideas of itself. Of nothing does the soul know so little as it knows of itself, for lack of means. And that indicates that within itself the soul is free, innocent of all instrumentalities and ideas, and that is why God can unite with it, He, too being pure and without any idea or likeness.

It is the function and craft of the moon and sun to reflect and give light and they do it swiftly. When they emit their rays, all the ends of the world are filled with light in a moment. There are the angels who work with fewer instruments than man and also with fewer ideas. The highest seraph has only one. He comprehends as unity all that his inferiors in stature see as manifold. But God needs no idea at all, nor has He any. He acts in the soul without instrument, idea or likeness. He acts in the core of the soul, which no idea ever penetrated – but He alone – his own essence.

How does God beget his Son in the soul? As a creature might, with ideas and likenesses?

He begets Him in the soul just as He does in eternity, through the unity of the divine nature.

But, at our stage there is nothing to the soul but ideas... or?

No idea represents or signifies itself. It always points to something else, of which it is the symbol. And since we have no ideas except those abstracted from external things through the senses we have to go beyond the senses by stilling them.

What should we do to secure and deserve the occurrence and perfection of this birth in our soul? Should we cooperate by imagining and thinking about God, or should we keep quiet, be silent and at peace, so that God may speak and act through us? Should we do nothing until God does act? Only if we have so absorbed the essence of virtue that virtue emanates from us without trying to make it do so, and if the useful life and noble teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ are fully operative in us.

When all the agents (of the soul) are withdrawn from the action and ideation, then this Word is spoken. The more you can withdraw the agents of your soul and forget things and the ideas you have received hitherto, the nearer you are to (hearing this word) and the more sensitive to it you will be. If you could only become unconscious of everything accumulated all at once and ignore your own life, as St. Paul did when he would say: *"Whether in body or out of it, I cannot tell..."*. His spirit had so far withdrawn all its agents that the body was forgotten. Neither memory nor intellect functioned, nor the senses, nor

any (of the soul's) agents, which are supposed to direct or grace the body. The warmth and energy of the body was suspended and yet it did not fail during the three days in which he neither ate nor drank. It was also this way with Moses, when he fasted forty days on the mountain and was none the worse for it. A person should diminish being subject to the senses and introvert his faculties until forgetfulness of things and self is achieved. Say to the soul: *"Draw back from the unrest of external actions"*.

The wise man said: *"In the middle of the night, while all things were wrapped up in silence, a secret word was spoken to me"*. It came stealthily, like a thief. What does he mean by a word that is secret or hidden? It is the nature of a word to reveal what is hidden. *"It opened and shone before me as if it were revealing something and made me conscious of God, and thus it was called a 'word'. Furthermore it was not clear to me what it was, because it came with stealth like a whisper trying to explain itself through the stillness"*.

St. Paul tells us that once he was conscious of what he calls the third heaven of the knowledge of God and saw everything. When he returned to the body he had forgotten nothing, but it had so regressed into the core of his soul that he could not call it to mind. Thus he pursued it within (the soul) and not without. It is always within and never outside, yea always inward. And thus he said: *"I am persuaded that neither death...nor any affliction can separate me from what I find within me"*. (Romans 8:38,39)

St. Augustine witnesses: *"I am aware of something in myself, like a light dancing before my soul, and if it could be brought out with perfect steadiness, it would surely be life eternal. It hides, and then again, it shows. It comes like a thief, as if it would steal everything from the soul. But since it shows itself and draws attention, it must want to allure the soul and make the soul follow it, to rob the soul of self"*. This is also what the Lord Christ meant, when he is to have said: *"Whosoever shall forsake anything for my sake, shall receive again a hundred-fold and whosoever will have me, must deny himself of everything and whosoever will serve me must follow me and not seek his own"*.

St. John says: *"The light shone in the darkness...it entered unto its own. And to as many as received it, to them power was given to become the Sons of God"*.

