

**THE COLLECTED  
WORKS OF  
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**Volume Seven**

**The Conquest Of Anxiety**

## Chapter One

We are going to examine a way of approach to the problem of fear and anxiety from the viewpoint of ideas implicit in the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Some thinkers distinguish between these two mental states by defining fear as a condition in which a living being anticipates a possibility of some rationally definable harm or damage to itself, or to something in which it has an interest. For example, a mother driving her child to school may become involved in a situation in which an accident may occur, and in this situation might experience fear for her own safety, but also for the safety of her child, for whom she is naturally concerned. In contrast with a rationally defined fear, a state of anxiety is then defined as one in which a living being anticipates harm or damage but without being able to define rationally the nature of this possibility.

Other thinkers distinguish two kinds of anxiety, a specific anxiety in which one anticipates some known definable damage, and a general anxiety in which a feeling of apprehension or anticipation of harm is not accompanied by any clear idea of the source or nature of the harm.

It is useful to distinguish between two kinds of anticipation of harm, one the nature of which is clearly definable, the other whose nature is not. An example of the clearly definable kind of harm can be seen when one perhaps drops a heavy object upon one's foot. An example of the indefinable is when a person is moving in the dark in an unfamiliar territory in which no idea of the particular kind of harm one might suffer is present.

Some psychologists believe that if an anxiety remains undefined in its form, then it is very difficult or even impossible to eliminate it. But if the cause of the anxiety can be located and defined, it is converted into what is called an *objective* fear, that is, a fear of some known defined object or event or situation. The location and definition of the anxiety cause is then viewed as part of the process of psychotherapy, of whatever kind this may be.

If we observe carefully the behaviour of living beings, animal or human, we are soon led to believe that anxiety of some kind is always in some degree present. Everywhere we see animals and human beings ready to take avoiding action when presented with any possibility of damage, harm, or impedance. This readiness demonstrates the presence at some level of the anticipation of possible harm, that is, of anxiety.

If we were to view the human being as merely an animal, though of great complexity, and an animal as merely a certain kind of material organism, with no spiritual significance, then we would have to say that an anxiety state is nothing but a manifestation of certain reactions of the material organism to certain kinds of material conditions or stimuli. This is the usual view of materialists.

But we are not all materialists. Even in the twentieth century, with its great emphasis on the successes of materialistic science, there are still millions of human

beings who do not think of themselves as merely material organisms, but as spiritual beings, although incarnate in physical bodies.

For those who believe themselves to be essentially spiritual beings, the problem of fear and anxiety takes on a different aspect. No longer are these states viewed as merely the reactions of material organisms to material situational stimuli. Rather they are seen as spiritual and psychological problems.

A materialist who does not believe that he is anything other than a particular grouping of material particles, atoms, molecules and so on, has no psychological or spiritual problems because, according to his own position, he has no soul or spirit. Thus a materialist cannot logically be worried or anxious about his relationship to infinity, to eternity, to soul, spirit or God. A materialist, from his own viewpoint, is a merely temporal being, a group of material particles, assembled at conception and due for disintegration at death. He is like a senseless puppet manipulated by merely material forces, for a while to "strut his hour or two upon the stage" of this world, only finally to fall apart and his particles to be scattered throughout space, to mix or not mix at some time with others. His coming to be, and his disintegration, have no ultimate significance. On his own view the materialist might just as well never have come into existence.

But the human being who sees himself as a spiritual being ensouled in a physical body has a very good reason for his anxiety: he has his relationship to God to consider. His existence in time is not his only existence. He is also *a dweller in eternity*. He has not merely his physical, material welfare to consider; he has also the problem of the relation of his soul to the divine Spirit, a problem of infinite importance.

Let us now leave the naive materialist to experience the results of his chosen viewpoint and confine ourselves to the consideration of the position of those of us who believe that we are not mere aggregations of material particles, but spiritual beings required for a time to experience the hazards of life in a physical body for a definite developmental reason.

A human being is a special kind of being, a being distinguished from other living beings by *his power to consider the problem of his own origin*. We do not find other living beings studying and writing books about the source of the universe, about the origins of life.

Animals live their lives struggling for survival, seeking food, striving to reproduce themselves, and always conditioned by pleasures and pains to act in certain well-defined ways. They do not show any evidence of anxiety about their origin, but show concern only about how to continue their lives as long as possible on earth, or within their natural material environment.

Spiritually minded human beings, however, are concerned about their origin and their ultimate goal, the Alpha and Omega of their being. This concern is a kind of anxiety, and an anticipation of possible failure to attain the goal. Let us look a little at the present condition of most human beings as reflected in the general state of affairs in the world. Every news bulletin brings us new information of new acts of violence, new military actions, new political take-overs. The daily news does not

give us examples of new harmonies in an unimpeded, universally welcoming world. It appears from the evidence that the human race is sick.

For a materialist this sickness is merely a disarray of material particles, but for the spiritually-minded human being there is another explanation of the plight of the world's population. Mankind has misused its most valuable gift, the gift of freedom, conferred upon it by the divine Spirit.

This misuse is the source of most human anxiety. Human freedom implies human responsibility. A materialist can disclaim responsibility on the grounds that he is only an aggregate of material particles patterned and driven by accidental collisions with other aggregates over which he has no control. This disclaiming of personal responsibility is the reason most materialists *are* materialists. The pure materialist, on his own view, *cannot* be responsible for actions, for freedom is not a part of his view of himself; thus he has no moral or ethical nature to be called to account. But it is otherwise with the spiritually- minded man

Spirit implies freedom of choice, and freedom of choice implies self-responsibility. But for the man who has this gift of choice there is danger, for he lives in a world in which not everyone has respect for freedom. When Herod heard that the King of Freedom was to be born, he at once ordered the slaughter of all male children in the territory where the King was to appear. The first experience of this world given to Jesus was an attempt on His life. And not only Herod was a hater of human freedom.

Today we see everywhere in the world a battle being fought. One army uses physical force wherever it can to suppress freedom. The other uses the "sword of the mouth", spoken truth, to defend itself. The weapons of this world are weapons of violence; the weapons of the world of the spirit are simple truths, simply spoken. Here is occasion for human concern, a situation in which anxiety is inevitable *unless we climb to the highest reaches of the divine Spirit.*

The spiritual man is in danger in many ways, but most of all he is today in danger of losing his belief in his own freedom of choice. He is surrounded by organisations which aim to suppress the very idea of freedom. And not least among these enemies of freedom are those groups of thinkers who believe that freedom is a myth, that human beings are only complex machines, that choice is an illusion produced by a brain that itself is but a machine that cannot help throwing up, amongst its other products, errors of thought, amongst which the idea of freedom is declared to be one.

But it is not only external organisations and groups that are the enemies of freedom. There are also inner enemies, of which two are chief; preference for pleasure over pain, and inertia.

Inertia is defined as the tendency for any kind of action to continue unless acted upon by some external force which can change the mode of action. All fixed habit-patterns come under the heading of inertia, and we all know how hard to break are long standing habits.

Preference for pleasure over pain seems at first glance to be a good thing, but if we

look at it a little more closely we can see that this preference can, under certain circumstances, lead to trouble. Any fish caught on the hook by the bait that concealed it can serve as a lesson for us. The world is full of "hook situations" carefully concealed by bait of various kinds. Here is another occasion for anxiety. We are offered things in attractive wrappers, which, when the wrapper is off, prove themselves of no use to us, and sometimes might do us harm.

And pain itself, or the threat of it, may be merely a way of intimidating the unthinking person. In the ancient world figures of great monsters were carved and set up at the city gates, or at the entrances to tombs filled with precious things, with gold and jewels. These monsters inspired fear in the minds of unenlightened beholders, and so kept safe the tombs' treasures. Some of these monsters, witnessed by our ancestors, have left traces or imprints of themselves in our minds, still strong enough to charge some of our dreams with anxiety and fear.

Somehow, if we are to conquer anxiety, we must re-evaluate our ideas about pleasure and pain and what they may mean in any given situation. We must teach ourselves to distinguish between "hook" situations covered with pleasure-giving bait, and the situations in which real happiness is possible. And we must learn to distinguish false "monsters" of stone or fabricated frightening ideas, from really dangerous beings who might have power to do us real harm. "Fear not those who can harm the body, but after that have no more that they can do; but fear those who can harm the soul."

We know how the physical body can be harmed; by breaking its bones, cutting, crushing or bruising its tissues and organs, or by poisoning it, etc. How can we harm the soul?

## Chapter Two

A soul may be harmed by the destruction of its belief in its essential spirituality, for this spirituality is its freedom. To undermine a soul's confidence in its spiritual origin is to cast doubt upon the whole meaning of its existence. Any idea that, once inserted into the human mind, can destroy the soul's faith in its own eternity, its divine origin, has put into that soul the most unprofitable of all anxieties and fears; the fear that perhaps God and Truth and Eternal Life and Universal Love are mere fictions of a badly put-together mechanical brain, itself but an accidental falling into temporary relation of a merely material aggregate of atomic particles, senseless and destined at some point in time and space for disintegration.

Much has been made by materialists of the statement by Friedrich Nietzsche, the famous German philosopher, that "God is dead". But little has been said of the life processes and experiences by which the great philosopher came to formulate this short sentence, the meaning of which when fully understood imposes the greatest strain on those who accept it. For, as Nietzsche said, "If God is dead, it is man's duty to take His place." The man who believes that God is dead, or that there is no God, places himself in the position of having to design for himself a life worthy of living. If there were no God, then man himself would have to undertake to make his own life meaningful, to live in such a way that he could bear to stand before the mirror of his mind and say to himself, "God is dead, or does not exist, but I exist, so all is well with the world". Such a man would be a rarity beyond grasp, or a conceited fool, or a madman.

Nietzsche himself finished his life as a mentally broken man, his balance of mind destroyed, but not by conceit and unintelligent pride. He well knew the colossal magnitude of his statement, and was deeply torn by its implications for mankind. As a young man of twenty years of age he had thanked God for watching over his early progress through the world. He had said, "To Him, to whom I owe almost everything, do I offer the first fruits of my gratitude; what else can I offer Him but the fervent adoration of my heart, which feels more than ever the warmth of His Love, the love to which I owe this happiest hour of my existence. May God always have me in His keeping."

But Nietzsche, brought up in a Protestant family in the 19th century, believed that there was "perfect harmony between a religious faith and an entirely independent science", so that he could search without fear for "truth". Holding this belief the young philosopher-to-be could accept the love of truth as a guiding principle of his whole life. At that time he could see clearly the direction in which the love of *scientific* truth would lead him.

Gradually he found the belief in the harmony of religion and science leaving him. By 1862, the year after his confirmation, he began to think of "venturing on the sea of doubt", and from this time came to believe that Christianity rested only on guesswork.

Once the young thinker had decided on a course of doubt, he had presented himself with the idea that was finally to lead to his breakdown. "It is easy to destroy, but after that one must build!" he wrote.

The mind in doubt has no true unity. Once his belief in God has been seen as based on mere guesswork, the problem was raised of what to put in God's place. Nietzsche's answer was fantastically brave; man himself must take God's place. But the strain of this courageous solution proved too much for his delicate body and fine soul.

To retain health, sanity and unity of mind, a human being must have an

unshakeable central belief. Armed with this idea he can face reality and live his life without drowning in the sea of anxiety which threatens to engulf him. What is this unshakeable idea?

Christ gives us this idea when He tells us to pray, "Our Father which art in Heaven.....". The word "Father" means "Generative Power". The whole universe around us is a manifestation of power, an expression of an indestructible energy which by its very nature can never cease to be. Energy may change its form, but itself can never be destroyed, never annihilated.

Everything in the universe, including our own being, is an expression of power, a play of energy which assumes innumerable forms, mineral, vegetable, animal, human and superhuman. This power is infinite and indestructible, and mysteriously it is also intelligent. Whatever we think of within our minds as intelligent is but an activity of this power. When we reason, it is this power which reasons in us. When we love it is this power which loves in us. Fully to realise that this *must* be so is the first step towards the conquest of anxiety.

If the infinite power that is the source of the universe is intelligent, sensitive, and capable of love, what is the origin of anxiety and fear?

This power, which Jesus calls, "Our Father", has a will to manifest, and a plan. Within this willed plan is a place for mankind, a place for each unshakeable central belief. He must have an idea which is unshakeable. Armed with this idea he can face reality and individual human soul. In order to further this plan, God, Our Father, our Generative Power, has willed freedom for each one of us, for each soul's own will.

