

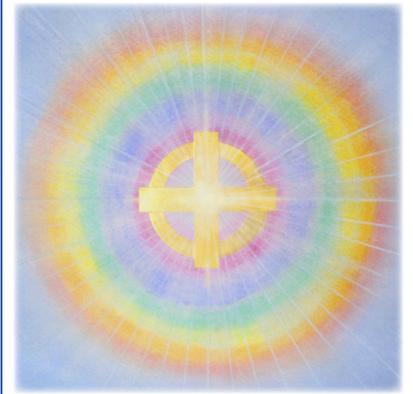
The Sacred Fire

The Mystery of the Sacred Fire has interpenetrated the Universe of Life and the best of this world's thought. It is found, in some degree of expression, couched in the beliefs of the children of men as you read their story. All the Great Religions have in some degree, even amidst the darkness of the ages which overwhelmed the Earth, held as a sacred belief the Mystery lying behind GOD as a living Flame and a sacred Fire. Thus, in the most materialized forms of religious belief and ceremonial, fire has been used, not only as a symbol, but also as the active agency in the sacrificial offerings. The Bible, held sacred in the Western world and in part of the East, is rich in passages wherein this Mystery is cryptically alluded to. However great and sad the misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the Mystery found in such a high religion as Jewry, yet the Mystery is recognised.

* * * *

If you make a sacrifice of your body, of your creative forces, or of other outer or inner attributes, with pure heart and reverent spirit, with a real sacrificial attitude of Being, GOD will re-energize you. The Fire will come down from the Heavens and touch your sacrifice. That Fire will ennoble you. It will clothe you inwardly in the degree in which you are able to receive it, with His Light, and outwardly with His Radiance – the auric Glory of His inward fashion. If you lay the ambitions of your mind on the Altar in sacrifice unto HIM, HE will energize that realm of your Being. HE will throw the radiance of His glory within you, and show you the right way in which to walk, to think, and to serve.

Herald 8 pages 57 and 70



The Order of the Cross

Spiritual Reflections

September 2016

Thoughts on the Teachings

John
Pignéguay

THE FORCES OF NATURE ARE IMPRESSIVE. They range through a wide spectrum of phenomena and present themselves in their varied manifestations in such a way as to indicate, however obliquely, that there is indeed ‘something going on.’ The quiet and unique beauty, for example, of a sunrise over the sea, with its transcendent pre-dawn glow, has its equivalent in the gradual awakening (or re-awakening) of a soul’s awareness of its own history, and the illumination that will slowly come to it as to its future path and purpose. In contrast, Nature can also give us disturbing influences through strong winds, storms of various sorts and intensity, and even serious fires where conditions are such as to make this unavoidable. Notwithstanding the outer impact of these events, there is often a subsequent sense of renewal, of re-growth and, spiritually speaking, of a learning or a re-learning, and a feeling of ‘moving forward.’

As we know from our reading and study of the Teachings, these outer phenomena have their correspondence with the inner life of each one of us – disturbances of various sorts are an inevitable part of the individual Soul-journey, and are also real opportunities to see the way ahead more clearly, if we are able to respond positively and in a reasonable way.

Our Friend’s remarkable first sentence in the cover-extract puts the idea of Fire – ‘The Sacred Fire’ – firmly before us. The energizing, the re-energizing properties contained within the reality of that term, certainly give us pause for thought. And ‘pause for thought’ is exactly what comes to us when, for example, sitting quietly in front of a log fire, we are able to just watch the movements and the colours of the flames, and feel the gentle and comforting warmth of the fire, all of which can draw us into a peaceful meditative atmosphere – a treat indeed.

We may sometimes think that all of this is outside our experience and does not necessarily apply to us – a natural reaction to such a profound topic, and especially so when coping with a busy world. But, as always, simplicity is the key – and a simple understanding of the Truths expressed by Our Friend gives us all the guidance we need in the conduct of our lives – ‘That Fire will ennoble you...and show you the right way in which to walk, to think, and to serve.’

Gateways to God: The Gateway of Taste

WE NOW COME TO THE SENSE that plays a vitally important part, that of taste. Now it is interesting that we can look at an apple, touch it, and feel it. We see its colour, note its shape. We may be able to judge as we touch it, whether it is hard or soft. We may be able to judge from the colour and the feel of it, what it may taste like, at least whether it is likely to be sweet or otherwise. But until we actually taste the apple, we do not really know what it is like, what is its nature.

Thus we may see and hear and touch many things but not really know them, although we may think we do. Until we really taste of the goodness of the Lord, do we really know what His goodness is and that the land in which that goodness is found is indeed goodly to live in?

Tastes change, it is said. It may also be said that taste changes. How true. For if we look back through the ages we find much evidence to support this. And here one is not thinking of what is superficial, but of that which is of deep import to the soul.

