

The Christian Community

Perspectives

March—May 2020

Wounds and Healing



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Detail from *The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb*,
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attributed to Hubert and Jan van Eyck

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Detail of newly-restored Ghent altarpiece

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Editor:

Tom Ravetz
11 Upper Close, Forest Row, RH18 5DS

Editorial Team:

Peter Howe, Deborah Ravetz
Kevin Street

Subscriptions & Advertisements:

Gabriele Kuhn, Tel: +44(1383)821204
subs@perspectives-magazine.co.uk

All correspondence: Perspectives,
21 Napier Road, Edinburgh, EH10 5AZ
editor@perspectives-magazine.co.uk

Lay-Up: Christoph Hänni

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(Cheques payable to: **The Christian
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Australia: Enquire for price at:
Matthew Bond
C/- 319 Auburn Road
Hawthorn East, Victoria 3123

New Zealand: Enquire for price at:
Elizabeth Heybrook, 293 Winterslow
Rd. Staveley RD1, Ashburton 7771
Phone: 03-3030780

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The need to describe reality as something entire, undivided and without injury has been present as long as human beings have been expressing themselves. Nowadays, we experience it in part through its lack. We long for integration with our true selves, with each other in our communities and with the greater world around us.

The Act of Consecration of Man offers us the ‘medicine that makes whole’. Whatever challenges we face, we can ask what serves the reintegration of ourselves, our communities and our world. Acting to serve this return to wholeness means that we are aligned with the purpose of the communion, and of the whole Act of Consecration, namely to serve the world’s evolving.

TOM RAVETZ



Detail of the Resurrection from the Isenheim Altarpiece, by Matthias Grünewald.

Contemplation for Easter

Ioanna Panagiotopoulos

*Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?
But as they arrived, they looked up and saw that the stone, which
was very large, had already been rolled aside.* MARK 16

Wherever we turn, we are faced with seemingly insurmountable challenges to our human experience. Some of these challenges bring us such difficulty in our inner life that we choose to close ourselves against them; the door of our heart is darkened and obscured by the stone of pain. The door is too heavy to shift and we turn away.

But something pulses within us that would choose something different; that would choose to not walk away from the stone.

Something that would choose rather to withstand the suffering of the obscured heart; to be in service of death, to tend it. Something that would wrestle, and grieve, and weep tears and somehow still seek to hope; this power in us draws the alchemy of change from the roots of our soul, unleashing a strength that can move heart-stones the size of mountains, opening to reveal the wonder within.

It can experience the rising of the sun on Easter morning.

The stone falls away when, through our longing, we are able to endure, to stare the stony heartache into dust.

The rising sun will touch the place of our heart.

Light shines out of the deepest darkness.

Out of the tomb's dust, new life will emerge.

Our whole biography is one great Easter Festival, where the triumph of the Resurrection—against the insurmountable hardships of destiny—will rise on the altar of the human heart.

*You, who did not shake the dust from your longing,
but stood still, until the dust becomes transformed
into light.*

Nelly Sachs

*Ioanna
Panagiotopoulos
is a priest of
The Christian
Community in
Canberra.*

The Feeding of the Five Thousand

*Let us look long at the child lying in squalor,
The limbs of the girl exposed, standing for sale.
Let's not deny the downtrodden and dusty,
The hunger, the horror, the fearful and frail.*

*Give us, O Lord, the answers to questions:
The way to fill void and famine and want,
Emptiness, panic, the punishing pain
Of lacking fulfilment. Fulfil us again!*

*Nourish, O Spirit, our soul and our heart,
The needs of our neighbour, the stranger, the Earth.
Heal us, O Spirit, through Christ's living power,
And help us to answer the need of the hour!*

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Sickness and sin

Luke Barr

The Act of Consecration brings two concepts together, which we might not normally think belong to each other: the sickness of sin.

Sin is a very difficult word in our times. Understandably, no-one wants to feel judged by another. And unless we are having a particularly bad day, and are feeling masochistic, thinking of ourselves as sinful is beyond the pale. And who is it in the Act of Consecration who is calling us sinful, anyway?

We might justifiably baulk at the idea that sickness has to do with sin. When someone is ill, we don't trace the cause of that illness back to some 'sin' that they have committed, which is coming to light through their symptoms and sufferings.

And yet it is not an alien idea that illness might have something to do with something being amiss in the human soul. We have all surely experienced some event or relationship that caused us to feel under strain. If this grew bad enough, we may have become ill as a result. The ensuing illness can bring a kind of cleansing. We may feel refreshed after we have recovered. The illness has helped us to work through something, and we may feel stronger or healthier or even wiser than we were before.