But freedom involves some degree of separation. We cannot be free to will individually unless we are somehow given space around us in which to move. To give us this space, our souls must be separated from each other, must be placed in some kind of separate container. These containers are what we call our "bodies". By breathing our souls into our separate bodies our Generative Power, God, has given us the opportunity of free movement in space.

But there is a certain logic resultant of being placed inside a container, inside our bodies. A body has an inside, bound by a containing skin, beyond which is space, in which other bodies may exist and move. Without such a bounding skin or integument, "bodies" would not exist. With such a binding skin, bodies can exist in separativity from each other. But bound by their skins, bodies can move about in space, can contact each other, and may collide, may strike each other. From such a simple fact, that separate bodies exist in space, and may touch each other, gently or violently, or may be dissolved in space, as when a dead body corrupts after death, from this arises all our anxiety and fear.

We may think of what might happen to our bodies under two simple headings; our bodies might be damaged either by action of something on them from outside, or inside; or our bodies might dissolve in space, disintegrate and vanish.

Damage may come from outside, either by some form of violence, or by invasion of some disease-causing germs, bacteria or viruses which may enter through a break in the skin, or be carried in the air we breathe, or in the liquids we drink, or the foods we eat. Damage may also arise from some failure of our inner processes, the development of faulty action in our organs, causing disease from within. All these possibilities may cause anxiety and fear. But the second possibility, that our bodies might dissolve, corrupt, fall apart and vanish away, may also cause anxiety, and not merely because if they do we shall be "dead". There is another, more important cause of this anxiety.

When a soul enters into incarnation into its body, this body serves as a very important centre of reference for the soul. Without a body on which to fasten its attention, a

soul, until it has completed its education, is very unstable, very insecure. This fact is one of the implications of the Incarnation of Christ, the deliberate embodiment of the Divine Power in matter, in a material body on earth.

Let us imagine the condition of a soul when it is not tightly fixed on a body. We have some idea of this from our experience during sleep, when we dream. In a bad dream often nothing seems stable, sure, certain. The images that float through our mind do not have the same sharp edges as the physical bodies we see in our waking state. They are often blurred, indistinct, changeable, confusing and somehow tinged with feeling or emotion. They may bring anxiety with them as a kind of aura, or a thin filmy garment in which the images are dressed, or as a fine energy permeating the dream itself.

This dream-condition into which the soul enters during sleep gives us a good example of the state of the soul when it is not firmly fixed to the physical body. But as long as we live we can, after dreaming, wake up to the surety of our physical body, and to the apparent stability of the material world.

Let us now accept that the soul is indestructible in itself, that it is a portion of the Divine Spirit, and so eternal. What would be its condition if it were to be deprived totally of a body to which it could refer for self-assurance, self-stabilisation? Its condition would be similar to that in the dream state, but with no possibility of returning to the security of a physical body. Such a soul would experience what we call *primary anxiety*, or *original anxiety*.

Now this original anxiety is the anxiety experienced by the soul when it begins to believe that it may have to stay in a suspended state, with no possibility of attaining to a worthwhile incarnation or embodiment. We must notice that there are two kinds of anxiety here; anxiety that the soul experiences when it feels that it cannot gain incarnation at all; and anxiety that if it does enter into embodiment, that body it enters may somehow be a wrong one, an unfitting one for the attainment of the soul's purpose.

In the first case, when the soul feels that it cannot ever gain a body in which to incarnate, its feeling is of an unbearable despair; for it feels that if it could gain a body, it could somehow develop itself and realise the full potential of its being. But it feels also that the gaining of the needed body is impossible. The experience of these two ideas is one of disparity, which is felt psychologically as despair.

In the second case, the soul is afraid that if it should be able to enter into a body, this body might be the wrong one for the soul's development, might be such a body that if its whole lifetime were spent in that body, then the soul would undergo terrible frustrations of its will which it would have to endure during the whole of its earth life, until death released it. Again the disparity between the two possibilities would produce the feeling of despair.

The way out of both these kinds of despair consists in finding a centre of reference for the soul which is not merely physical, not merely material. The key to this is expressed in the words "Christ my Anchor". But before we examine this we will first consider the conditions which the soul needs before it will be able to understand these words, make their meaning its own, and take advantage of them.

## Chapter Three

To the observant eye the human soul shows everywhere its anxious condition, no matter how carefully it may try to conceal it. The whole human race swims, or drowns, in a vast sea of anxiety. The existence of insurance companies, which offer protection against most of the hazards of life, bears witness to this, and everywhere we see other evidences of mankind's anxious condition. A million methods of distracting our attention from this condition are offered by entertainments presented on television, radio, and theatre, and by sports, holidays, and so on. Everywhere we are offered escape from the contemplation of the real human situation.

We have fallen into the great ocean of anxiety. How we fell into it is told in the Book of Genesis. We fell with our first ancestors' disobedience of God's command; "Do not eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil". Our first ancestors ate of this fruit and fell. We are eating the fruits of their failure to understand why God gave that mysterious command.

Man's understanding is limited by his sense impressions, and the reasons he bases on these. He is not equipped to know what is for his ultimate benefit. He cannot tell what finally will be good or evil for him. So far he has tended to view pain as an evil and pleasure as a good. We have seen that bait can hide a hook, that the fierce monster guarding the hidden treasure may be only a lifeless stone figure. We need to realise that our life must be based on something other than desire to gain pleasure and avoid pain. We need faith that God has a purpose for us which might require us for a time to face certain unpleasant facts and to forego situations that seem to offer pleasure.

The fact is that the pursuit of pleasure and the attempt to avoid pain often result in failure, and where there is a degree of success it is seldom complete. When it is complete the gain is often followed by a loss. Even if we could guarantee permanent pleasure and permanent freedom from pain, we would not necessarily gain in depth of soul or character. The merely pleasure-filled life does not encourage one to desire self-control, self-responsibility. Total freedom from pain might easily lead to thoughtlessness and unawareness of higher human values. The little child who runs without thought through the grass may bark his shins against a concealed rock and be brought suddenly to self-awareness.

This self-awareness, first produced by a pain, may be the beginning of the generation of an individual with unique characteristics, products of thoughts which but for the pain might never have arisen. Pleasure tends to de-individuate us. Pain makes us self-aware.

Before God's first act of creation, the energy which now constitutes our being was in an uncreated state; it had no fixed centre and no clearly marked circumference. It was not truly individuated; it did not know itself reflexively for what it was. Today most human beings have some degree of self-knowledge and reflexive awareness, because the ancestors of mankind have *suffered* in some way that has forced them into selfconsciousness. The Jews are a very individuated people because they have suffered centuries of persecution and painful dispossession.

These are the conditions that the soul needs to make itself aware of before it can understand the meaning of the words, "Christ my anchor". The human race has disobeyed the principles of life laid down by the Lord of the Universe. As a result of this disobedience it has plunged itself deeper and deeper into error. It has displaced the service of truth and the freedom of the will with enslavement to lies and bondage, to the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. In consequence of this deepening error man has become more and more a servant of the external material world and the things in it. He has lost his awareness of his own personal freedom, and with it has lost belief in the reality of his own soul.

Masses of people today have lost faith in the value of their own being. They have accepted the theories of mechanistic behaviourists as truths. They view themselves as the materialists wish them to, as machines energised by calories as motorcars are energised by petrol. They no longer look beyond the outer things of the material world for their salvation. They consider themselves nearly saved if they own their own house and the mortgage is not too high, and they have a refrigerator and dishwasher and a respectable car; *nearly* saved, but not quite. For at the back of their minds is a disquiet; not clearly defined as such, but still there, disturbing the depths of their minds during the day and their soul's quietness at night.

Why do they feel *nearly* saved, these house owning, car-driving people? Because the owning of material things is not the final purpose of human existence. Material possessions have their place in a civilised community, but they are not man's final goal. And there is the fact, finally, of death. "It is appointed for man once to die, and after that the judgment."

A materialist who thinks of himself only as a kind of machine that gradually wears out and one day stops running, never to move again, has nothing to worry about after death. On his own hypothesis, he will not be there to worry, annihilation is his final lot. But a man who thinks more deeply, and knows that energy cannot be annihilated but can change only its *form*, may have reason to consider the condition of this energy which has constituted his very being in life, as it will be after death. Survival of the constituent energies of his being in some form is certain. The question is raised: in what form will he survive? Will he know himself as himself? Will he be able to take hold of his constituent energies and hold them together after death as he did in life? Or will he be unable to stop a process of disintegration that might finally result in the complete dissembling of his mind and all that in life he has centred upon? And what will be the condition of his soul if he has lost the reference centre that served in life to give unity to his consciousness?

For secure survival of physical death we must have an unshakeable belief. We must believe that the source-energy, the basis power of all reality, has at heart the welfare of all its creation. We must believe that this source-power is intelligent and loving, and that it has a plan for us. This belief is the first step to the conquering of anxiety. We call this source-power "Our Heavenly Father" because "Father" means generative power, and "Heaven" means the balance of power. It is this source-power, our Heavenly Father, who holds in His hands the destiny of all creatures, who is the origin of the certainty of our eternal survival.

God, our Father, the generative power of universal being and source of our

souls, has a plan, a purpose, which He intends to realise in us. He intends to bring us to realise the divine power which He has placed in our innermost centre, the divine power which is the source of our freedom.

But we cannot know ourselves to be free unless we are placed in a position in which we have to choose between alternatives. Freedom can realise itself only in an act of choice. The alternatives offered to us are of two kinds: eternal and temporal. The eternal is unalterable Truth, the temporal is a changing form which tends to lead us away from this eternal Truth and involve us in an unstable, continually vanishing event. The temporal is a temptation which is aimed to seduce us away from the true centre of our being, wherein dwells our free will, into the false peripherality of the temporal, distracted mind.

God aims to lead men to realise their innermost power of free will. To do this He has placed men inside physical bodies and has given them space in which to move and choose. But in giving us this space and the bodies in which to move, He has placed us in a situation in which we may collide with each other, a situation in which our purposes may conflict, a situation in which we may make war on each other. We live in a world in which free choices may be made between alternative courses of action. We may love and help each other to live; or we may hate and strive to destroy whatever possibilities of life we have.

Before creation the energies which now constitute our being were not bound together as they are now. They experienced themselves as uneasy zones of awareness, not yet as formed being. Their anxiety was of the kind that arises within a zone of awareness which is not yet sure of its own possibility of existence, and also not sure that if it should gain existence it would do so in the way it desires. This is pre-creational anxiety.

But after creation, when these energies have gained a sufficient degree of self-awareness, as they have in human beings, the form of their anxiety changes. Now it is a question of survival within our bodies whilst we are living in them, and survival in our souls when we meet death. We have a fear of possible destruction of our bodies whilst living on earth, and we are anxious about the possible destruction of our souls after death.

What is destruction? It is *un-structuring*, the un-building of any being that has been built. Our physical body is built of packets of energy. Our mind is built of systems of ideas, derived from perceptions gained from our senses and placed in some kind of order by our reason.

A structure is needed to provide a stable reference centre for our awareness. We need either a physically stable body, or a stable system of true ideas on which to centre our ideas. Our physical body is our first stable reference centre in the process. The second stable reference centre we gain is a system of true ideas. Untrue ideas are not inherently stable, for they do not fit together correctly, and what does not fit properly together is doomed at some time to fall apart. All untruth is destined for disintegration.

Because some system of true ideas is needed to maintain a soul in balance,

and because untrue ideas must finally disintegrate, the soul that aims at survival after death must learn to discriminate between truth and falsity.

The death of the physical body is called the "first death". The disintegration of a soul's reference system of ideas is called the "second death". Those who understand the meaning of "Christ my anchor" shall not be hurt of the second death.

Because the first stable reference of consciousness is our physical body, Jesus Christ incarnated, God became man, to teach us not to under-value, not to scorn our physical body. If the physical body had not a use, Christ would not have incarnated in one. The thing we think of as our lowest part, the physical body, is the key to gaining and stabilising of our highest part, our spirit. In order to realise consciously our spiritual freedom, we must first be embodied in a physical vehicle. We must be "born of water and of spirit". Water is the Bible symbol of plastic substance and fire is the symbol of free will, the power of initiatory activity. Thus water symbolises our physical body and our birth into time, and fire symbolizes our spiritual body and our birth into eternity.