See now the profit and fruit of the silence, of the secret word and this darkness, for you, too, are born there and to you this power is a heritage.

By 'robbing yourself of self and all externalities' you are becoming worthy partakers of Truth.

There never was a struggle or a battle that required greater effort than that in which a person forgets or denies the personality... but:

No person in this life may reach the point at which he can be excused from outward service. Even if he is given a life of meditation and contemplation, still he cannot refrain from going out and taking an active part of life. Even as a person who has nothing at all may still not be generous because he gives nothing; so – no one may have virtues without

using them, as time and occasion require. Thus, those who are given to the life of contemplation and avoid action, deceive themselves. The contemplative person should indeed avoid even the thought of deeds to be done during the period of his contemplation, but afterwards should get busy, for no one can or should engage in contemplation all the time, for the active life is to be bringing into practice the fruits of insight.

AN EXERCISE:

Our individual uniqueness, the nature of individual uniqueness, its nature, its origin in God and the presence of the individual uniqueness of all the Monads¹ in a perfectly harmonised and integrated state in God, eternally emerging, getting involved in manifestation and then merging again in the Godhead, after going through the process of unfoldment, this whole process of manifestation may be seen to be an eternal cycle of the One becoming the Many and Many becoming the One.

The relation of the One and the Many may be represented symbolically thus:

(DIAGRAM)

Which shows at a glance many important aspects of this relationship. One interesting aspect is the co-existence of Oneness and Many in several stages.

In the first stage we see that a centre of consciousness represented by a point in a radius is in the realm of many and separateness. As it approaches the centre it also draws nearer to all the other units of consciousness represented by the radii and at the centre becomes one, not only with the centre but with all the other units of consciousness.

MAXIM: the Many gives place to Oneness at the centre.

The second stage of co-existence is seen in the simultaneous existence of Oneness and Many at the centre. In this stage we see Oneness and Many not merely as a culmination or end of many but as

AN OVER-ALL ONENESS WHICH ALSO INCLUDES THE MANY

If we look at this symbol as a whole it is one and includes both the centre and all the radii. In this it is not a question of the Oneness being an alternative to many but the Oneness and Many together constituting a deeper Oneness.

There is a third kind of Oneness that goes beyond even the second stage and this is the ultimate Oneness in which all the Monads with their different individual uniqueness

¹ Monad (GR.): “alone”. The divine spirit in man, the “Dweller in the innermost”, which is said to evolve through the sub-human kingdoms of Nature into the human and thence to the stature of Christhood. The description of the destiny of man given by our Lord: “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect”. (St. Matthew 5:48)

become merged in an integrated state. In this state they do not exist as separate entities, just as the infinite number of individually unique vibrations with their specific or characteristic wave-lengths in the visible spectrum become merged in white light and do not exist in white light as separate entities.

You are invited to ponder and meditate upon these concepts.

The text of this paper is from MEISTER ECKHART, celebrated 14th Century mystic and priest, in a modern translation. Those students familiar with philosophies of the East will find the Meister Eckhart had found the source of the perennial and Ancient Wisdom within.

4.

SPIRIT, SOUL, BODY

"A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps".

Proverbs XVI: 9 (King James)

"A man's mind plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps".

Proverbs XVI: 9 (R.S.V.)

"Man plans his journey by his own wit, but it is the Lord who guides his steps".

Proverbs XVI: 9 (N.E.B.)