On the other hand, sickness may manifest, without our being able to find a cause for it. Where does the sickness come from? Living through a destiny with such an illness, whether it be terminal or long-term, may lead us to ponder upon why this is happening. Illness may then lead us toward the gates of the great mystery of life with the questions about our destinies that cannot be answered by the intellect, but by intuition. We may feel the birth pangs of a new life in our soul that must develop if we are to fruitfully live with these questions.

In such times, the illness may appear to us in brief glimpses, as it must do to the consciousness of an angel. It manifests so 'that the deeds of God within may appear outwardly' (John 9:3).

*Luke Barr is a
priest of
The Christian
Community in
Forest Row.*

We all know that the Bible rests upon the foundations of the Judaic-Hellenic cultures. The Judaic element is clear to everyone. The Hellenic is often less so, and yet it is vital. The New Testament was originally conceived, heard and written in the Hellenic mind and soul. This extraordinary culture thought and related to the world in a way that we find difficult to grasp and replicate today.

The Hellenic mind did not experience 'sin' as the Hebrews did. For the Greeks, there was no 'sin'. They had to invent the word when they translated the sacred books of the Hebrews into the so-called Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament. The word that they chose for 'sin' was ἁμαρτία (hamartia) whose subtlety can be best grasped in a picture: it was as if an archer attempted to shoot an arrow, but their aim was off. The archer 'missed the mark'. And this was the experience of the Hellenist, of 'sin'. It was a 'missing the mark'; a 'falling short', a deviation from the aim.

This is the sort of 'sin' that we can probably all relate to! We need no outer judge. We can sense ourselves when we miss the mark. And if not, life will soon show us. Outer events will not feel right—or we will not feel aligned with them, even if they are good.

Sickness, then, is not just getting ill and becoming aware of our mortality. It means all the times in life when we feel out of alignment with our true selves—even if, despairingly, we don't know what our true self wills. That is an ill feeling: just as when we have eaten too much, and our stomach 'tells us' what we have done wrong, we might experience in our lack of connection with the world and ourselves. Somewhere along the line we have done too little or too much of something, and this needs to be addressed. Likewise, our culture can make us sick in the same way.

In reality, in our struggles for alignment, we are not only fighting to maintain our own health, but the health of a nation, a culture and of a time. Behind all of these are spiritual beings. Paul drew attention to the fact that we are not fighting against 'flesh and blood' but against 'spirit beings, mighty in the stream of time, against spirit beings, powerful in the creating of earth's substance, against the cosmic powers whose darkness rules the present time...' (Ephesians 6:12)

So, even if we do not see sickness as a sin, we might be able to see sin as a sickness. Just as sickness removes us from our life, causes us to

pause, and take stock of our lives, so too ‘sin’—that feeling of being off the mark—can serve to awaken us.

And it makes possible the emergence of something also quite new and unexpected in the spiritual world: the healing spirit. God is at work as living spirit in a way that heals the wounds and traumas that we are all beginning to experience today.

To ‘heal the sickness of sin’ it will be necessary to experience something that must be healed. The fact that human beings are now so aware that they are wounded, sick and traumatised indicates that we are getting closer to the working of the Holy Spirit. This healing spirit will not appear in some overwhelming cosmic revelation. It will unfold quietly in the human spirit: here, there—wherever the consciousness of the human being pauses, allowing itself, in a healthy way, to become ‘sick’ for a moment, and makes the effort to align itself with itself, and thereby ‘overcome sin’ through our healing, hallowing forces.



The Resurrection panel of the Isenheim altarpiece by Matthias Grünewald

The wound is a window for light

The priest as wounded healer

Jonah Evans

The Holy Wound is a profound mystery. I have been deeply moved, as I am sure many of you have, by the painting of the Resurrected Christ in the Isenheim Altarpiece. What has always struck me, are the wounds of Christ. In this painting, the wounds of Christ are not festering or infected, they are radiating with healing light. Christ's wounds became holy, Christ's wounds became like windows shone through with light! We see this profound mystery also when the Risen One appears to the disciples and they recognize him because of his wounds. At the same time He gives them the peace. Wounds alight with peace are Christ's signature. The holy wound is also in the apocalypse. We see the lamb of God who is pouring out his blood from a wound; pouring out his blood for the life of the world. Peace, life and light, pouring through the windows of his wounds. Rumi also speaks of this mystery, 'The wound is the place where the Light enters you.' And the famous Canadian poet Leonard Cohen says, 'Ring the bells that still can ring, forget your perfect offering, there is a crack in everything, that is where the light gets in.'