For it relates to what man desires to possess, to appease his hunger, to gratify his tastes. It relates to the fact that in order to live, a man must eat outwardly and also inwardly. For God so created us that we must eat and drink in order to live, or to sustain life. It is as simple and as profound as that.

We get hungry. What a wonderful thing that is, provided, of course, that there is something to eat and that we are capable of eating it. True hunger is the desire to replenish, to refresh, to build up. There is a true appetite. There can also be false appetites. That is, the true appetite has been perverted because the taste for something other than what is truly right has been cultivated.

Man, it is said, hungers after righteousness. How true that is even though he may eat of that which is often unrighteous, even in an outward sense. But then he will have developed a taste for what is unrighteous, even though his soul hungers for the bread which will alone suffice it. For only that bread which is of the realm of the soul, of soul quality, will suffice the soul.

The mind too has its bread. The heart also has its sustenance. And the outer body has its food.

In a truly lived and spiritually ordered life, the food for each realm would be of the same quality, though it be bread of a different realm, and though greater or lesser in degree. In the obtaining, preparing and eating of that food there would be nothing that could cause hurt or harm to life in any form.

But we can see that man's taste has changed from what it was originally. For originally he ate only of those foods which involved no hurt or harm to life in any way, but only what was nourishing, sustaining and upbuilding, so that the whole life of man was spiritual, even the earthly or physical part of him. It must, one thinks, be manifest to most people today, that man is something much more than what is accounted physical.

But can it be said of man today, that his whole life is spiritual, in soul, heart, mind and body? Bringing it nearer, to ourselves, can it be said of us that it is so?

Now this question of food is a vitally important one. For it may well be that upon this very thing will depend whether man is willing and able to find that true sustenance that will feed, nourish, sustain and upbuild him in the true sense way, so that he comes to know that true health that is entirely spiritual, which includes even the physical elements. But man cannot do this if his taste is for that which is non-spiritual.

Now what part of us does the sense of taste relate to specifically? Our desire nature surely. Now our desire nature is thought of in a way that accounts it to be of a non-spiritual order. It is thought of in relation to passion as anger and to what is thought of as sex indulgence with all its concomitants. Our desire is accounted as something to be suppressed or overcome or turned away from or indulged in. But in fact, it is of God. In its true sense it is 'intensity of feeling'. It is 'divinity of purpose'. but when it is brought down in its purpose, in its expressions, in its functions, then it will reveal what is not divine, and the intensity of feeling takes it even further down. This is not to say the physical expression is wrong. It is only wrong at any level when the purpose, motive, object and use is not pure and right.

But in itself, in what it is, in its real nature and purpose, it is sacred and holy and can be a mighty power in the true life of man. There is

too often a great sense of revulsion and guilt about this, but there is no need for this, once we clearly see that what He has given us, has implanted in us, must be of Him and like Him. The fact that it may have been misused in any way, should not affect our real understanding of its true nature; although obviously, as when any part of our nature has gone amiss, it has to be put right, but in the right way. At no point should there be any sense of false shame. For this very thing holds some from being freed and healed.

As was said earlier, if He who created us, gave of His own nature and likeness to us, then whatever we possessed originally, however latently, must be of Him, like Him. But because of the great declension of consciousness which took place in relation to man, those gifts given to us in the beginning were used for purposes which were neither true, pure, nor beautiful.

But if man's tastes have changed, if they have become as a taste for that which is unrighteous and in the spiritual sense unlawful, then it will have produced non-spiritual and unlawful results. We have but to look at things around us and we see that it is so. It has been productive of dissipation leading to serious organic breakdowns, even to the enervation of the very substances of man right through to the physical. There is much we could say in relation to this, but those who can see clearly will know what is indicated here.

This touches every aspect of our lives. For we may have a taste for power, for possessions of many kinds, for false ambition, for money, for drink. There is nothing wrong in possessing power, or having ambition, or having possessions. For they together with many other things are not wrong in themselves when truly understood - that is in their true nature, service and the way they should be acquired.

It is man through his own concept of them, his way and motive for acquiring them, who still caused them to be means whereby he has been brought into and kept in spiritual bondage and darkness for so long.

The real causes for this we cannot go into here, but we now know that these have been removed and man is now able, if he is willing, and desires to do so, to rise out of such a bondage into the freedom of a truly live spiritual life.

But he may well be held there by his taste, inbuilt by that which has long held him there.