Here we look at three translations of the same maxim, the core of which conveys to us the true relation that should exist between the three functioning centres within man, which the Christian calls spirit, soul and body. Soul is the region of the higher intellect, from whence comes understanding. Spirit, the innermost being, Infinite Mind differentiated into an individual life-centre, when not obstructed, guides soul, and of this guidance soul becomes increasingly conscious. Body, the external part of man's being, the association of organs whereby soul gathers experience through contact with the physical universe, ought to obey soul, guided by spirit, and then all is well. That is the ideal relationship between the three functioning centres in individual Man. Spirit is the seat of our God-consciousness. Soul is the seat of our self-consciousness. Body, or rather personality, is the seat of our self – or sense-consciousness. In the spirit God dwells; in the soul Self dwells; in the body sense dwells. The at-one-ment is the realised equipoise of these functioning factors in the complex mechanism of individual Man. The body, with its senses, subject to the soul with its understanding Reason. The soul, attaining to Pure Reason, opens to the spirit, which is divine. And when we grasp this inter-relation, and give spirit the pre-eminence, we do not "sin". Disharmony, transgression, or, as most Christians call it, sin, when it is mental, is the assertion of self seeking its life and its

happiness through the personality only. Sin, when it is bodily, is the assertion of animal appetite, seeing its life and its happiness through the emotional senses only. Harmony lies in the soul-self, of which the conscious mind is the functioning power, seeking its life and its happiness in obedience to spirit, thinking itself into conscious oneness with spirit, the inmost shrine of our complex nature. Then, as Soul will no longer be functioning from the plane of material conditions, Body obeys Soul, and thus, through our conscious mind “deviseth his way”, Spirit “directeth his steps”.

Man is spirit, which is “the kingdom of heaven within”. Spirit is “the Father within you”. The one everlasting impossibility to man is to sever himself from immanent spirit. A person may have so wrongly “devised its way” as to be derelict; the nightmare of life may have been so heavy that a person has not recognised that the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven within him are committed to him, or her. He or she may not yet have awakened to the truth that God’s intensity dwells within even the person; there may even be a plunge into animalism; one may pass out of this life still in a dreamlike state, but, though he knows it not, whatever his mind may devise, the Lord, Immanent Spirit, will still “direct his steps” to the ultimate issue. Into whatever educative school of life a human being may pass, Spirit goes with him or her. *“If I go down into Hades, Thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy right hand lead me”*. And where Spirit is, there, at last, every wandering derelict human being will *“arise and go to its Father”*.

Your attention is directed to St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans and to read Chapter 8, beginning with verse 12 through 17, if you can stop at that point. We are taught here about the glorious truth of the Immanence of God. Do not let concentration upon your oneness with the Infinite Spirit Immanent hinder your consciousness of Infinite Spirit Transcendent – that is, external to us. Our Lord Christ Jesus was intensely conscious of the Immanence of God; He called It “the Father in Him” but He also prayed definitely to the Father outside Him, or That which existed on the periphery of His consciousness as manifest on earth. St. Paul suggests that when we pray to God as undifferentiated Spirit, who is God without us, we should use the familiar affectionate title “Abba”. The Lord Christ is only recorded to have used this title once, at the moment of His deepest agony, and it is in suffering, physical or mental, that you most want it. It is a declaration of your estimate of God, and therefore important, because the ability of Divine Love to help and sustain you is conditioned by your appreciation of Him and your mental attitude of receptivity towards Deity. So, in times when He seems most absent, it is well that we address Him by the tenderest name you personally know and do as our Lord Christ did, when he said: “Abba Father (Dad), if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me”.

Now, turn to the Collect for the Eleventh Sunday after Trinity with its Intent of Discernment. “O god, whose never-failing providence ordereth all things both in heaven and earth”. In other words, a person’s mind may wrongly “devise his way” but “the Lord will direct his steps”. Saturate your mind with that thought. Address the universal Spirit outside you and, as it were, individualise Him. Say “Abba, Father, whose never failing providence ordereth all things both in Heaven and on earth, though my personality may be ‘devising my way’ wrongly and sometimes tortuously, - I will that Thou direct my steps into Thy purpose”. In that attitude of mind you direct your

personality to become a fit dwelling place, the temple you want it to be, which it will be if you persevered, no matter whatever happens to you betimes. This gives you a great freedom in worshipping, at all moments of your daily doings, the Infinite Spirit – emancipated from all traditional conceptions you may have outgrown.