Just like the disciples, having a relationship with the living Christ today means getting closer to his healing wounds—getting closer to his light-filled pain. For we hear from *The Fifth Gospel* that "The connection between humanity and the pain of Christ must grow—must grow ever more tangible. Only then, will people comprehend how Christ's pain has continued to work....since the mystery of Golgotha, rejuvenating the powers of earth evolution.' Christ's pain has become a window where the light of the Father streams through to humanity.

*Jonah Evans
is a priest of
The Christian
Community
and codirector
of the English
speaking
priests' training
in Toronto.*

And as we get closer to him, as we progress in ever greater likeness with Christ, as St Paul says, we too are called to bring our wounds into likeness with Christ, transmuting our wounds, from sources of mere pain into light-filled wounds.

Rudolf Steiner also speaks of the mystery of holy wounds. In his lectures on the Gospel of Mark he tells us that Jesus needed five wounds—Jesus needed wounds in order to be fully penetrated by the being of Christ. The wounds of Jesus were like windows through which the light of Christ could penetrate. Similarly, just as we as priests are called to become bearers of Christ, bearers of the angels of our congregations which are members of Christ's being, then, like Jesus we too need wounds. We need wounds so that we may be penetrated by his being. (From this perspective it is interesting to think about the fact that, according to our recent seminary research, most of us experience the seminary as a place of receiving wounds...)

Joseph Beuys made a work of art called *Show your Wound*. Before sharing my wounds, I want to make a clear distinction between redeemed and unredeemed wounds. Redeemed wounds are wounds that have become open windows for Christ's light—light which fills us and rays out to others. Unredeemed wounds are wounds that are still closed to his light, not yet transmuted through dying and becoming new. Unredeemed wounds are dark; they can become infected; they are full of untransformed pain. And if we reveal unredeemed wounds in the wrong place, for example to those whom we are supposed to be helping, they give no help, they shed no light. Rather, unredeemed wounds radiate more fear, resentment, bitterness and blame into the world. We can see the archetype of the unredeemed wound in the beast of the apocalypse. In contrast to the lamb's open wound whose blood pours out for the life of the world, the beast's wound (Rev. 13) is a death wound that closes up; it does not want to go through death and resurrection. Unredeemed wounds have no light to give for the life of the world.

For this reason, I will not write about my unredeemed wounds. It is important to guard those carefully, only speaking of them in a protected space, until the grace of transformation can come. However, I do feel inspired to share three redeemed wounds—wounds that have become windows for light. For in my experience, the priestly heart is

like a house. And the more open windows, the more the sun shines through.

A wound with a colleague is where I want to start. The pain began for me in this relationship with feeling unrecognised, unseen and criticised. The pain grew more difficult as time went on. We would attempt to talk things out, but nothing seemed to change. No amount of talking seemed to help. From the outside our conflict was probably invisible, for we hid it well, but it was there under the surface. Then, in my secret suffering, I decided to seek



Detail of the Resurrection by Matthias Grünewald

help. I asked an older priest who had been a mentor, for a Sacramental Consultation. It was there that he suggested I needed to work with forgiveness. He gave me an exercise to work with. Every night, I needed to take my colleague into my imagination and try to focus on something truly good, something truly light-filled in them. So I tried. It was hard. I found it difficult to let go of my complaining pain and resentment and see the good. And yet, as I became more and more aware of the pain, my pain unexpectedly transformed. The pain that I thought was from my colleague, surprisingly turned into the pain of guilt. After a short time with this practice, a clear picture arose that actually I had trespassed against my colleague. I became aware that inwardly, I had actually dismissed my colleague long ago. I had dismissed them as not worthy. I had judged them unacceptable. And I saw that this judgement was a lie and hindering my capacity to love. I felt so ashamed of this. I am so ashamed. It was as if my judgment was like shutters closed tight

on the window of my heart, my judgement itself blocking the light of love to pass through.

So I began every night consciously to choose to let go of this lie and focus on their goodness. In this way I discovered true forgiveness—opening the shutters so that his light can shine through. I felt liberated from a self-imposed prison. And even though in many ways the pain of those wounds between us is still there, it is different now for me. The pain is carried with peace. The tension has softened with acceptance. The wound is permeated with warmth.

A few years later I discovered the pain of a second wound. It was the painful fear connected to a dwindling bank account in the congregation. No, actually an empty bank account in the congregation! Because we lacked money, I experienced feeling somehow unappreciated for my work, as if I were giving my life-blood to this congregation and yet receiving no actual appreciation in return. I tried to remain positive outwardly, but I began to notice that I felt more and more subtle resentment toward my community. I certainly didn't shout at them, or show my fear and anger with words, but it was nevertheless there, festering below the surface. After much soul-spirit work, I finally came to realize the source of my pain. I felt owed, entitled to the congregation's care and compensation.