What holds him there? Many things can do this! But it may be one thing in particular. Food, for instance. There will be those who have come into some measure of spiritual light and understanding, and yet do not seem to progress any further, it may well be that what is not yet seen is that the physical food that is eaten may, because of its nature and what is entailed in the procuring of it, and its effect upon and within the life, make it impossible for them to proceed further, spiritually. I am speaking here, of course, of the eating of flesh foods. Now the abstention from eating all flesh foods does not make anyone spiritual, but it makes it possible. And it will mean that some other creature's lives will have been spared. And where there is a measure of spiritual attainment, then abstention from flesh and the nourishing of the body with true foods, together with other things, will enable man to go forward spiritually, that is upwardly and inwardly and in a way that is not otherwise possible. I know this has been challenged, but those who have taken this step for the right reasons, which are humane and spiritual reasons, very rarely, if ever, go back from it. And as they go on they find confirmation of the rightness of the step taken.

The same applies, though in a less degree, to drinking and smoking. All these relate and appeal to the desire nature when this is not as it should be. They stimulate the desire for more. And there is built up a false taste which effectively veils and obscures the Truth. The same applies also to drugs. We should be able to dispense with all these things. If we want outer aids, the natural, simple herbal remedies will meet the case. All false stimulants are quite unnecessary. They are not of divine origin. They have no spiritual purpose. And they meet no true need. They cloud the mind. They burden the heart and clog the transmutory organs. They vitiate the true life in man. They are the cause of much that is diseased. It is now known medically, that smoking injects poison into the blood stream. And although these things may appear to alleviate certain conditions and meet certain needs, they do this at the cost of the true spiritual life, for these do not and cannot meet any true need. It is in this way that a man loses his own soul. For the life is immersed

in that which makes it well nigh impossible for the soul to function as it should, as it is intended to, that of revealing and expressing through heart, mind and body, those inner realities that are found in the soul alone. Such things are not found in books, though they point the way, but only within the soul.

Taste and see the goodness of the Lord, runs the Psalm. It is only as we seek to do this that we find the land, the land of our soul, goodly to live in.

If we so taste and eat of that which is provided by Him at every level of our life, then we shall find that true and permanent health, that wondrous sense of wholeness and wellbeing that can only come in that way. For the way is now open for our true soul faculties and senses to find their true service, expressions and function.

Our tastes will become refined at every level. They will become more selective, selecting only the best, that which is true and beautiful and pure, outwardly, mentally, emotionally and soulfully. For we cannot isolate or hurt any part of our life without the rest of life suffering. We cannot adulterate any part of the life without it being affected as a whole. As we realise what holds us, for the right reason at the right time, not coercing or forcing ourselves to do it, but quietly, prayerfully, wisely, we shall be specially helped. Ah, there is much waiting to be accomplished, if we can only rise into that state of consciousness and life where it becomes possible.

As we proceed along the true path, our taste for those things which are of Him will grow. We shall indeed hunger. But it will be that hunger after righteousness, that He alone can suffice. And that which He gives us induces in us a desire for more, so that as we eat, our capacity grows and we able to receive more and so become more like Him, upbuilt into His fashion and likeness.

And righteousness surely means right soul aspiration, right feeling, right thinking, right living, right desires, so purified and exalted that we shall be enhancing life and not hurting or harming it in any way.

So we come gradually to see, and what is more, to feel that we are all related to one another, members of one great family of which the creatures are a part. For they, as they become freed from all oppression and cruelty, will be enabled to fulfil the sacred purpose

for which they have been created. May they come to enjoy the freedom we claim for ourselves and to which they must ever be entitled.

Ah, Life then will indeed be glorious. For war will have departed, cruelty and oppression will have been banished, and disease will be no more. There will be only peace, light, joy and wholeness abounding. Is this a vain dream? Oh no. But it will become a reality only as it becomes a reality within us individually first. And it is now possible for each one to enter into that life wherein disease is no more, where all darkness has fled, where light shines, and where the power of God may be radiated at all times.

May our desires become truly purified and exalted, that we may desire only those things that are good, that are true, that are beautiful. Let us indeed taste of this wondrous life that is His life in us.

There is a great mystery in our desire nature. As we come to see what that nature really is, what is its true purpose and service, and to realise it, then shall we rejoice and be glad. For it is none other than the mystery of Himself in us.

How great the honour! How wondrous the privilege in being so created!

Our New Altar

At our Convocation in July we used our new Altar for the first time.



GATHERINGS AND EVENTS

September

23-25 Northern Area Gathering: Gartmore House, Stirling, Scotland

October

5 Western Area Day Gathering: Congresbury

November

11-14 Gathering at Charney Manor

December-January

30-4 New Year Gathering in Swanage

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

If you have changed your address or any of your contact details, please notify Roger Score at:

The Order of the Cross
27 Old Gloucester Street, London, WC1N 3AX
Email: light@orderofthecross.org or
Telephone 0207 1176 059

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David Everett, 112 Hankinson Road, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH9 1HX
Email: editor@orderofthecross.org

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