Infinite Mind expresses Itself in individuals that It - we say He in Christianity – many manifest His own qualities and attributes. To that end we have created “in the Image of God”, and having free will, have the power to “devise our way”...

First, Originating Spirit, GOD, wills to realise His highest qualities in humanity. Therefore, man must have liberty to withhold cooperation or he would be only a ...computer. Programmed moral qualities would not be moral any more than your watch is moral. To receive and to distribute the nature of the Divine mind, not circuitry, but mental acquiescence is necessary. “The heavens declare the glory of God”, yes, but they do it mechanically, as it were, not morally. The solar system is a perfect work of creation, but a planet cannot leave its appointed (programmed) orbit.

MAN CAN.

If man obeyed the immutable laws only as a planet revolves in its orbit, he would “declare the glory of God”, but would not be...human; that is, he would not be the Centre in which Originating Mind could realise Itself. Then again, without being free to disobey, we could never become moral beings. The pressure of non-moral inclinations within our personality challenges our highest Self, and as we make each to our present ability, which is greater than our past ability, and will be less than tomorrow’s ability, as we make a correct choice between alternatives presented, we are lifted Godward. We must ultimately attain to know consciously the Life whence we came, for It has declared to us, “Ye shall be perfect”. Of course, we must ourselves “open out the way”. In that Obligation lies the function of our Will and our responsibility for using the Keys of our own Kingdom of Heaven within.

Read the seventh chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew. The thorn and the thistle, the grape and the fig are, in allegory, parts of our being, of that complex nature that makes us different from the immanence of God as “subconscious mind” – or “unaware” in the vegetable and the animal. Each human being is, as it were, the soil in which the personality produces thorn and thistle, and the soul and spirit produce grape and fig. The opposing functioning centres in the same person strive for dominance, sometimes even mastery, and from this very striving emerges the perfected life of the Child of God, and that where the possibility of what is called evil comes in. We can, at this time, grasp that God’s thought-forms, imaged forth from the womb of Infinite Mind, could never attain Self-consciousness unless associated with matter in some definite form. That association with matter involves body with its “thorn and thistle” tendencies, which tendencies are the training ground of the individual, and this training will be complete when you, as Spirit, through your-Self, as Soul, controls you, the personality and you can say with St. Paul, (I Cor. 9:27) “I keep under my body and bring it into subjection”.

As vehicles of spirit we have the capacity of living by a definite effort and purpose the higher life, the fruit-bearing life, and, as we live it, we weaken and starve the thorn and thistle-bearing life.

We are debtors – says the Apostles – we, who have received the keys of our own Kingdom of heaven within – “we are debtors not to live after the flesh” – Every purposeful encouragement of your Divine Nature Within, every clinging to principle in time of temptation, every triumph over bodily and emotional desires by forcing the mind away from the sense impressions into recollection of the Divinity Within, every quenching of anger by a kind and gentle word, ministers to the fruit-bearing life and withers the thorn and thistle.

1. Here is a text, from the TALKS OF INSTRUCTION OF Meister Eckhart, to ponder, to meditate upon, and to profess; to affirm and then to practice in daily life:

“THE USEFULNESS OF DENIAL, TO BE PRACTISED
INWARDLY, AND OUTWARDLY

Know, that no one in this life ever gave up so much that nothing more to let go could be found...Few people, knowing what this means, can stand it long, and yet it is an honest requital, a just exchange. To the extent that you eliminate self from your activities, God comes into them – no more and no less.

Begin with that and let it cost you your uttermost. In this way, and no other, is true peace to be found.

People ought not to consider so much what they are to do as what they are; let them be good and their ways and deeds will shine brightly. If you are just, your actions will be just too. Do not think that saintliness comes from occupation; it depends rather on what one is. The kind of work we do does not make us holy but we can make it holy. However “sacred” a calling may be, as it is a calling, it has no power to sanctify; but rather as we are and have the divine being within, we bless each task we do, be it eating, or sleeping, or watching, or any other. Whatever they do, who have not much of God’s nature, they work in vain.