The awakening came one day on a walk as I was contemplating the sun for a sermon. I was thinking that the sun gives everything it has all the time. It gives to the earth, it gives to all human beings, it gives without any expectation of return! It is self-sustaining. This simple thought broke open my heart. I realized then that at the base of my wound there lived a lie. The lie was that I had believed in the thought that the value of my work was dependent on others—that if I didn't get money as a recognition for my work, it meant that I wasn't doing good work. My conviction that the congregation should pay me because of my good work was the closed shutters covering my window. I saw that I needed to open the shutters of my window by letting go of the lie. I saw that I needed the inspiration of the sun, the sun who simply gives and gives without any expectation of return, to be my new truth. I felt liberated from the shackles of working for money and I knew that no matter what happened, nothing could prevent me from giving.

That next year, the discomfort of living with a tenuous bank account was still there but my heart was free. I had realized through His grace that the most important thing a priest can do is to let go of every expectation that prevents us from loving whatever is given us, loving the work we do for itself in itself. I experienced then the truth of Steiner's words from *How to Know Higher Worlds*, 'that the spiritual world sees no value in our efforts made with the intention for outer success, only love for the deed itself has worth in the eyes of the spirit.'

The last wound I want to share pierces me with pain every day and yet this wound has also been one of the biggest blessings of my life. This wound comes from the pain of carrying a child with a severe illness. Five years ago I was preparing for a lecture at the church when I received a distressed call. It was my wife. She was at the hospital with our daughter who had fainted and wasn't responding to pain. The doctors told us that she had Bartter's Syndrome, a rare genetic-kidney illness that is fatal if she doesn't take multiple medications four times a day. The news was devastating. I put down the phone and began to walk home. I had never felt that kind of pain before, the pain of fear for your child's life, the wrenching pain of knowing that she would have a life of suffering and hospital visits. And as I walked, I fell to my knees. I inwardly cried out to Christ, cried out for help like never before. This time, the shutters opened on my wound-window because of the sheer sincerity of my cry. And I will never forget how the light poured in. It was a pure gift. It was a substance. Christ and his sphere of life was there. Through the window of my pain poured a strength that carried me so that I could carry my daughter. I felt blessed by a faith that knows everything is as it should be—that bearing my daughter's illness was to join with Christ. He didn't take away the pain but surrounded it with his peace.

From that moment on, I was opened to a new kingdom, a new kingdom in the spiritual world, a new kingdom within the world of the senses. Only then did I actually understand the word 'The Kingdom of God is at hand.' Through the pain of my daughter's illness, through a conflict with a colleague, through not feeling supported by the congregation, the eyes of my heart had opened.

The wounds became windows for his light.

Counterpoint – an inner journey through the festivals

Lars-Åke Karlsson

This article is the first in a series that will appear in the next four issues of *Perspectives*. They were first published in book form in Finnish and Swedish. They have been translated by Sheila Iveson.

From the Foreword: Human beings are part of nature. They live from it, are carried by it, and are protected by it. Human beings have always more or less consciously known that if something is taken from nature it has to be replaced in some way. Religions, mythologies, magic, agricultural methods, science and technology have all in their own way sought to maintain equilibrium.

How does this work today? Ever more people are asking themselves now: has humanity disturbed this equilibrium, or even destroyed it?

Nature is not spoken about much in the four gospels. And when it is, we might encounter a tree, a mountain, a desert, the shore of a lake, some grass or a bird, but there will be no description. Christ moves through this landscape: he walks along the shore; he ascends a mountain; he kneels to write in the sand; he sails on a lake. In all these places he does things, meets people and speaks words. And wherever he goes, changes occur. People are healed and nourished, while others are filled with deep resentment.

Careful readers of the gospels may notice, after having returned to a passage in the gospel time and again, that their surroundings are not quite the same as they were. It is as if the surroundings had also ‘experienced’ something, and had been given a new hue. So we may ask ourselves: what traces have I left on the path that I have trodden? Is anything growing in them?

These articles can be viewed as an inward journey along a familiar road through the changing scenery of the four seasons together with one who knows the way.

Easter—the heart of the earth

‘But we have not witnessed great miracles, but small events in the presence of some people.’

We leave the security of the Christmas period behind us and during February and March we set out on a journey marked by increasing dissonance, confrontation and polarisation towards a place of pain, the point where two lines intersect: the Cross, which is the central symbol

of Christianity. In the depths, a bitter struggle takes place and on Easter morning vibrant nature signals a breakthrough, a victory.

But a lot happens before we arrive there.

Topsy-turvy, carnival and ash

Many people still know that Easter season is preceded by a period of fasting, but we have largely forgotten that before this period began the world was turned upside down and a riotous time was had by all. It was time for carnival!