## Chapter Four

To understand fully the meaning of "Christ my Anchor" we must remember His two-fold nature. He is an eternal spiritual being, and He was born into the world of matter and time as a human being in a physical body. As an eternal spiritual being His symbol is Fire, which signifies active energy, the energy of the free will which is able to initiate action *immediately*, without being slowed down by the inertia of previously established patterns of behaviour. We see how fire leaps with its flames to consume the fuel it needs for its continuance. We talk about a person being suddenly *fired with enthusiasm*. When we become really interested in something we find that our interest raises our temperature. There is a real connection between life, interest and warmth. We talk about the "fires of life", and in the moments of sudden interest feel warming energy coursing through our body.

Fire, then, has from the earliest times of history been the symbol of spiritual life, that life which has no inertia, but springs at once in the moment of decision into action. To be "born of fire" is to become capable of immediate and intelligent response.

Water has always been the symbol of material plasticity, the symbol of substance that can be modeled, that can take any shape, as a fluid takes the shape of any vessel into which we may pour it. To be "born of water" is to be born into a physical body, as a living being, in the material world.

The very substance of living beings, vegetable, animal or human, is composed chiefly of water. This substance is called protoplasm, which means "first plastic substance". We begin our life in the physical world as a tiny sphere of protoplasm which is nearly all water, with minute amounts of certain chemical substances in it. This tiny sphere is the egg or ovum from which all living beings develop. The "birth into water" is the entry into protoplasmic existence. Without this birth we would not be able to develop the physical body in which we gain our experience of life on earth. Without this experience we would not disclose to ourselves our real nature.

We can talk symbolically of our "fire-body" and our "water-body". Our "fire-body" is our spiritual body, and our "water-body" is our physical body. Our fire-body is the mass of vital energy which is self-initiating, self-mobilising. It is that in us which allows us to change what we are doing, without having laboriously to work out a course of action. It is the source of our *initiation*, Christ's power in us that can leap like a flame at once to a truth. There is no inertia, no heaviness in our fire-body. It is essentially vital, immediately responsive to every life-situation. By means of our fire-body, our spiritual self, we are able to respond to any demand made upon us in a real life survival situation. It is this spiritual fire-body which makes us leap at once out of danger when anything happens to endanger our life.

Our water-body, our physical life, is quite different from that of our spiritual fire-body. Whilst our fire-body is ready to leap into action at every moment to preserve our life, our water-body, which we call our fleshly body, is not characterised by this every-ready immediacy of the spirit body. Our physical life

water-body tends towards pleasure, towards "taking things easily", towards "la dolce vita", the sweet life.

From this difference between the two bodies we can understand why we are told that the fleshly life and the life of the spirit are often at war. The spiritual life is a life that prefers freedom, the fleshly life is a life that prefers pleasure, and for pleasure is prepared to give up its freedom.

This appears to be a very strange association, for inside the same being we find two totally opposed tendencies, one towards freedom and the shaking off of bondage, and one towards pleasurable self-indulgence, with no regard for freedom as such, as long as pleasure can be attained. Why should two opposing tendencies be held within the same organism?

Between the desire for pleasure and the will to freedom is generated a certain kind of tension. This tension has a very special function. Without it we could never become a truly individuated being. It is this tension that makes us realise that we are individuals. Let us examine an elastic band lying on a desk, limply, unstretched. Let us imagine that this elastic band has a power to feel its own state, that it is sentient. How does it experience itself? We must say that it feels slack, hardly self-aware at all. Let us now imagine that we stretch this band and put it over two pegs so that it is held in a state of tension. How does it feel in this state? It feels *more conscious of itself*, has *more self-awareness*.

What is the use of increased self-awareness to a living being? It increases the probability of survival, not only in the physical world, but in the spiritual world also. If we are able to generate sufficient self-awareness during our physical, earthly life, we shall be better able to retain this self-awareness after our life has ended and we have left our physical body. Here is where we really see the value of Jesus Christ for us, and for survival in this world and the next. The fact is that He, an eternal Spiritual Being, entered into a material physical body, a wholly free being entered into the bondage of the material world. To understand why He did this we have to gain some insight into the meaning of Adam's fall, and of our own tendencies to repeat this fall.

First, we must remember that as human beings we are the possessors of a dual nature, we are double in construction. We have a physical body of flesh which we enter in the "birth of water", where we live, first inside a water-filled bag or sac inside our mother, and after birth, inside our water-filled skin, as a protoplasmic being in the outer world; and we have a spiritual body, a very fine body of free energy by means of which we are able to participate in the spiritual life of God.

Secondly we are to remember that by His entry into the material world, into physical embodiment, Jesus Christ showed us how to rescue ourselves from the tendency to repeat Adam's Fall.

This Fall is a fall into *identification* with our physical body, our fleshly, pleasure-seeking nature. When we become fully identified with this physical body we become enslaved by it. Its pleasure-seeking and pain-avoiding tendencies bind us ever more closely into our physical body, until finally we come to believe ourselves merely physical. Then all memory of our true spiritual nature fades away, until at last we

become totally unbelieving. Then "spirit" becomes for us a word of no significance in relation to our being as we know it. We come more and more to believe ourselves merely material beings whose bodies are subject wholly to the laws of nature. This is the point where we fall easily into accepting statements of materialistic scientists who view the human being merely as some kind of complex machine, subjected to machine laws.

If we sink into this materialistic identification, we become more and more ready to be treated as machines. We expect from ourselves nothing more than we could expect from a machine. This is a strange, contradictory state of being, for on the one hand we believe ourselves to be merely complex machines, and on the other hand we actually experience ourselves as pleasure-seeking, pain-avoiding beings. And seldom do we ask ourselves the questions: If we are merely machines, why do we feel pleasure and pain? And if we feel pleasure and pain, why do we believe we are merely machines?

As long as we view ourselves as pleasure seekers, we are trapped by the particular conditions under which we gain pleasure. If we view ourselves as pain-avoiders, we find ourselves driven far away from anything that might cause us pain. If we accept the so-called "scientific" view of materialistic thinkers, we behave as if we were machines governed by mechanical laws. Then we lose awareness of the freedom that stands at the true centre of our souls.

But Jesus Christ, by His incarnation in a physical body, and His conquest of the tendencies of the fleshly life, showed us that we do not have to fall into identification with the things of the material world. We do not have to view ourselves as mere pleasure-seekers and pain-avoiders, nor as mere machines obeying mechanical laws. Nor do we have to forget that we are really spiritual beings whose very essence is freedom.

Jesus Christ is our Anchor. By His victory over the temptations of the fleshly body, and over the desire for power over other things, and over the mechanical reactivity of the material part of His being, He showed us that victory over the flesh, and over the world of matter and time, is possible. We do not have to be enslaved by pleasure-seeking tendencies. We do not have to be intimidated by our pain-avoiding tendencies. We do not have to think of ourselves as slaves of material, mechanical laws.

Jesus Christ gives us a picture in our mind of a special kind of man. This picture can serve to remind us of the possibility of spiritual freedom. It is a picture of the Anchor-Man, the Man who has anchored Himself by His will to the will of God, a will which says that every man's essence is free, and that this freedom can be realised by every man who takes Christ as his Anchor.

Another symbol of Jesus Christ is a Fish. We swim in an ocean of anxiety, and need this Fish symbol to remind us of the fact that in the middle of this ocean, in the middle of all our anxieties, we can learn to swim. We can learn to see life as Jesus Christ sees it, as a situation in which we are surrounded by instabilities and yet can stabilise ourselves, as a fish stabilises itself in the midst of the ever-changing, ever contrary-flowing waters of the ocean.

That life goes up and down, that there are waves on the ocean of life, that the situations in which we find ourselves continuously change, that our condition is never for very long the same, is something we all know. But that we tend to think it should be otherwise is also something we all know. Yet Jesus tells us by His life that it is better for us to be wary of thinking that something *should* be other than it is. We have to learn first to accept what is, and then we shall become able to respond profitably to it. A sailor who goes to sea does not expect it to remain flat and calm; he gains what he calls his "sea-legs".

## Chapter Five

Acceptance of reality is the first pre-condition of being able to deal efficiently with it. But what is reality? It is the totality of the things and events and relationships within the universe. But this totality is too much for any created being to deal with in its wholeness. No merely human being can understand the whole of reality. It is far, far too vast for a mere man's intelligence to grasp. What, then, are we to do?

Although the tremendous stretch of the universe is beyond our comprehension, beyond even our imagination, there is something that we can do to bring ourselves into an adequate relationship with reality. We can accept that we do not know the whole of reality, and that therefore we are in need of help in dealing with it. It is here that we encounter the meaning of Christ for us: He is our helper, He is our sword and shield, He is our anchor. By His sacrifice He anchored Himself in Eternal Reality. By our belief in His sacrifice we anchor ourselves in Him. By His Word of Universal Truth we shield ourselves against attacks of the untruth of our enemies. By His everlasting Will to teach God's Law of Love to us we are given a spiritual sword with which to spread this law.

What does Christ say that we are to do with the vast universe that surrounds us? How are we to relate to its innumerable demands? We are to deal with it moment by moment. We are not to try to grasp more of it than is each instant within our power. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Why should it be sufficient for us only to deal with the little area of the great universe in which we find ourselves? Because God is not concerned with the width of our activities, but with the focus of our *Will*. He is not concerned with the *quantity* of our deeds, but with their *quality*. And quality depends on the *state of our will*, the condition of our innermost heart, the deepest *motivation* of our acts.

We have here a very important idea: that the vastness of reality, the innumerableness of the things of the universe, is not what God requires us to deal with. What God wants us to relate to is the state of our heart, whether it be *a loving* heart or not. A hating heart, a will saturated in enmity and hate, is not what God wills for us.

Each moment of our life is a moment in which we turn our will in one direction or another. Our life is nothing but a series of *moments of will*, and in each moment our will gives to itself a direction, sets itself a goal to realise, a kind of relationship to establish with some portion of reality. And this kind of relationship must be one either of love or hate.

Hate and Love are states of our Will. Our deepest will is the centre of our secret heart. In this centre we have an *attitude to reality*, and this attitude determines what will befall us. This attitude is what God is looking at in us. God searches our heart, and according to what He finds there, so He leads us into the path appropriate for us. If our heart is in love with God's Truth, He leads us in a special way to realise it. If our heart is afraid of God's Truth in case it should disallow the

gaining of some private advantage, God leads us along another path for our correction.

We have the promise of Christ that if we love God we have perfect assurance that He will lead us in the direction in which His love is moving. His love will carry us upwards towards greater relationship with him. Now, if we love God, we are in God's love, and this love empowers us to see reality in a special way. God *is* love, the infinite, mysterious power that has brought the universe into being. Nothing that is in existence can continue to exist without the supporting power of divine love. If we have love in our hearts, our understanding is opened and we see what is the meaning of love.

Love is the infinite power of God that works incessantly *to bring all being into its own state*. Divine Love is the will for the development of all harmonious possibilities of being. It wills to bring all creatures into its own condition, so that they, too, can love in the same way. When we accept that this is Love and that love is working for the propagation of itself, a door of understanding begins to open inside our minds. We begin to understand why it is that "perfect love casts out fear."

Fear is born of pain. But pain may be seen as of two kinds: pain imposed on us from outside ourselves, without our will; and pain to which we submit ourselves by act of will in order to fulfill some purpose. The pain suffered by Jesus on the Cross was of the second kind. It has endured purposefully in order to rescue mankind from a condition of slavery, a slavery resulting from man's presumption that he was fit to define good and evil for himself.

When man fell, he did so by considering himself fit to be in possession of the mysteries of good and evil. But he had made an equation that the good was the pleasant, and the evil the painful. This is not always so, for there are times when pain is life-protective: pain in our bodies can tell us something in us is wrong and needs attention. The pains that accompany certain diseases are a warning. But the pain that arises from frustration of egotistic desires is of quite another kind. This pain tells us that we need to change our life-direction, that we have allowed our private purposes to blind us to the realities of the world situation.