Take care that your emphasis is laid on being good and not on the number of things to be done. Emphasise rather the fundamentals on which your work depends”.²

² Confucius said ‘WU PEN’ – “attend to the fundamentals” – cf Analects.

5.

"OF HIS OWN WILL BEGAT HE US WITH THE WORD OF TRUTH, THAT WE SHOULD BE A KIND OF FIRST FRUITS OF HIS CREATURES"

St. James I: 18

This verse precedes the reading of the Epistle governing the Intent of Precept and Practice for the twenty-third Sunday after Trinity. These words illuminate conspicuously the teaching that we were "thought-forms" in the Womb of Infinite Mind before we were "body forms" in this terrestrial school, and they affirm to us the closeness of our intimacy with the Infinite Mind and the obviousness of our life's duty. Please ponder upon the next sentence for a while.

The Power of Infinite Mind to realise me, and express through me, and externalise Love in the circumstances of my life, is conditioned by my appreciation of what Infinite Mind is in Itself. Therefore, the more familiar, the more reverently tender my estimate of Originating Spirit becomes, the more will It be able to manifest in my life.

St. James, in the words quoted, is suggesting to us a conception of Infinite Creative Mind so exalted and yet so personal, that, if by a raising of awareness, or consciousness, it can be grasped, there results the highest possible estimate of the ALL-conscious Life-Principle whence we came. "Of his Own Will begat He us with the Word" or, as the Greek reads "He willed us forth with the Word". In the Greek there is, of course, no personal pronoun before a Greek word that is only used for the description of the birth of a child from its mother – scholars will confirm, it has no other meaning. And, knowing this, imagine the infinite motherly tenderness of the metaphor. Can it be used by accident? Was it translated in ignorance? Does it not suggest the words "Can a woman forget her child that she should not have compassion upon the fruit of her womb?" Can then infinite Mind forget the individual life-centre that has come forth from its creative thought womb? You may say this is emotion, that this is sentiment. Quite so: that is exactly what is needed: Our relations to our Originator are often too formal, too cold, and too "mental".

According to our expanded understanding we can now say that Father-Mother or, if more compatible with your view, the Mother-Soul "brought us forth" – "bore us", body-formed us, that by separation we might come to know our Parentage as we could never have known it if we had remained in the womb of Creative Mind, just as between human child and mother there can be no conscious cognising intercourse till they are separated.

This metaphor of St. James reaches into the deep things of God. It proves that the irrevocability of Divine Immanence in man is not the product of human speculation. As the child in the womb received the nature of the mother, and is born into the world bearing that nature, part of the mother, a repetition of the mother, so have we come into this world with a divine nature within us, which is our real self, our eternal humanity. It is true FOR us, when it is not yet true TO us, that we are the offspring of GOD, the infinite

Parent-Spirit, by a process more intimate than everything implied by the word “creation”.

The nature and perfection of God, as Omnipotent Love and Wisdom, are germinal within us, and are gradually advancing mankind, by the law of evolution, which is irresistible, to a more and more perfect condition. And so, the problem of evil, while it remains as a motive for action, loses its power to perplex those who decide to persevere.

As an Infinite Motherliness is the sole producing agent of all that is manifest, and as all that is manifest must have been in the thought-womb of Infinite Motherliness before coming into Existence, the whole mystery of the dark side of life must be within the purpose of the eternal order, and there can be no independent rival to the Author, or Architect, of the Universe. Again, this view of Creative Motherliness should help us in realising the oneness of humanity the priceless dignity of every individual as drawn directly from God.