We believe that we know roughly who we are. Perhaps we have heard it so often from parents, teachers and others that we have begun to believe it. Yet it is clear that many of the obstacles in our lives are not problems in themselves; they become problems because of the inaccurate picture we have of ourselves and our capacities. The masquerade, which was the highlight of the carnival period, provided one magical night of escape from one's own prison, when we could play a completely different role to our normal one. How good it would be if we could reintroduce the element of carnival into our lives.

After this, the fasting begins on Ash Wednesday. To fast for forty days is a strange experience, regardless of how it is done. Something is missing. We may feel a strange feeling of restlessness. After a while we may feel: 'it's not so bad.' Then perhaps: 'it's going well.' Often at the end: 'I did it!' or 'Now I know a little more about myself'.

Most cultures have some form of fasting. The Christian forty-day fast is a reflection of Christ's own fast before he meets the Adversary on the mountaintop. Fasting was not originally about health or lifestyle. It was seen as a necessary preparation for something big to come, a kind of strengthening before a trial or a decision. Seen from a modern perspective, it is the antithesis of modern man's comfort eating and unthinking consumerism under the pressures of the everyday grind.

There are many ways of fasting. Within the Orthodox and Catholic churches, certain foods such as meat and eggs are given up. For Muslims, fasting means that one doesn't eat during daylight hours. The Reformation largely abolished the external practice of fasting and instead put emphasis on inner attitudes. Today, during

*Lars-Åke
Karlsson is a
priest emeritus
living in
Finland.*

Lent, many try to abstain from something for forty days: not to watch TV, not to eat chocolate, not to smoke, or not to drive to work, to name just a few examples.

Human beings are creatures of habit. We experience our habits—even the bad ones—as absolutely essential, and perhaps even as the core of our identity. But if I remove a habit, good or bad, and stay away from it for a month, I will realize that I can manage without it. It is a simple way to get to know my body, my whole being and how I really nurture myself.

Lent culminates in Holy Week. Christ has now reached the city of Jerusalem, the end of his journey, where a cross will soon be erected.

Strangely familiar

The dramatic stages of Holy Week, from the entry into the city on a donkey on Palm Sunday, to the torture and death on the cross on Good Friday, are like a journey into the heart of darkness, whereby all that is not essential is gradually peeled away. We are thrown into a whirlwind of betrayal, envy, fear, doubt, arrogance, hatred, brutality and humiliation, with brief moments of insight, comfort and closeness often from unexpected sources. No angels, no heavenly music. As Good Friday's decisive moment approaches we hear the words 'Behold, the Man!' spoken prophetically by somebody who has the power to set him free, but does not.

Every step of Christ's passion, every little turn, both good and bad, feels strangely familiar, for it is so human. We are on the way up to our own Jerusalem and we all bear our own cross. If we follow our inner voice it feels right, even if we 'walk through the valley of the shadow of death'. If we don't, it will feel wrong, regardless of all the worldly success we may enjoy.

The gospels are silent about what happens on Easter Saturday, but the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus amplifies the few references elsewhere in the Bible (Ephesians 4:8–10 and 1 Peter 3:18–20) when it takes us through the deepest darkness, into to the dwelling place of the dead, where Christ reveals himself as the light. He is able to break the chains of death despite the strong resistance of Hades and the Devil.

When Easter morning dawns, it is as if everything has changed. The same town, the same houses and streets, the same grave, the same people: yet everything is different. It is as if everything has a new sheen, a

new pulse, a new breath. Things are the same, but then again they are not. They have got their magic back.

The Sun's day

Easter morning always falls on a Sunday: 'the first day of the week', the day of the sun. It is as if Christianity's innermost desire was to bring us to the quality that prevailed on the first day of creation when the words 'Let there be light' actually created light. It gives us the possibility to experience ourselves and all others in our personal cosmos as radiant 'suns' and not as pale 'moons', as is often the case in our daily lives. The elevation of Sunday to the most important day of the week is more than just a question of the calendar: something profoundly human is at stake here.

If we truly want to be human beings, should not everything we do begin with 'Sunday'? The fact that we modern human beings have paired Saturday with Sunday to form what we call the 'weekend' seems to be a step back.

Although the gospels need only a few pages to describe them, the forty days of Easter are a time of wonders. These are not the big, dramatic miracles that we have witnessed before Easter; rather, they are small events in the immediate vicinity of certain people. And initially, the reactions of those individuals are neither big nor particularly dramatic.

Slowly—step by step

Fathomless grief seems to weigh on those who loved Jesus, after their great loss. Some of the women approach the tomb early on Sunday morning. The other disciples meet secretly out of fear. Two of them wander in the countryside and try to understand the incomprehensible events that have just taken place. They all seem to be paralysed.