Pleasure may arise from the contemplation of beautiful and good things, from the co-operative activities of our physical bodies, from true communal inter-relationships. But it can arise also from certain kinds of stimuli of our nerve endings which can enslave our intelligence, as we see in drug-addiction and alcoholism. Or it can arise from observing the downfall of persons we have defined as our enemies, this being a kind of pleasure which is very damaging to our souls. It is also possible for pleasure and pain to be inverted. We see this in cases of sadism, in which pleasure may be derived from inflicting pain on persons we love, or masochism, in which we may derive pleasure from suffering pain at the hands of our beloved ones or others.

The whole problem of the relationship between pleasure and pain and good and evil is so complex that it is extremely improbable that we will be able finally to resolve it. It is a mystery the solution of which God has reserved for Himself. This is why God gave to Adam the commandment that he should not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

What, then, are we to do about this problem? We are to accept what comes to us in the most intelligent way we can. We are to free ourselves from slavery to what is merely pleasant, and to strengthen our will to accept what pains we must suffer when these arise from conditions that we cannot yet control.

Especially we are to work to remove from our mind those tendencies which lead to our enjoying pains imposed on other persons. When we view ourselves as beings separated from each other, our minds tend to work in a defensive manner. We fall into a condition in which we may delight in the misfortunes of other persons whose aims do not receive our approval.

To delight in another's downfall is to expose ourselves to the fear that the other may take joy in *our* misfortunes. The human mind works in such a way that whatever it wills for others it must, consciously or unconsciously, expect for itself. Why should this be so?

Deep within our heart of hearts we know that all beings are somehow mysteriously inter-connected. In the moments of our most complete stillness we feel our essential oneness with all living beings, we know we spring all from one source.

This sense of oneness with all beings is really beyond argument, because if we had absolutely no common origin we would be totally unable to communicate with one another.

Once we accept that we are all participants in an original substance, we can begin to see that whatever we do must in some way affect the other beings who also participate in this same substance. We cannot insulate ourselves absolutely from one common source, and therefore we cannot totally separate ourselves from the other beings who originate from that source. Nor can they separate themselves from us. We are bound together in the reality of which we are all parts.

This being so, we would be quite unreasonable to think that we could be free from the effects that our own actions have on the other beings who partake of the universal power of which we are all an expression. All of us are like wavelets on a vast ocean. None of us can escape the effects of all the causes that operate in this ocean. We are co-operators, whether we like it or not, to good or evil.

Once we have seen the truth of this, we can see also that if we allow ourselves to work against other beings in a spirit of hate and fear, we shall be sowing the seeds of our own overthrow. The world is round; all things move in cycles and return to their source. "As we sow, so shall we reap." This is an unavoidable law.

Seeing this, we shall release from our heart's centre, from the depths of our innermost being, only those acts the necessary fruits of which we *will* to return to us. We are our own executioners. And we are also our own rewarders, in that we call down from our original source the unavoidable results of our deeds and intentions.

Christ has given us the Key: "Inasmuch as you do it to the least of these, you do it unto me". There is one source of all of us, one infinite God who is present in every atom of His creation, and who thus knows the most hidden intentions of our

secret wills.

Because this is so, we have only to bring our will into alignment with God's will to place ourselves within the protection of His all-pervading power. This is the only pre-condition to freeing ourselves from the anxiety that pervades the world of created beings. We have but to remember that whatever actions we do are done not only to the finite beings to whom we do them, but also to the Infinite God in whom we live and move and have our being. "Vengeance is mine", says God. "I will repay." It is not for us, with our so-meager knowledge of the forces acting in the world, to decide what punishments shall be meted out to those we consider to be offenders against God's Law. Our soul duty is to bring our will into God's Love, and to live and act from this love.

## Chapter Six

By His self-sacrifice in Golgotha, Jesus Christ anchored Himself in Eternal Reality. What is Eternal Reality? First, we are to understand that Eternity is not just unending time. Time is a process *within* Eternity. Eternity is an infinite "Here-Now". This is not an easy notion to grasp. Our mind is generally conditioned in its processes to think of things happening *one after another* in a sequence. It is this sequential, linear way of thinking that has given rise to the idea that Time stretches from what we call the "past", through what we call the "present", into what we call the "future". But "past", "present" and "future" are very mysterious. Some of the world's greatest philosophers have tried to disclose the secret of Time, and yet not given us a clear explanation of it.

Plato saw Time as the "moving image of Eternity". This can be a very fruitful way of thinking about Time and Eternity. Let us remind ourselves that God is omniscient, that He knows everything, and that He knows this "everything" in an infinite simultaneity, an unlimited "all-in-oneness". This "all-in-oneness" is the *Eternal Now*, an infinite Now that contains within itself all conceivable things, beings, events and relations, in one infinite wholeness.

But God is also omnipotent, all-powerful; and within His all-powerfulness He can not only see the totality of all possibilities of all things, He can also *focus* in a special way on any *particular* thing within the infinite totality. This capacity to focus upon particular things within His infinite possibilities is the cause of the appearance of Time. Time is the result of focusing attention first on one thing, then on another. We can illustrate this to ourselves in a very simple way.

If we hold up one of our hands at full arm stretch, our fingers extended and separated from each other, we can see the whole of our hand in one glance. We can see that our fingers and thumb stand up out of our palm; we can see the pattern of our hand, the way the fingers and thumb are related. We can do this in one glance, all at once. If we now bring our hand very close up to our eyes, we can converge our gaze and focus our attention on one finger. We then say that we "abstracted" one of our fingers from the total number of fingers that we have, by the simple act of focusing our attention upon it. If we concentrate very hard upon one finger, we can make ourselves "forget" about the others. This "forgetting" is very important for the generating of our "Time" consciousness.

We can focus all our attention by act of will onto our little finger, and "forget" the others. Then we can shift our focus onto our ring finger and "forget" the others, and so on. When we can do this exercise of shifting our focus of attention from one finger to another, "forgetting" the other fingers as we do so, we *generate Time*. We see things *one after another*.

We can see from this simple exercise that we have the capacity to see things "all at once", and also to see them separately, one after another. When we see things all at once we have a foretaste of what it means to be in *Eternity*. When we see things one after another we experience them as in *Time*. We then begin to see what it means to say that "Time is the moving image of Eternity".

Eternity is the infinity of things, beings, events and relationships, grasped in God's Mind all at once as one infinite whole pattern. For God this Eternity is an infinite actuality. For man on earth in his ordinary consciousness, it is *an idea of a possibility*. But if a man's mind is elevated by God's grace, as the mind of St. John was when he was "lifted up in the spirit", it becomes possible for him to experience something of what the infinite Now of Eternity is in itself.

This Infinite "Now" of Eternity is the *very presence of God Himself*, as He experiences Himself in Himself. This fact of the "presence" of God Himself means that His Eternal "Now" is also the Eternal "Here." The "Here" of God is His Eternal Presence of God to Himself. The "Now" of God is His Eternal immediacy, His instancy with Himself, His Eternal "Presentness" with Himself. It is inside this "Here-Now" instancy of God's Presence that we "live, move, and have our being". This is why "nothing can separate us from the love of God", for wherever we are, in whatever condition we are, we are always inside His Infinite Self Presence.

If this is so, and it is so, why do we ever believe that we can be cut off from God? It is because we ourselves cut ourselves off. How do we do this? By our own interest in the things, events, and relations of *Time*.

There is an interesting illustration of what Time may mean for us in the ancient myth of Saturn, a pagan god who was viewed as the personification of the Time-process. Saturn gave birth by means of his consort Rhea to all the beings that exist in time, and then devoured them. In Time we come into existence, and then Time devours us. This was the ancient view of the fact of the cycle of birth and death, through which all beings must go.

We have seen that when we view the parts of our experience separately in a linear sequence, we, by this fact, identify ourselves with the Time process. We look at each separate thing in a moment of time, for a particular length of time. We, for the time being, become enslaved by time. And if we are not careful, we forget that we are really children of Eternity. We forget the Eternal Presence of God, and fall into thinking only of the temporal facts of things. Finally, we lose all awareness of Eternity, which is our true home, and we behave like children of Time.

The mythic colour of Saturn is dark. When we fall into identification with the linear things of Time, our mind is darkened. We can no longer see the true pattern of things as they are in the Eternal Light of God. In pagan times, the opposite of Saturn was said to be Jupiter. "Jupiter" means DeoPater, God the Father.

Before Jesus Christ came on earth, the ancient prophets and seers had had some insights given to them about the nature of reality, to help them to prepare mankind for the coming of the Saviour. They had been allowed to see that man has a choice of how he will live his life, either as if he were a child of Saturn, a creature of Time, bound by Time's processes, or as if he were a child of Jupiter, a son of God, the true Father of all beings, a son of spiritual freedom. This choice is still today the one important choice that we must all face.

We must choose whether we will think of ourselves as simply mechanical

products of the Time-process, with no meaning beyond Time; or we must *know* that we are beings whose real origin is in the Eternal, beyond Time, in the infinite loving presence of God.

If we were really only Time-beings, we would have no possibility of knowing any eternal truths. We would know only the sequence of linear events of the fleeting moments of Time. We would be carried along remorselessly by the movement of Time, from our birth, with only chaos before it, to our death, with only chaos and annihilation after it.

But if we are beings of Eternity, we pre-exist our birth and post-exist our death. From God's Eternal Love we come, and back into God's Eternal Love we go. Time, for us, is just an interlude between the "out" and "in" doorways of Eternity.

What, then, does Time really mean for us? It is the period of our being in which we experience the possibilities of an infinite number of ways of being, but in a linear, sequential manner, a manner which allows us to look at each of our actions *separately*, in isolation, so that we can assess each action that we do *as it is in itself*, uncoloured by other possibilities.

This linear separation of our actions in Time is what is meant by "temptation". Temptation is *temporal presentation of action possibilities*. By temptation, that is, linear presentation of action possibilities, we are placed in a position where we have to *choose* what particular Time-actions we will do. We are put in a position where we shall have at some time to become conscious of our motivations. In time we are forced into motivational research on ourselves. This is the real purpose of God allowing the time process to continue, and when this purpose is finally fulfilled, "there will be time no more". Time will be "rolled up as a scroll" and cease. Only Eternity will reign.

If we can allow ourselves to see that the linear events of Time are but some of the infinite possibilities of Eternity, we shall be able to look more closely at the causes of our anxieties.

When we are anxious, we are anxious about something that we think or feel might happen that we do not want to happen. We are anxious about some painful event that might worsen our possibilities of life; or we are worried about some advantage our enemies might gain over us. In both cases we are concerned about events that might happen in Time. The anxious mind is a mind focused in Time. Such a mind is always painting pictures of undesirable events for itself. It is a mind always looking backwards or forwards, and not confining itself to the Here-Now present moment. It is a mind that cannot understand why Jesus Christ said, "Take no thought for the morrow". It is a mind that confuses Eternity with an ever-stretching line of Time. It is a mind incapable of understanding either Time or Eternity.

But fortunately we have another mind; the one we call the "higher mind", the mind that is not bound down to the temporal sequences of events, the mind that in certain moments of insight can intuit the real nature of Time and Eternity. And this higher mind is not anxious about tomorrow.

We have two minds, a linear thinking mind that experiences its ideas one after the

other, in sequence; and a pattern-comprehending mind that holds all its ideas in one instant grasp. The linear thinking mind is our Time mind. The pattern comprehending mind is our Eternal mind. These two minds act in quite different ways, and have quite different results from their actions. The Time mind is riddled with anxiety; the Eternal mind lives in quiet faith.

We can live our life in either of our two minds. If we choose to consider only the affairs of time, we thereby bind ourselves into the anxieties which are the natural accompaniments of time thinking. If we choose to live in the consciousness of Eternity, which we call the "Mind of Christ", then we are lifted above the anxieties of the Time process into the Eternal Presence of God. In this Presence our confidence is complete. We understand that in this "mind of Eternity" we are sharing with Christ the surety of God's Eternal Presence.

In this "Mind of Eternity" we comprehend the real meaning of the statement "Time is the moving image of Eternity". We realise that the sequence of time events is but an abstraction of some of the infinite possibilities of Eternity, presented to us separately so that we can test our motives, search the depths of our souls, find out what kind of beings we are willing to become. Then we can see Time as it really is, a limited period of testing given to each soul so that each soul may design for itself by its own choice what kind of being it will be in all Eternity.