We should recognise our present double consciousness – that two distinct planes of thought of initiative compose our life – the one is the natural or animal person, the product of evolution through the operation of the Cosmic Mind; the other is the spiritual person, with an essential inner nature, equipped with all the potentialities and the qualities of the Infinite Father-Mother. In the recognition of this duality lies the strength to persevere; in the reconciliation of these two levels of consciousness lies the purpose of life; and in the transcendence of the lower into the higher lies the victory!

Upon what does victory depend? It depends upon our use of our will-power in training our mental faculty to rise above the mere sense-impressions of our lower consciousness IN OUR DAILY DOINGS, and intensify upon the eternal fact of our oneness with the Infinite Life from which we have come forth as a child comes from its mother’s womb.

And, says St. James in verse 21: “Wherefore...receive with meekness the ENGRAFTED Word...” The Greek is more explicit; it says LOGOS EMPHUTOS “the ‘inborn Word’, which is the hereditary divine nature. “With meekness” – that is, with receptivity. Mentally practice Self-Realisation, become conscious that the Logos, which is the mystic you – “INBORN”. Be receptive to its promptings, acknowledge it, recognise it, realise it, appeal to it; put away what St. James calls “superfluity of naughtiness”, an expression you can measure with your very own ruler. Strengthen it by replacing undesirable thought with aspirational thoughts, by your secret communion with it, and it will rapidly evolve, and as it grows, it will externalise in the conditions of your life, it will become more and more a power in the affair of your daily duties, it will bring you into right relations with your fellow-men, and make you kind to others. As it awakens the nature of the Infinite Manifestation within you, it will teach you what is God’s plan for humanity – namely that God’s true son is not perfect man, but the whole multitudinous race of man and women, of which race God is the Father, the Mother, the Soul, the Glory and the Eternity.

This inborn Word – Logos Emphutos – this hereditary witness of the close and tender relationship between our selves and Creative Motherliness, this “urge” of the Creative

Fire, is a universal principle. It is not easy to define it; but what EXISTENCE is to being, what the spoken word is to THOUGHT, what the LIGHTNING-FLASH is to electricity, that the LOGOS is to the creative MOTHER-SOUL: Its expression, its activity, its self-utterance. The LOGOS is that quality of originating Mind that forms, upholds, and sustains all that is. “Without the LOGOS was not anything made that was made”. “By the LOGOS says St. Paul, “the heavens were made”. The LOGOS is the one life in all, the cosmic mind in all – in the mineral, the crystal, the lower order of animal life, and, above all, in its highest function, it is the dominating power in the soul of Man, and in angels and archangels and all denizens of the spheres of Light and Life.

It has always been so. The early Aryans knew it; we find it in the wisdom of all Religions; but generations of wrong thinking darkened human minds to their divine origin as possessors of the LOGOS EMPHUTOS.

If the Lord Jesus Christ alone were the Incarnate Son, He would profit us little. He could in no sense be our Elder Brother or our model. Incarnation is a universal Principle, of which Principle the Lord Jesus Christ is the absolute perfection. He did not stay long in the limitations of the flesh, but long enough to manifest the splendid divine potentiality of a human being in whom the Logos rules. The human beings that he came to illuminate killed his body. Plato, long ago, prophesied that if a perfect man appeared, the world would crucify Him... And the Gospel records His farewell. He says: “It is expedient for you that I go away”.

The Christian revelation is a complete and intelligible philosophy; it secures our position. Infinite Mind, brooding Creative Motherliness, has expressed itself by manifesting its thoughts in the phenomena of the universe, and in forming itself in its completeness in human beings. Man’s consciousness, when fully aware AND STILL, will mirror all that is, as the dewdrop mirrors the Sun. If there were such a perfect One among us, He would be able to say “I and the Father (Infinite Mind) are one; he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father (Infinite Mind)”.