Then something completely unexpected happens: in the early morning light, the women see that the great stone has been rolled away from the tomb, which appears to be empty. In spite of the locked doors, the men who have gathered together feel that their master, so recently executed, is standing in their midst, only to disappear again. The two wanderers are joined by a stranger. It is only in the evening as they are about to eat together that they realise they are together with their master, as they had been so many times before. Slowly, step by step, the crippling grief of these people, who have shared their life with the

prophet of Nazareth, is transformed through dismay, doubt and amazement into a budding notion that something new is about to happen in the world. It is as if a new heart has begun to beat within the earth. God has moved back into the dwelling place that seemed irredeemably ruined. The pulse of the earth is beating anew.

Easter is the heart of the earth.

The in-between

Forty days later there are some men standing on the hill that stands opposite the temple in Jerusalem, and they experience the Resurrected One disappearing from their sight in a cloud. Before this, he had said that he would return in the same manner he left them.

The final farewell? Presence? Return in a cloud? It is a farewell—in the physical sense. He really goes ‘to the Father’: he is no longer visible or tangible. Simultaneously he is intensely present in the airy, life-giving quality which the clouds stand for in this world.

And his return?

If we seek for him outwardly, might we be looking for him in the wrong places with instruments too crude and clumsy? Perhaps we should be looking elsewhere: in the ever changing seasons, in the play of colours in the sky, in the light and shadows of a birch thicket, or in the ceaseless movement of the waves? Perhaps in the finest performance of a string quartet, in a poem that makes it easier to breath, or in a fleeting encounter between two people?

Ascension is a homage to the vibrant in-between spaces in our lives.

Out of our own prison

Fifty days have now passed since the Resurrection. The disciples have assembled once more. They meet in a room, perhaps still in secret for fear of reprisals. Suddenly a wind blows through the room and flames descend above their heads. They begin to speak and the people around them are able to understand them, regardless of their language. Even Peter, the denier, goes into the midst of the crowd and makes a long speech, which surprises all who hear it and ‘the words touched them in their hearts.’

Where is the timidity, the anxiety, the betrayal, the fear? Step by step, the fifty days have changed the disciples from a fearful crowd into a group of strong individuals, who dare to leave the confines of their own prison and become ‘fire-bearers’ in the world.

Whitsun stands for so much:

- *It is the day of **democracy**. The spirit is not shared according to deserts. Everyone gets the same amount, regardless of whether they are a scribe or a fisherman. The only thing it requires is the willingness to set out on a journey.*
- *It is the birthday of **language**. The most important things in all languages take place beyond the words, in the tension between the different types of word and the sentences they make up, between the sounds and the rhythms, in the intervals and in the silences. Once we have learned to understand this we become true ‘Pentecostals.’*
- *It is the day of **courage**. The fear that lives within all of us is pushed aside to make room for the creative, active self. When Christ says ‘I am,’ it is not something exclusive to him, but we can take it quite literally: I am, indeed.*
- *It is the day of the **Spirit**. The message is shockingly simple: everything that is, comes from ‘above.’ The essence of everything is spirit, which manifests itself physically in an infinite number of ever-changing shapes and forms.*

To summarise, we can see how the Easter festival period moves between extremes of strong dramatic tension. We began with the carnival atmosphere; we were led by hardship and suffering into the confrontation with bitter necessity in Holy Week: this pressed us towards Jerusalem and Golgotha. There everything is brought together, at the focal point, the cross, where all roads end.

Astonished, we stood before an empty grave. We could feel that a shift had taken place deep beneath the surface of our consciousness and we could see the slow transformation within the disciples. Finally, Whitsun demonstrates the universality of Christianity and its deeply human character: Every human being is in reality a Christopherus, a bearer of Christ.

What is true healing?

Reflections on not just living with a disability

Saraphir Qaa-Rishi

The impulse for writing this article came out of conversations with friends about what it is like to live with a disability or condition like stammering. Stammering is a neurological condition but it is still not uncommon for people to see it as a psychological weakness or a symptom of emotional imbalance. This is, of course, not true, and it is clear to me that stammering is a gift, both in how it can help you develop as a human being and in the way it makes you see and experience things differently. However, this doesn't mean that it's a smooth journey, as you not only have to deal with your own feelings about having a disability: you also always have to be prepared to deal with other people's attitudes and behaviour. I can genuinely say that most people I meet are very open-minded. I am blessed with wonderful friends who accept me as I am, and work environments that are mostly infused with respect and openness. I have also had many positive encounters with people who didn't know me well, one memorable remark from a priest of The Christian Community about ten years ago being: 'You must never be embarrassed by your stammer, I think it's beautiful'. However, there have also been plenty of less positive encounters with people, encounters that if I had let them, could have left me questioning my own worth, strength and emotional health.