## Chapter Seven

We are here in time to choose what kind of being we will to *become*. Finally, our being will be what the totality of our choices has made it. There is no escape from this. Each choice that we make changes our character in some way. *Character* is the result of our choices. As we choose we model ourselves, our bodies, minds and souls. Just as, if we repeatedly do a physical act, we predispose our body to become more able to do that act (as we see evidenced in the results of doing physical exercises), so if we repeatedly *think* in a certain way we predispose our mind to think more and more in this way.

We condition our physical body by doing certain physical actions. We condition our mind to think in certain ways by thinking in a certain manner. How do we condition our soul? By *feeling* about what we think and do, by *liking* and *disliking* what we think and do, or by allowing ourselves to be *indifferent* to our thoughts and actions.

Our soul is essentially *a feeling* being that takes attitudes of liking, disliking and indifference towards whatever it encounters. Of these three attitudes, that of indifference is strongly condemned in the Book of Revelation, where the Laodiceans are told, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth". So speaks God to the indifferent, the luke-warm. Why should God so view the indifferent?

When we are indifferent, our energy does not flow through our being as it should. Indifference is failure to *commit* ourselves to one course or another. When we commit ourselves to a course of action we *mobilise our energy*, we enliven ourselves, we vitalise our body and mind and soul. Whether we "blow hot", that is, feel intense interest towards something; or "blow cold", that is, feel a strong opposition to something, we live more intensely, we mobilise our spirit. Our life is on the way to greater abundance of experience, from which we *will learn* more about ourselves and about the world and everything in it.

But lukewarmness, indifference, does not vitalise us, does not mobilise our energies, does not enliven our spirit. Indifference persisted-in means loss of life-drive, loss of purpose. It is a first stage towards loss of the power to integrate ourselves, a first step towards corruption of being and failure to find a true centre of reference for our soul.

We sometimes hear people say that if God knows everything, then He knows every action that we are going to do. But to think this is to misunderstand God's purpose for mankind. Certainly God knows the infinity of action possibilities open to us, but He has given us, with His gift of the Spirit, a capacity for free choice, which He wills us to exercise. There are an infinity of ways that we may act, and all of these God knows, and He knows also the results of the following of any of these ways. But He has given us the power to *choose* which of these ways we shall take, which of these possibilities we shall activate. For God has a purpose for us. He wills us to become such as He Himself is. "Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect," says Jesus Christ.

But how can we possibly become perfect as God is? God is infinite, and we are but finite. He is the all-powerful Creator, and we are but creatures. Yet Christ would not command us to be something beyond our capacity to be. There must be some way in which the perfection of God is attainable by us. In what does God's perfection consist?

Firstly we must see that God is God because of a definite quality that He has, and that He *wills* for Himself. God is above all things self-consistent. Supreme self-consistency is the characteristic of God. From this self-consistency derives the equation "God is Love"; for self-consistency is the ground of Love. Without self-consistency God could not remember Himself, nor remember His sacred purpose for mankind.

In this *will to self-consistency* can we see a possibility that we might become like God? Yes, for our will to self-consistency is a possibility for us. Even if we make mistakes, even if we fail in practice to attain it, our will to self-consistency can remain with us, can be repeatedly reaffirmed by us. Failure or success is here not the important thing. The important thing is the *Will*. It is our *Will* that God will judge, not our actual performance. A man with immobilised limbs, perhaps paralysed by an accident or by disease, may be unable physically to move them. But this incapacity says nothing about the state of his *will*. If, in the very middle of his physical disability, he retains the *will* to live, the will to make some contribution to life, no matter how small, it is his *will* that God will judge him by, not his actual physical performance.

When we will in relationship to something, we choose a certain direction rather than another one for our soul to take. The possibility of choice is a property of the will. Will and choice are inseparably joined together. We cannot choose except by act of will. We cannot use our will without choosing something.

Each choice we make is based on a judgement that the chooser makes. "With what judgement ye judge, with that shall you be judged", says Christ. This means that when we judge, when we choose, we judge and choose ourselves to be the kind of being that makes such judgements, such choices. In judging and choosing, we *make* ourselves, we build our very being. We are self-creators. Ultimately a man's being is the product of the totality of all his judgements, all his choices. How do we feel inside ourselves when we contemplate this truth?

Firstly it is probable we feel nervous, or guilty, for it is natural for a finite creature to make mistakes, to choose wrongly. As we are finite, so are we limited in knowledge and power, and so our physical actions will tend to be less than perfect.

But when we remember that it is not our physical actions that we shall be judged by, but the *state-of our will* whilst doing them, we might feel less nervous, for we know that when we fail to do a good action it is often not that we are willing to do a bad action, but that the doing of a good action demanded more from us than we could quite summon up the energy or presence of mind to do. Most of our wrong actions are not the product of a consciously evil will, but the resultants of lack of concentration, lack of vision of what such actions really signify for us within our soul.

If a man could see the corruption influence of *deliberate* evil deeds and their results in his soul, he would probably be afraid to perform them. But then his choice would result only from *fear* and not from *freedom*, and God wills man to choose freely, and not merely in fear. Certainly the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord, but the end of wisdom, the purpose of wisdom, is not fear but love. "Perfect love casts out fear."

God, in His all-seeingness, sees the infinite number of choices that men can make, and He sees also the results, the consequence of making these choices. But He does not remove the possibility of man choosing a given course of action, and suffering or enjoying its consequences, for it is in this suffering or enjoying the consequences of his choices that a man can build his own character into the form which he desires or wills for himself. The final form and character of a man will be the natural resultant of all his choices.

This could be very frightening, unless we remember one very important thing. Just as the choices we make form our character, so the new choices we make will re-form it. This is the meaning of reformation. Each choice we make is a judgement, *a judgement willed by our soul*. The soul is furnished with the memories of all its judgements. At some point in time there will be a "last judgement". This might occur at the point of one's death, which we may call the individual's last temporal judgement of his earth life, after which his time-experience will cease, and the soul will enter Eternity. At this point a man finds himself with no more time left for "reformation", for reforming himself. Whatever by his choices in life he has made himself into, that pattern of being he now *is*, at the temporal end of his earth life. With that pattern he must now enter Eternity. When death strikes, in that moment the soul makes its last time-assessment of itself as its time-choices have made it.

But before death strikes, whilst we are still living, we can *change our mind*, change our whole attitude towards all our previous choices. We can re-form our basic *will*, re-design our whole way of looking at the world, at ourselves, and at God. This is right and proper, for it is only as to our *will* that God will judge us in His last judgement, when He will judge *all* men not for what they have done physically, but for the state of their will in doing it; not for what they have thought or understood, but for the state of their heart when thinking it or understanding it.

That a man's last time judgement on himself will occur at the moment before his physical death may seem most probable. But there is another possibility. It might happen that before a man's death in the time process that he is suddenly brought face to face with the fact of Jesus Christ. This is prophesied in the Bible where it says that Christ will come again, and at a time which no man will be able to foresee. This gives another meaning to the Last Judgement, as the judgement that each man will make of himself in the moment when, without warning, Christ shall present Himself before man, and man shall in that moment have to say to himself, "Up to this moment I have chosen to live in a certain way; but now I am face to face with God Incarnate. Am I glad to have chosen as I did? or do I wish I had chosen otherwise? And if otherwise, is it out of fear of reprisals or out of love that I would re-form myself?"

Because no man knows the moment of his possible encounter with the

Christ, with the reincarnated God, it is advisable for him to choose *now* what attitude he will take towards this possibility. For it is in this possibility's possibility that the necessity of our here-and-now re-forming becomes obvious.

We are to remember that it is not on our actual physical performance that we shall be judged, but on *the state of our will*. "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Our physical body is an inheritor of the totality of our ancestry. It has a strong tendency to act in certain ways rather than in others. These tendencies are often not easy to control.

## Chapter Eight

To keep one's temper under test conditions is not always possible. To "love one's neighbour as oneself" when the neighbour may have been very unpleasant is not free from difficulties. The physical body tends to react to unpleasant things in a self-protecting manner, and from self-protecting to aggression against another is often but a small step.

But amidst all our physical body's reactive tendencies, it is not these as such that we shall be judged for, and so it is not these as such that are important to us. What is important for us is the *state of our will*, the condition of our soul as the initiator of our motives.

Where do our personal actions originate? They originate in the innermost centre of our being, within the deepest depths of the soul itself, in the hidden recesses of which is our pure will, the will which *cannot be conditioned by externals without its own giving itself to them*.

The will is the soul in its own power of self-initiation, self-immobilisation and self-mobilisation. The will can still itself or move itself without any external stimulus, or in relation to any external thing or situation or event. The power of the soul to will stillness or movement in relation to itself or in relation to any external situation signifies that the soul is entirely self-responsible for its actions or its non-actions. It is this total self-responsibility that is both the ground of humanity's potential greatness, and of its potential degradation. Because this is so we shall be well advised to make ourselves more and more aware of the fact of this innermost power of the soul.

How do we do this? How are we to become aware of the fact that *we really do choose* what attitude we shall take to an event or a thing or a person?

There are some psychologists who believe, or *say* that they believe, that we do *not* choose how we shall react to a situation, or to any kind of stimulus that we receive. They say that they believe that every action of a human being, as of an animal, is *conditioned* by the nature of the physical body, its chemistry, electrical properties, and so on; and by the nature of the physical stimuli that act upon the body from outside. If their belief were true, then they would be unable to stop doing their laboratory experiments, unable to choose to write or not write a book about their work and findings. They would be entirely determined in their actions by the physical, chemical and electrical processes going on inside our bodies, and by the external stimuli which act upon these. But if we look sincerely inside ourselves into the quietest depths of our mental life, if we examine carefully our inner processes, we find that we have *some* degree of control about what we think, and how we think it. And if we have *some* degree of control, no matter how small this degree is, then we are not *absolutely* conditioned by our physical, chemical and electrical body processes.

But if we are not absolutely at the mercy of such processes, then we have in us *the seed of possible growth of greater freedom*. We can work to increase our freedom, study our own physical, mental and psychical processes. We can find out how our

whole being is related to its parts, and how these parts interact with each other within the whole.

We can teach ourselves to watch our own processes, physical, mental, psychical and spiritual. We can start by watching how we actually *do* certain physical actions and then watch our *reasons* for them, and how we *feel* about them, and about our own self in the doing and thinking of them. And then we can seek the spirit within ourselves, the centre of our freedom and initiative.

There is a procedure which we can follow for our own self-examination, an order of approach to the discovery of our potentialities, a number of steps we can take on our soul's journey towards perfection and freedom. Let us examine these.

We will set out the number of steps we are to take, then we shall examine them in detail. The first step is to watch our physical body's actions so that we become clearly aware of what we actually *do* from moment to moment. The second step is to watch our feelings of liking and disliking and the emotional tendencies that arise from these. The third step is to watch our mental processes, the stream of ideas that flows through our mind and carries our attention now this way, now that. The fourth step is to look for the principles which we use as guides for our mental, emotional and physical activities. The fifth step is to become aware of the point of initiative within our life, the moments in which we actually *choose between alternatives*. (This is a very important step). The sixth step is to see how often we make ourselves conscious of over-looking all the preceding steps. The seventh step is to know whether we have faith in God's all-comprehending Presence, within which we have our being and our life, and in His divine purpose for us.

Once we have become aware that these steps of self-development have to be taken, we can then go on to take them in order, one by one.

Step one is to become aware of our physical body's actions, the actual things we do with our body and its parts from moment to moment. We look at each action we perform, each gesture we make, and note its form or character. Here we will find what we mean when we say that *consciousness is a catalyst*. It means that when we become conscious of an action, and note its useful or useless nature, its intelligent purpose or unintelligent purposelessness, the mere fact of becoming conscious of the action's nature tends to change it. It is very difficult, if we find ourselves doing something foolish, not to modify our action in some way.

As long as we are quite unconscious of our actions they can continue to operate in their own established way. But if we are made sharply conscious of an action which is one we would not like to be *seen* doing, either by other persons, or by ourselves in a mirror, then we find that this action tends to modify. It is clear that we have inside us some kind of image of ourselves, a picture of our being as we would like it to be, so that it may be acceptable to ourselves.

What is the origin of this acceptable picture of ourselves? It derives from our original perfection, that faultless state of being in which God created our first human ancestor. The source of our belief in possible perfection is the perfection of God Himself. When God creates a thing, that thing is always perfect, for He is Himself

perfection. He is perfect in action, feeling, thought and will, and so produces always things that conform exactly to His intention.