So, in our Lord, God is no longer a vague abstraction, because you can interpret the Universal mind, GOD, through what is manifest in Him. But more, in our Lord you can also understand yourself. God sent the Christ to be a complete full-orbed specimen of what you are potentially yourself. The principles that He embodies, the LOGOS EMPHUTOS that “became flesh” in Him, are not peculiar to Him, but universal, so that we can claim identity with Him. St. John says: “As He is, so are we in this world”. St. Paul also says: “Christ – that is the LOGOS EMPHUTOS - is in you the hope of glory”; and He Himself said: “I am in the Father, and ye in Me, and I in you”.

That is why He said: “It is expedient for you that I go away”. He came to teach that the “inborn Word” is universal; it is God repeating itself in all Souls; and if this Truth were to be realised and appreciated, it was expedient that the visible personality in which it was manifest should be removed, in order that Man might mentally universalise the manifestation and learn that this spirit of Sonship, this Divine nature, this Expression of the Creative Being, belongs to all humanity, as the hope, nay, the reason of their

existence, the leaven of their humanity, the assurance of their perfection and the ideal of their life.

He did not really leave us. He said that if he did not go the Comforter could not come. He is the comforter. He identified Himself completely with the coming of the Holy Ghost; He speaks of Pentecost as His second coming; He says, "I will not leave you comfortless" – "I will come unto you"; and St. Paul, in 2 Cor. III: 17, in emphatic terms, declares: "Now the Lord" – meaning the Lord Jesus Christ – "is that Spirit".

Our Lord also said, "When He is come He will convict the world of sin". What do you know about this? He said that, when Divine Sonship, the inborn Word, begins to stir in a personality, to make itself felt, there is a new principle on that person that cannot tolerate the lower nature, but torments it. Until the LOGOS EMPHUTOS is awakened there is no real awareness of sin. Philo taught that where the Word had not stirred in a person there was no moral responsibility; but "when He has come" – how you remember your past transgressions! And if from deeply ingrained habitual accumulations of many lifetimes you are sometimes now selfish, irritable, unkind, impure, the reaction comes quickly in the sometimes-painful sense of disturbed harmony, and you may be miserable until restored. This is the LOGOS EMPHUTOS, "the Christ in you" – call it the Holy Ghost if you like, convicting you, as the Bible says, of "sin".

This very intimate relationship to the Deity unfolds the limitless capacities of our being. The Kingdom of heaven (which is a state of consciousness) is at hand if we will claim it. Remember, the moral issues of life, with which this course deals in effect, are mental. It is a fundamental law of conscious life that by our own effort (and no one else's) and, in the beginning only through mastering your mental processes, you can have communion with the Infinite Life to the degree of your efforts and purity of your motives. Your mind can focus the Divine presence and we may speak in our heart to the world's Creator as intimately as a child would prattle to its mother. If that be so, then consider what ought your moral life to be? NOT obedience to a conventional category of social maxims, but an expression of That which is within you, and a daily prayer could be, "May my conscious mind perceive that thy Life, thy thoughts, Thy spirit are within me, and Thou art seeking to realise Thyself and manifest Thy love through me".

Again, inasmuch as the whole must include its parts, and as we can mentally focus attention on the whole, we can most assuredly be perceived by any Great One to whom we may choose to direct our aspiration; not by drawing Them down into these denser elements in which they are not readily manifest, but lifting ourselves as best as we may to the level of Their abode, for when we are realising GOD we are summoning Them. That is a communion that breaks down the barrier that is only ours to remove and enables us to say: "With angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name; evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory; glory be to thee, O Lord most high and blessed is he that comes in the Name of the Lord".

TO DO:

1. Read St. James I: 18-27. Discover who are “the fatherless and widows in their affliction”.
2. In the Gospel for the Fifth Sunday in Lent, or Passion Sunday, the Lord is quoted as saying: “Suffer little children, etc. (Please read the entire Gospel quotation in the Liturgy). Ponder upon this and write to your mentor your perception of the nature of those “little children”.
3. Read the Second Lesson of Good Friday and ponder upon the passage: The Son of Man must suffer, etc., to completion of lesson. Let your mentor know what you perceived.