A friend of mine, who also has a stammer, describes living with it as

Saraphir Qaa-Rishi works as a eurythmist in Edinburgh, specialising in well-being, mindfulness and social eurythmy.

a path of initiation. This can certainly be so, as you can see in how Rudolf Steiner describes the stages of initiation in *How to Know Higher Worlds*:

For many people, ordinary life itself is already a more or less unconscious process of initiation through the fire trial. Such people have lived a life so rich in experiences that their self-confidence, courage and steadfastness have matured in healthy ways; they have learned to bear suffering,

disappointment and failure calmly, magnanimously, and with unbroken strength. People who have worked through their experiences in this way are often already, although without knowing it clearly, initiates.

Of course, this doesn't mean that everyone who lives with a stammer or other condition ends up being an initiate or even manages to take significant steps in this direction. To start that journey you have to acknowledge the importance of managing and transforming your inner life and how you respond inwardly to outer circumstances. But once you do realise the importance of this, then what better way to learn to bear suffering calmly than when you have to face off bullies, people laughing at you, or deal with people's condescension and ignorance when they offer you suggestions for healing your stammer or make other comments that reveal a lack of tolerance? While I have occasionally been laughed at, the latter is what I have more commonly met in anthroposophical or other spiritual circles.

One example is a healer/shaman I knew back in 2001, who decided I should go on a timeline journey back to the moment when I started stammering and he would heal it for me—and if I didn't stop stammering it meant I just wasn't strong enough to heal. A second example is from when I was studying eurythmy and a eurythmist whom I barely knew came up to tell me of an emotional release technique she knew. When I asked why she told me about this, she said it was because of my stammer. A third example is a colleague telling me, just after we had spoken about stammering and living with a disability, that 'Steiner said' that people are disabled because of their sins in a past life. Other examples are: having healers suggested to me and being told that neuroplasticity is proof I can heal my stammer, by people I'd never met before.

While I always welcome genuine interest in stammering and am happy to talk about it if approached with empathy, it is thought-provoking that most people who have transgressed in the way described above have never shown any actual interest in stammering or how it is to live with it, prior to making their comments. This suggests to me that their attitude is based on a lack of real empathy. It comes across as being condescending and superior and, as they are basically telling me it is not ok to have a stammer and I should deal with it, is also intoler-

ant and in effect discriminatory, which is not only unethical, but also against the law in Britain and other western countries.

Even people working in the therapies get it wrong sometimes: I have seen a document by an unknown eurythmy therapist that describes stammering and dyslexia as illnesses. This implies that people who stammer (which is up to at least 1% of the population) and people who are dyslexic (which is about 10% of the population) are in a perpetual state of being sick and unwell, which is a very disturbing view of difference and disability.

These examples bring to mind what Steiner says in his lecture course, *Education for Special Needs*. He not only says that everyone has some tendency or quality in their soul life that can be called abnormal, he also says:

... the only possible grounds we can have for speaking of the normality or abnormality of the child's life of soul, or indeed of the life of soul of any human being, is that we have in mind something that is normal in the sense of being average. There is no other criterion than the one that is customary among people who abide by ordinary conventions; such people have their ideas of what is to be considered reasonable or clever, and then everything that is not an expression of a 'normal' life of soul (as they understand it) is for them an abnormality. At present there is really no other criterion. That is why the conclusions people come to are so very confused. When they have in this way ascertained the existence of 'abnormality', they then begin to do—heaven knows what!—believing they are thereby helping to get rid of the abnormality, while all the time they are driving out a fragment of genius! (Lecture 1)

The balance between the extremes

Between January 1940 and August 1941 over 70,000 people with disabilities were exterminated by the Nazis in what was termed the 'euthanasia programme', an operation that provided the blueprint for the extermination camps where they planned for their 'final solution' to take place (the genocide of the Jewish people). These people with various disabilities or mental health issues were deemed unworthy of life and were seen as a threat to the purity of the Aryan master race. The programme was officially stopped in August 1941, but the practice

continued and it is estimated that over 200,000 people with various disabilities were murdered by the Nazis between 1940 and 1945.

The Nazis were not alone in considering some people ‘unworthy of life’. Eugenics—the science of improving a population by controlled breeding to increase the occurrence of desirable characteristics—was very prevalent in the early twentieth century. The term was coined by Francis Galton, a British scientist, and the theory and practice had supporters in all parts of the Western world.