Was the first human being perfectly created? and if so, how did he fall into sin? To understand this, we must first grasp the meaning of freedom.

God did not will the first human being to be a senseless machine, incapable of any actions but those programmed into it. God did not design man as man designs a computer, to be absolutely incapable of disobedience. There are many people today who have accepted an idea of a computer put forward by certain kinds of science fiction writers who like to frighten people into believing that computers may be intelligent, and may overthrow their designers and take over the world, reducing man to perpetual slavery. But a properly designed computer is not intelligent, although it may have intelligently designed action-patterns programmed into it. If a computer is in proper working order, it *cannot disobey* the instructions fed into it. The computer has *no free will*.

But God breathed into man the spirit which conferred upon man the power of free choice, and with this power the capacity of choosing *wrongly* as well as rightly. Many people are puzzled by the idea that God would give man a capacity for doing wrong. But if we think carefully we will see that if man had not been given a free will, he would be a machine, an organism entirely at the mercy of every stimulus that struck upon him. But if he is given a *free will* then he must necessarily be able to *disobey* any instructions given to him. Either man is totally unfree or, if he is free to choose, then he must logically be able to choose not only rightly but wrongly. This is the price that God has to pay for preferring to create free beings rather than mechanical marionettes.

It is this same freedom, which God breathed into us with His Spirit that is the ground of the possibility of man's fall into sin and error. It is also the ultimate guarantee of the possibility of his reclamation and re-establishment in his lost perfection.

From becoming aware of physical body actions and the dissatisfaction we experience in ourselves, we become aware that we have inside us a sense of perfection which arises from the depths of our being. What we once had we can again recapture if we reverse the choice which led to our loss. By choosing to disobey God's command, our first human ancestor fell into bondage to the things of the outer world. He lost consciousness of his innermost freedom of will, and fell under the domination of the stimuli that bring pleasure and pain to the body. He would now have to undergo a process of gaining more and more experience of the things of the outer world, to feel the pleasure and pains that such material things could impose on him, until finally he would begin to see that he must gain some kind of transcendence to pleasures and pains in order to free himself from their dictatorship over his freedom.

This carries us to the consideration of our second step, the watching of our feelings of liking and disliking, and the experience of the emotionally-driven tendencies to act upon such feelings. In this process we are to watch nothing but our likings and dislikings as they arise and vanish, and to note the conditions under which they arise. We find, when we do this exercise, that our feelings change from moment to moment, in correspondence with thoughts which are presented in the mind, some at conscious and some at unconscious levels.

The ideas of which we are conscious usually have some degree of liking or disliking attached to them, which we can consciously feel and for which we may believe we have a "reason". But some of our likings and dislikings arise without presenting with them correspondent ideas. Such feelings lead us to believe that we may have some ideas of which we are not conscious, that we may have in us an *unconscious mind*, thinking thoughts of which we have no conscious knowledge, thoughts perhaps too secret to allow into our consciousness, in case we should accidentally mention them to someone who might be annoyed by them; or thoughts that refer to experiences or events too painful to bear thinking about.

By careful, sharp watching of our likes and dislikes we become aware that we are continuously being moved by emotional energies which arise from feelings of liking or disliking. Accompanying some of these emotional energies are more or less clear ideas, but others may surge through us with no conscious idea-correspondences. These second kinds of energies are often the cause of impulsive activities that we later regret. But as before, *consciousness is a catalyst*. If we continue to look sharply at our feelings and emotions, our likes and dislikes, they begin to change, because they do not always match up to our inner *sense* of perfection.

## Chapter Nine

Our *acceptable picture* of ourselves is derived from our original perfection, given to us in the moment of our creation by God. Our *perfection* is grounded in God's pre-fection, that is, in the perfection of God Himself before the beginning of the process which we call the movement of time. God is eternal Self-Presence, simultaneous self-activity of infinite spirit, perfect in His immediacy of His will. Time is the playing out of God's simultaneity in a sequence of separate activities. What for mankind would be incomprehensible in its infinite pattern, the wholeness of the Divine Plan, becomes comprehensible by presenting it in a series of separate moments of action, which moments in their totality will constitute, when finished, the pattern of human history and the cosmic evolutionary process.

Mankind's perfection, when finally attained, will be the pre-fection, the *before-time perfection* of the Eternal Divine Spirit. To attain this perfection we have to go through the stages of the evolutionary development of mankind, in the order given to us. We cannot skip a step without missing an opportunity for gaining a level of self-understanding.

When we have watched our physical body's actions and reactions, and our likes and dislikes, we can go on to watch the mental processes we call "thinking". Thinking is the presentation of ideas, one after the other, in what we call the "serial" or sequential process. This aspect of man's activities bears certain resemblances to the processes occurring in a computer, which "plays back" whatever has been programmed into it.

But a man is *not* a computer. A computer cannot *disobey* the instructions fed into it. A computer is built to compute from information given to it. It is not built to be arbitrary. A computer is not free to choose what to do without reference to data supplied to it. Thus a computer cannot freely decide to make an offering of itself to its maker. A computer is not a free spiritual being.

But *a man* is a free spiritual being, and so can refuse to consider information given to him. He is not compelled unavoidably to process the data fed into him by his environment in a set way, and to react to it in a predictable manner. Man can ignore data offered to him, can distort and misrepresent what is said to him, and can give irrelevant responses, something impossible to a computer in good working order.

In watching our mental processes, the ideas that pass in *sequence* through our mind, we quickly become aware that they do not always follow each other in a strictly logical order. They jump from one subject to another, abandon one train of thought for another, make sudden digressions or stray associations, and generally behave as if no purposeful person were in charge of them. Why should this be so?

We derive the content of our mind from two sources, from without, and from within. From outside, by means of our sense organs, we gain information about the things, events and relationships of these as they occur in the world about us. From inside we gain sensations from our physical body and its organs, tissues and cells, and their

different states of tension, and their functional processes. We also receive contributions from our uncontrolled imagination, from our hidden hopes and fears, and unconscious memories of past pleasures and pains.

Our mind, then, presents itself to us as a meeting place of two worlds, and two times. Here the outer physical world's things present themselves as pictures or mental images of external *present* facts, and come into contact with images of things *no-longer present* in the physical world around us, but derived, some of them from past physical facts, and some of them from past imaginative activity, conscious or unconscious. In the mental process, present facts meet past facts and fantasies, and often it is difficult to separate the past and the present.

What are the causes of the high complexity of our mental life? There are present in our minds images from our present sense-organs' activities, visual images from our eyes, aural images from our ears, and so on. We receive some information from all our five sense organs, and some from our generalised sensitivity, sensations of warmth, or cold, of varying degrees of intensity and of varying degrees of pleasure or pain, comfort or discomfort, ease or lack of it. And from inside we are acted upon by memories of past images and associated feelings.

All of these mental processes, images and feelings may associate together in any order. What determines which contents of the mind will come into association? Basically, our *interests*, conscious or unconscious.

Our conscious interests constitute hardly any problem, and are relatively few. They are simply the things, events and relationships which occupy our conscious attention at any given moment. Here our mental images are linked together by their relevance to our conscious purposes or projects of any kind. Usually they have to do with our physical environment and its things, and their probability of being useful to us either immediately or at a time fairly close to the present.

But our unconscious interests are not all simple. Below the conscious level of our mental processes are innumerable processes started long ago at periods of our history no longer easily accessible to conscious investigation. Even the single individual has in his unconscious mind many processes which began with the setting up of purposes later on to be abandoned.

When we define for ourselves a purpose as worthwhile fulfilling, and decide to pursue it, we set a certain amount of energy moving in a certain direction. Once this energy is set in motion, it does not cease to move in its defined direction unless we consciously and deliberately withdraw it from this direction. But we do not often re-examine and consciously re-define our purpose and deliberately re-direct the energies we have dedicated to them. Rather we tend to let go of the purposes we have come to believe impossible to fulfill because of some difficulties or impediments to them, and we tend not to define these purposes clearly as definitely to be abandoned. Because of this lack of clear definition, we leave some original energy devoted to these purposes still moving towards the originally defined goals.

But if a defined goal is not attained, and the energy dedicated to realising it is not clearly withdrawn from its pursuit, the still-moving energy gives rise to a feeling of

frustration within the unconscious mind. It is the accumulation of such feelings of frustration that add to the general discomfort and anxiety which so permeates the minds of civilised men.

Frustrated energy is energy feeding anxiety states.

In the depths of our unconscious mind are still-persisting energies originally set in motion by consciously defined purposes of the past. These energies, although blocked in the pursuit of their original aim, do not cease their activities. They continue to seek ways of self-realisation, and being impeded in any *direct* way of gaining satisfaction, they strive to attain their goals *indirectly*.

It is because of their *indirect* ways of seeking satisfaction that these unconscious energies establish association links with mental contents that ordinarily they would not make. Blocked in their nearest and most logical connections, these energies make further off and less obvious connections, connections that, on a surface analysis, might appear to be quite illogical. Here is the explanation of much so-called irrational behaviour. Energies blocked in more direct ways of gaining their goals seeks less direct ways, sometimes very devious ways.

As the way to attaining a defined goal becomes less direct and so more devious, the anxiety associated with possible failure increases. Anxiety and belief in the possibility of attaining one's goals are closely associated.

As we begin to expose to our consciousness the nature of our mental processes, we begin to see that in order to solve the problem of anxiety we must re-examine our past purposes and eliminate those of them which are either impossible to realise, or are not worthy of realisation. This re-examination of past purposes begins when we start consciously to watch our mental processes, for in the watching of idea-sequences we begin to see connections between our ideas and feelings, which we have not previously suspected.

We begin to see that there still exists in us many purposes which we have formulated in the past, and then have abandoned without clearly saying so to ourselves. We begin to see that in the past, perhaps from our earliest childhood, we have set ourselves certain objectives which we have never fulfilled; and we begin to see that these unfulfilled purposes have not been given up in the depths of our soul. Because of the impedances to their realisation we have given up putting *more* energy into them, but *we have not fully withdrawn from these purposes the original energy which we put into them*. This withdrawn energy is still at work, seeking ways of attaining its goals, still unsatisfied, and so still frustrated, and so still in a state of anxiety.

As we begin to understand this anxiety source, and so realise the necessity of consciously giving up unrealisable purposes, our study of our mental processes will receive a stronger impetus, for we will recognise that *anxiety decreases as unrealisable aims are freely given up*.

As we begin to realise consciously the relation between anxiety and frustrated energies, and begin to understand that by freely giving up purposes that cannot be

attained, *we can release energy that has been dedicated to the realisation of such purposes.*

Having convinced ourselves of this, we shall begin to fit ourselves for the study of the whole pattern of life. We shall see that it is not only our own souls that are beset by anxieties, but also the souls of the human race at large. Then we shall be ready to study the principle and underlying pattern of anxiety within ourselves and in the universe as a whole.

This brings us to the fourth thing we can look for and watch in ourselves, the principle or the *whole pattern* of our action, feeling and thought. To find a principle is to find a governing concept which controls the pattern of life. It is such a pattern that we call the *meaning* of our activities, the significance of our lives.

The essence of meaning is pattern. The essence of pattern is *relation of parts to a whole, the relation of a whole to its parts*. When we seek the meaning of life, we look for the ways all the different things and events in life make a pattern. We look for the way in which all the different things and events in life are related together and enter into inter-function. In a universe made of energy, pattern is *interfunction of forces*. In a universe built essentially of power, every force put into application involves necessarily an effect on all other forces. This means that whatever we do with our energies we shall necessarily interfere with whatever anyone else is doing, and whatever anyone else is doing must interfere with whatever *we* are doing. Mutual interaction is of the very essence of the universal energies which constitute our being.

## Chapter Ten

Egotism does not like the statement that no one finally can get away with anything, that there is a law of action-and-reaction in the universe from which no man can escape. "Vengeance is Mine," saith the Lord. "I will repay."

But to the non-egotist, to the man who wills to co-operate harmoniously with his fellow men and with God, this same statement means that everything is in God's hands. We have no need to revenge ourselves for injuries done to us by others. Universal law will do this, for God's will is set towards ultimate wholeness, towards the final harmony of all those who accept His Law of Creative Love.

Much of human anxiety arises from the desire to act against persons that impede the fulfilling of desires, and from the fear of reprisals if one does so act. Let us be clear about this. In the human being there are certain forces which tend to drive always towards getting one's own way. They show themselves in actions that we call egotistic, in behaviour patterns that are aimed, crudely subtly, at controlling other people's activities, make them adjust to our own action intentions.

Of course, we can say that people do not *consciously* do this kind of manipulation. We can call upon the psychologist's idea of the "unconscious mind, and blame this for our bad behaviour. But the contents of our "unconscious" mind have various sources, and some of these are our own concern. Let us look at the idea of the "unconscious a little more carefully than we usually do.

We may distinguish the contents of the unconscious mind in various ways. We know that some of the memories of our activities fade away; simply because they are just not interesting enough to be worthy of recall. We know also that some of our memories are of actually physically painful experiences, memories of painful diseases, which tend to make us unhappy or afraid, we recall them. Such memories may be repressed simply because, when allowed uncontrolled play, they may impede our physical and mental functions, so that we cannot properly respond to the real situation of the present.

But we have also other kinds of memories, memories of our intentions which jar against our self-image, memories of occasions when our inner attitudes towards other persons were not the highest.

We do not like to think of ourselves as unacceptable to others; we do not like to believe that other persons may actually dislike us; and we have historically good reasons for this.

In the ancient world, when a member of a community did an act which in any way endangered that community, that member was punished, that is, *his power was reduced*, so that he could no longer move freely within the group to which he belonged.

Punishment varied with the degree of seriousness of the crime, that is, the degree to which the community believed itself to have been put in danger by it. In extreme

cases the punishment was death, preceded by tortures designed to frighten other group-members from committing similar offences. Less serious crimes might be punished by banishment from the group. Socrates was given the alternative of banishment or death. He chose death.

When in the ancient world a man was banished from the community, the possibilities of his survival were much reduced. He was put outside of the city walls and so exposed to all the hazards of the wilderness, where wild animals might kill him, or wandering outcasts from other communes might attack him.

Today if we commit any socially unacceptable act we still stand in danger of being refused communion with our fellows, and few can stand this refusal and still keep their inner balance. Inter-relations with other human beings is for most of us essential to our well-being. There may be a few individuals who can remain alone and keep their mental balance; perhaps a yogi living in a high mountain cave, engaged in deep meditation on some universal principle, or a rare individual who has dedicated himself to the contemplation of God alone. But for most of us the way of human development and happiness is through human relationships. Few men can long endure total isolation from the rest of mankind.

It is, therefore, not surprising if we do not like to think of ourselves as unacceptable to the human race at large, or to a particular community or group. Almost certainly most of us would not like to be rejected by those with whom we wish to be friends. And here is where, in general, the problem of inner guilt becomes important.

For a human community to be safe within its own protecting city walls, there had to be a certain degree of harmony between its members. Quarrels between persons had not to reach a pitch sufficient to threaten the unity of the communal group. We have many cases in history of disharmony between families or tribes resulting in their overthrow by an external enemy. The ancient Britons, but for their own internal disagreements, would not have been defeated by the invading Romans. The Scottish clans, but for their own internal quarrels, would not have fallen to the English. Internal harmony of a group is essential to its survival.

From this it is clear that when a quarrel between persons results in desire for revenge, the community is endangered. Thus thoughts of revenge tend to be hidden, to be repressed into the unconscious. We all know that revenge can result in counter-revenge. We all know that personal disagreements can become family disagreements, that family dis-harmonies can become communal conflicts, and that these can become international wars. Today we know also that international wars could spell the destruction of the human race.

It is because of this "unconscious" knowledge that we do not like to admit to other persons that we intend to revenge ourselves for injuries received. Revengeful persons are feared by almost everyone. This fact makes us dislike admitting, even to ourselves, that we have any tendency to bear grudges. We know that revenge tends to generate counter-revenge. We do not like to think of ourselves as having initiated an act which might result in retaliation against us.

Here is the source of much of our anxiety. All of us have been to some degree injured

by others. Our paths somewhere have crossed, and we have impeded each other's purposes and so antagonised each other. It is not easy for us to make the adjustments in life which are necessary for harmonious living together. And because of the unpleasantness of being impeded we tend to feel resentful.

Resentfulness tends to breed desire to retaliate. Possible retaliation to our retaliation makes us feel anxious. Anxiety creates tension in us. Tension reduces the efficiency of our organism. Reduced efficiency spells reduction in our capacity for self-protection. Reduced capacity for self-protection increases our nervousness. We have created an anxiety-wheel within our soul. This wheel will spin faster and faster if we do not find a solution to the problem of its generation. What is the solution?

The solution is in the words, "perfect love casts out fear". But how are we going to generate perfect love inside our soul? The fearful do not have much power to love.

First we must remind ourselves that the whole of mankind is in the same predicament. Fear stalks through everyone's unconscious mind. We are all inheritors. We all have ancestors, and the very substance of our bodies is a portion of the original protoplasm, the very stuff of our ancestors. We cannot escape the fact that we have *tendencies to reactivity*. Already the newborn baby demonstrates to us the basics of human behaviour. We see tears as well as smiles, self-pity as well as courage. The baby can show us in little what we ourselves know ourselves to be at large.

The stuff of our bodies, the protoplasm of which we are made, is not new. It comes to us from our parents, who got it from their parents, who received it from their parents, and so backwards through history to our first ancestors. This is what is implied in the doctrine of "original sin". Simply, our substance, our flesh, is an *inheritor* of our ancestors' tendencies. Protoplasm, the substance of our bodies, is a near-perfect recording material. It records not only the shapes of things that we experience, but also the feelings and emotions and action tendencies that accompany these. Our physical substance is like a library of CD's, ready at any moment to be replayed and to give us once more the old sounds, the ancient statements of our ancestors.

But we do not have to put on the records and re-play them just because we have them in our library. We can be selective; we can discriminate between those records worth replaying, and those which are not.

Our ancestors have not had only unhappy experiences, with memories of pain and fear and revenge. They have also had their moments of love, their moments of courage and mutual forgiveness; and these records are worth replaying and listening to and agreeing with.

If we listen inside ourselves we will hear records replaying, some good, some bad. That the records are *there* in us is a *fact*. That *we do not have to obey their commands* is also a fact. We have in us the God-given power to *choose* to listen to them or not, to act on their recommendations or not. *The Spirit of God in us is our freedom*. And this freedom fully realised in us is the perfect Love which casts out fear.

Why does perfect love cast out fear? In this is hidden the greatest mystery in the world, the mystery of *sacrifice*.

In God, who is infinite power, Love and Reason are absolutely at one. His Reason is the Reason of Love, His Love is the Love of Reason. Here "Rea-son" is identical with *perfect justice*. "He who judges us is He who made us." He who made us knows us absolutely, without and within, *because* He made us. He knows that to be *created is* to be made *finite*, to have *limits* imposed on one's being. He Himself is infinite, unlimited in every way. He cannot make mistakes, because He has unlimited knowledge and infinite power. He knows that creatures, of whatever kind, are limited in power and knowledge. Therefore He knows that they are *a possibility* of error; *a possibility*, not *a necessity*.

God has created man and given to him the capacity for free choice. This capacity for freedom is man's greatest gift, the foundation of his claim to human dignity and grace. It is also his greatest danger, because he can, if he wills to do so, choose to revolt against his very freedom, for freedom implies *responsibility* for one's self and for one's actions.

The sense of responsibility lies heavily on the human soul, for it signifies that there is a power above man, a power that can call him to account for his actions, and for their effect on other creatures. "Inasmuch as you do it to the least of these little ones, you do it to Me," says the incarnate God.

The world is like Christ's seamless garment. *We cannot pull upon it anywhere without pulling at it everywhere*. The universe is a power-continuum, a partless whole. Action anywhere in it means action everywhere.

When Cain became enraged at God's acceptance of Abel's offering, Cain temporarily forgot *The Great Law of the Seamless Garment*. In that moment he forgot the inter-dependent seamlessness of all things, and killed his brother. When he regained control of himself and saw what he had done, he cried out, "My punishment is more than I can bear!"

## Chapter Eleven

Why did Cain say, "My punishment is more than I can bear."? How did he know that his brother was now dead? Simply, Abel no longer *responded* to anything said or done to him. The dead do not respond to us. The body of the dead lies there inertly, inactive, immobile. Death demonstrates to us our own isolation, our own incapacity for relation.

The dead do not communicate with us. The dead body gives us no feedback, answers none of our questions. In the presence of the dead we feel our own death-to-come standing like a ghost at our left side, whispering to us of our own future non-being. When Cain killed Abel, he saw the moment of his own future death, his own cutting off from human communication, *that communication which is the very essentiality of human life*.

Before Abel's death Cain did not realise the full meaning of *communication*. If he felt that he wished to talk to his brother he did so; if that he desired to keep silence, then he did so; if he willed again to speak, he did so. But after Abel's death, when Cain willed to speak, his brother did not respond. Cain stood alone in terrible self-isolation. His brother's death forced into Cain's consciousness the meaning of human communication. *Abel's death was sacrificial*. Something had been effected by it that could have been effected in no other way. Abel's death was the first foreshadowing of the death of Jesus Christ, the first hint at the marvellous efficacy of the mystery of sacrifice.

Human individuals, identified with their physical bodies, tend to defend themselves against attacks from outside, from painful or unpleasant actions of other individuals, and from undesirable events in the world around them. Some of these attacks actually occur in present moments, but many of them do not; many of them are only possibilities in the future. But whether present or in the future the attacks, real or imaginary, tend to provoke defensive reactions, and anticipated defensive reactions can easily become aggressions.

Certainly anticipation of a possible need to defend oneself can result in tension states in mind and body, and these further tend towards a state of isolation. The mind on guard against possible damage is a mind surrounded with a defensive wall of alerted energy. The defensive mind is a mind insulated, a mind isolated, a mind alienated from its own highest functions.

In order for a human being to function most efficiently he must be *in communication with himself*. Self-communication is essential to the healthy functioning of the human organism. Our different functions must be allowed to interact. Our thinking, feeling and willing can be efficient only if they interrelate.

When we think, we formulate ideas and relations of these. When we feel we assess, in terms of like and dislike, the value of these ideas and relations. When we will, we put into actual expression the results of our evaluations of our ideas and relations. Only in the inter-communication of our thinking and feeling and willing can we live

fully our lives.

But we do not live to ourselves alone, and we cannot do so. Our thinking, if kept in isolation from the thoughts of others, becomes out of contact with the developing process of human evolution, and so impoverished. Our feeling, divorced from the feeling evaluations of others, loses its vitality. Our willing, kept out of relation with the willed actions of other human beings, loses its dynamism. *We need* the stimulation of the thoughts, feelings and volitions of our fellow men. Without them we cannot develop the system of cross-fertilisation of minds and bodies which is essential to our attainment of ever higher levels of being and consciousness; we cannot take part in the forward march of mankind into an ever expanding universe of new insights and joys.

The fear of being hurt or damaged by others tends to isolate us. Our present day neuroses and estrangements testify to the fact of our daily living in an atmosphere of apprehension. We expect trouble from each other, and in our expectations we create it. We tend to look to the other to be the first to give up aggressive intent. Meanwhile we look to the preservation of our defences, not aware of the like attitude in other human beings. We need something to shock us out of our self-created isolation, something to force us into the awareness that our fellow men also are unconscious of their self-insulation. We need sacrifices, a sacrificial act of some kind.

We need to be able to give up our defensive reactions to life's emergents. We need to become able to expose ourselves, our souls and our bodies, to the "slings and arrows" of daily living. Either we learn to expose ourselves, or we shall remain in our self-isolation, walking the way towards death alone.

When Abel was killed by his brother, the murdered man did not plan his own death in order to teach Cain the meaning of isolation, the meaning of non-communication as the doorway to self-impoverishment. Abel simply *suffered* his death; he did not purposefully design it as a loving gesture to his brother.

But Jesus Christ died on the cross, deliberately to show mankind that non-communication is death, that to live we must communicate with *each* other.

When in order to one thing we have to do its opposite, we call this "dialectic". The dialectic of Christ's crucifixion is that *in order to teach us how to live, He had to show us how to die*. "He who would preserve his life must be prepared to lose it; he who is prepared to lose his life will find it."

Ordinary human beings who live ordinary lives, do so because they have not understood this principle, this *dialectic of sacrifice*. Yet ordinary human beings love to witness the extraordinary activities of extraordinary persons. We delight in the superb performances of great musicians, artists, writers, athletes, explorers, astronauts and so on. We do not always remind ourselves that in order to attain their superb performances they have had to elect themselves to live a life of sacrifice. No great attainments have been made without a dedication to a training process which has involved *giving something up*, some other value of life which might have been pursued.

Jesus Christ perfectly embodied the insights which reveal the secret of sacrifice.

He saw more clearly than any other man that the life of all men involves relations with each man. He knew that life itself is *relationship*, that totally isolated bodies cannot live, that the degree of isolation of beings is the degree of their deadness. He spoke of the "quick" and the "dead", of those who are quick to see the need in beings for relationship, the "deadness" of those who are out of relationship with their fellow men. Then He showed human beings how to make themselves alive again, showed them how to regain the power to live by the sacrificial process of giving life up, giving it back again to the Infinite Source-Power from which it derives.

When we defend ourselves against the attacks, real or imaginary, which might be made upon us by other human beings, we put ourselves *out of relationship* with them. But we put ourselves out of relationship not only with what we imagine may harm us, but also with what could benefit us. In avoiding possible unpleasantness we avoid also possible relationships of happinesses of interchange of ideas and feelings, of new insights and values. We cannot give up a relationship because of some difficulty without giving up also the innumerable benefits which would derive from overcoming that difficulty.

Once we understand this, we can go on to understand also that all human beings labour under the same difficulties under which we ourselves struggle. Because of our heritage, because of the past sufferings of all members of the human race, we are all on guard, all only too ready to defend ourselves against possible harm.

At some time in human history, this self-defensive reaction must be given up. We shall have to dare to extend our hand to the whole of mankind, to open our hearts and minds in friendship to each of our fellow men. The alternative to this act of daring is the perpetuation of a war of mutual extinction. It is not impossible, with the nuclear weapons available to us, that we could totally annihilate the human race, and so leave the world to be inhabited by other, less destructive forms. There are some cynics who declare this to be a high probability, or even an inevitability, and look forward to its accomplishment, the annihilation of the most self-contradictory form of life ever to appear on earth. But this need not be so.

Every great discovery, every new invention, every new evolutionary emergent which has benefited mankind, has come first through a single individual's observation of some of the implications of his relations with other human beings in the world. Then this observation has been communicated to some of his fellow men. Then the whole group has worked together to bring out further implications of the new idea, finally to give the results of their collective efforts to the waiting world.

Jesus Christ observed the world, saw the universal fear that gripped the souls and minds of men, and having diagnosed the disease, devised the cure. Men were striving to preserve their individual lives, and in the process were losing them. Fear drives out love. Love is the essence of fruitful human relation. Fear isolates; love conjoins. But in a world of fear, how could love do this? Fear was even afraid of love, afraid of that very power which alone could cure it. So love would have to sacrifice itself to fear. Love would have to die on that which fear most feared - the cross.

Having made His analysis in Gethsemane, Jesus made His way steadily

towards Golgotha. There love, the embodied love of God in Jesus Christ, hung on the cross devised by fear, and forgave his killers: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

In this demonstration love triumphed over fear and death. Men who had felt justified in their self-defensive actions would have to re-think their position. For two thousand years their minds would be unable to shake off the memory of this sacrificial figure and the first great *conscious self*-sacrifice of a God-man for his fellows.

Understanding this demonstration of love we ourselves can, with our love, crucify ourselves on our personal Golgotha, in the "place of the skull", in our own brain and mind, and there generate the same tremendous courage of Jesus Christ. We, too, can conquer fear and death in a supreme act of self-sacrificing love. We can allow ourselves to be attacked and nailed upon the cross of our individual existence.

We also can forgive those who act against us, knowing that they do so from fear, knowing that anxiety clouds their minds and forces them into unneeded defensive actions which soon become acts of aggression. We can give up the ceaseless, non-profitable war that we have fought against them. We can show them that we, at least, are ready to open to them our hearts, to receive them in communion with us. Then, with our new understanding, we shall be able to demonstrate to ourselves in our own beings the resurrecting power of Christ-love.

## Chapter Twelve

We have distinguished fear from anxiety by saying that in fear we can give a rational definition of the thing that threatens us, and that in anxiety we cannot usually give a clear statement of what it is that is making us feel under threat of harm.

Anxiety of some degree is always present in living beings, for some kind of damage is always a possibility. But we are to distinguish between different kinds of harm, physical, psychological and spiritual. If only physical harm is possible, then it is relatively easy to adjust to it. But if psychological harm is done, the soul itself is involved and may complicate its position by wrong interpretation of its condition. Spiritual harm is that which reduces our freedom of decision and so alienates us from our true source in God.

The human being differs from the animal in that the human being can consider questions about his own origin. Struggle for mere survival marks the animal life. Human life is distinguished by the struggle for the attainment of the state of free decision, which we call the spiritual state. Human anxiety is basically the state of anticipation of loss of freedom of decision, that freedom which is a gift of the Divine Spirit.

Spirit implies freedom of choice, and this implies self-responsibility and self-response-ability, the capacity to respond adequately to each situation in which we may find ourselves. Anxiety is implied at every level of free existence other than the highest, in which we are at one with the Divine Spirit.

Everywhere surrounding us are forces which tend to limit our freedom, which aim to destroy our belief in the very possibility of freedom. Not only external organisations do this; for we have also inner enemies, inertias, preferences for pleasures, etc. Everywhere are hooks carrying tempting baits to catch us and take away our freedom. Threats of pain and punishments also tend to intimidate us. We must learn to distinguish different kinds of harm. The physical body may be bruised or its limbs broken, but such damages are repaired by the body's own natural defences, if we give them the right conditions.

The soul's chief harm would be the destruction of its own belief in its essential spiritual freedom. If a soul loses its belief in its spiritual origin, the meaning of its very existence is put in question, for it then stands to lose its belief in Ultimate mere fictions of a brain invaded by fantasy or sentimentality. Then it seems that God does not exist, that the world is a world of predators and prey, in which we must fight, take flight, or feign, in order to preserve our lives.

To retain health of body, soul and spirit, we must have an unshakeable belief. This can be nothing but the idea that we derive our being from the One Supreme Generative Power of the universe, that Power we call God. The whole world is a manifestation of this power. Our own being is an expression of this power. When we feel, think or act, it is this power which feels, thinks and acts in us. To realise this is to conquer anxiety.

This Supreme, Infinite Power is that One which Jesus calls "Our Father", for "Father" means "generative power". This power is supremely intelligent and has a plan for mankind, a plan to bring each human soul into full awareness of creative freedom. To fulfill this plan God places each soul in a physical body, for it is only within a physical body that a soul can gain the experience of bondage in the presence of freedom. In our physical body, we experience what bondage means, and in this experience we gradually learn to prefer freedom. But in order to gain freedom we must first gain self-control.

The separate bodies in which souls live and move may collide, may injure each other, and from this fact our souls learn to control themselves. Fear of harm, anxiety in the presence of unknown possibilities of damage, make the soul awaken to the possibilities of freedom. In a world where harm was impossible, souls would have no fear, and so no need to get hold of themselves, and gain self-control.

The physical body is a relatively stable centre of reference without which the soul would feel very insecure. This is the key to understanding the mystery of Christ's incarnation. Divine power has embodied itself in physical bodies as human souls, and is pressing those souls towards their ultimate goal, the realisation of the freedom of God within the relatively bound realm of the human existent self.

The human soul is part of the divine power which is God, and is being led slowly towards the realisation of this fact. To gain this realisation, the soul must go through a cycle of experience within a physical body, for this gives sufficient stability to the soul to make it possible to examine its own nature as a spiritual being. Without a body as central reference the soul would be in a state of continual anxiety about whether or not it could gain the conditions of free existence.

The soul has a two-fold anxiety; 1. that it may fail to gain the conditions of real existence; 2. that if it attains to existence it may do so in a malformed way. If the soul not yet in a body feels that it can never gain one, it undergoes a dreadful despair. If the soul has entered a body and started upon the path of self-evolution, it is in a state of anxiety in case it should not attain its final goal. But there is a way of release from both these kinds of despair, for Jesus Christ has fought and won this battle, and in doing so showed mankind the possibility of full self-realisation. "Christ my anchor" is the idea that saves the human soul. What Christ has done, we also, if we follow in His footsteps, can do.

The universe is a manifestation of an infinite ocean of Divine Power. To the unenlightened soul this infinite ocean is a vast sea of anxiety, in which the soul swims, and may sink and drown. This anxiety of the soul is a product of indecision, of non-committal to the Way laid out for mankind to follow. The moment in which we fully make this decision to tread in the steps of Christ is the moment that the soul's anxiety falls away.

True, our physical body may shrink at the thought of possible pains or sufferings that it may be called upon to pass through, but the soul, although it feels these pains, understands the reason for them, and does not fall into identification with them. The soul understands that without pains there would be no clear self-awareness. It knows that before the first pain was suffered, there was no real consciousness of self.

It knows also that when real self-consciousness has been attained and made secure, there will be no further need to undergo the sufferings that made this attainment possible. "We sacrifice, but not forever." The final goal of personal self-integration having been attained, "God will wipe away all tears from your eyes."

Self-awareness, attained through undergoing sufferings of various kinds, begins the new period in which the soul builds itself, consciously and deliberately, a unique individuality, with fully developed talents, to delight the God who is the soul's source. Each suffering and pain undergone positively in the soul anchored in Christ, places a new facet on the soul's spiritual body, to refract the One Divine Light in a new way. The completed spiritual body of the soul, the Jerusalemic body, is like a multi-faceted diamond which shows, from the One Supreme White Light, all the colours of the rainbow, in ever-changing display to the glory of our Divine Source.

The human soul is a power, an energy, and energy cannot be annihilated. It may change its form during its evolution from lower to higher states, but it cannot, as a power, cease to be. What we are as human souls, we are eternally. What we need is to develop and extend the talents that are implied in the fact that we are in essence *power*. This power is "Our Heavenly Father". Nothing can ever separate us from this power. To believe that we can be separated from power is to be in error. To know that nothing can ever separate us from this power, this *Love* of God (for Love is power) is to be safe absolutely. Once we thoroughly understand this, anxiety falls away from us.

God, the supreme infinite power, the source of all things and of our own souls, has a purpose with His creation, and especially with mankind. We are being led slowly but inexorably towards the attainment of perfect freedom, intelligent creativity. We are designed and are being developed to take part in the free creative activity of the divine spirit. In order to attain our highest state of being, destined for us, we have to go through "the valley of the shadow of death"; we have to suffer those experiences which place us in a position where we ourselves must *choose* what we will become. Only by our own self-choice can we become the kind of beings God wills us to be. He has given us freedom of choice so that we may choose our own being for ourselves, so that what we become we cannot say has been imposed upon us by some force other than our own will.

When by our own choice we finally become what we become, we shall not be able to say, "I don't like my character, I don't like my nature, but God imposed it on me, or fate visited it upon me, or destiny compelled me to become as I am". No. When we become finally what we become, we shall be so because we alone will have chosen for ourselves so to be. In this fact is our greatest danger, but also our highest honour.

There is no higher being than one that has *chosen-itself* to be a vehicle of eternal truth. God is God and is worthy of our worship precisely because He *chose Himself* freely to enter into His creation and to embody Himself in the human form of Jesus Christ to demonstrate to all mankind the way of freedom, the way of self-choosing, the method of choosing the character one wills for oneself, the being one wills oneself to be *eternally*. For finally, when all our *basic* choices have been made about the kind of character we will for ourselves, the technique of life we shall use in our relationships with each other and with Jesus Christ and God, then

we shall have eternally that form of being which we shall have to live with.

The primal anxiety which we experience within ourself is the result of this deep knowledge that we, by our own choosing, and not by fate or destiny, or accident, or the rigid commands of God make of ourself. What we shall become is what we, by our own free choices, shall *will ourselves to be*. And in this, God, whilst leaving us free to choose our design, has given us in His incarnation in Jesus Christ, the demonstration of Grace coupled with the inflexible will to provide us with the best conceivable example.

God, as He is in Himself, is invisible to our natural eyes, but by His self-embodiment in Jesus Christ has let down from Eternity into Time that Anchor which, holding strongly to, we shall not be lost, but finally shall become that kind of being which both God and our own self shall be happy for us to be.