What we see in the cold-hearted and inhuman treatment of anyone who didn’t fit their image of the superhuman is how the Nazis and the advocates for eugenics, in seeking to deprive people of their humanity, actually deprived themselves of just that. This can be seen as one side of the duality of the forces of evil. The other side of this, I would say, is the sentimental effusiveness of ‘wanting to heal’ someone, usually by people who have little sense of boundaries and no interest in what they are meeting. Both the Ahrimanic cold-heartedness and the superior, Luciferic lack of boundaries are based on lack of acceptance and intolerance of what is different and, more importantly, on a clear lack of compassion.

To discover what real healing is, we have to slip into the gap between these two opposing forces that are constantly trying to push, tempt or trick us out of our humanity. This is the place of true freedom, where we connect to a deeper part of our being and where the love that many refer to as the Christ consciousness or God lives. In this place you love what is. You have no need to be something other than who you are or to be how others think you should be.

I have been asked by people if I have ‘overcome my stammer yet’, but this just shows a lack of understanding about what stammering is, and what really bothers me in this obsession with ‘overcoming’ or ‘healing’ the stammer is the focus on the physical body and the notion that the person is healed just because they stop stammering. Surely, if we are living and working with the concept of humans being more than just a physical body, the physical should cease to be of most importance, and our soul development and spiritual insights become what we should focus on in our lives? There is, of course, no cure for stammering and the point is that what we need to overcome is our inability to love and accept ourselves as we are and all the negative emotions that often ac-

company the physical stammer, not the stammer itself. It is far harder to love than to hate. It is far easier to go with the lack of acceptance that is prevalent in society and to wish to eradicate anything that makes us different, than it is for us to embrace and accept it and ourselves as we are. It is far easier to keep on pursuing a dream that is impossible to reach and to live in a state of unhappiness, shame, fear and feelings of inadequacy—and it is also easy to see which forces would want to keep us in such a state. To quote John in his First Epistle: ‘There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.’ (1 John 4:18)

It is very easy to let the stammer control your life. It can determine whether you have a good or a bad day, whether you study or what jobs you go for, and it can control your entire social life. However, what is really controlling you is your fear, shame and lack of acceptance of the stammer. Once you start working constructively with these inner aspects of stammering, you are changing your inner reality and creating a life with less tension and resistance. What you resist persists, and I know from my own inner work over the last twenty years, that whenever I have started thinking I should try to not stammer in a situation, I created inner tension and resistance, which always made me stammer more.

Once you love whatever challenge you were born with, that part of you is healed and you are free of the fetters it previously held you in. As Steiner says in connection with the sixth requirement for esoteric training—developing the feeling of gratitude for all that you receive: ‘Only if I love something can it reveal itself to me. And every revelation should fill me with thankfulness, for I am made richer by it.’ (*How to Know Higher Worlds*.) Loving something does not make the physical aspect of it go away, and of course that’s not the point. The point is that you are free and you have found inner peace—at least in relation to this aspect of your being. Then, not only can the gifts of living with something like a stammer begin to reveal themselves to you—such as developing inner strength and courage, empathy, listening skills and insights into the nature of suffering and how to transform it—you can also begin to be of real service to your community through being able to offer the fruits of your own journey so far and helping others move towards love and acceptance and away from fear and suffering.

Baptism, evil and freedom

Peter van Breda

Some modern churches have struggled with the question whether the references to evil really belong in a service of infant baptism. When godparents swear on the baby's behalf to renounce 'the deceit and corruption of evil', our intuition tells us that this has little to do with the world of the tiny baby, which embodies innocence and purity. This confusion of what belongs in a service for infants and one for adults goes back to the first centuries of the Christian church, when baptisms were mainly celebrated for adults. A person wanting to become a Christian as an adult needed to recognise the fallen aspect of their being. This includes the sickness of sin, which has been part of our evolution since our expulsion from paradise. When the sacrament of baptism came to be used more and more for infants, the reference to our original sin was retained. The Roman Catholic rite includes the prayer of exorcism: 'We pray for this child: set him/her free from original sin.'

Of course, the fundamental question of the meaning of the 'original' sin that led to our leaving paradise and our relationship to the adversary forces through the ages is not resolved by merely omitting it from the baptismal service. The Sacrament of Baptism in The Christian Community makes no reference to evil; nevertheless, we still face the challenge of dealing with the unrelenting negative powers of the adversary forces. As we go from childhood into youth and adulthood our awareness of the reality of evil increases. We sense it attacking us on all levels of our being. Evil stalks us in every part of life. We are constantly and seriously challenged to confront evil in all its manifestations. It cannot be overcome by simply banishing it, or by imagining we can deny its reality, as many contemporary thinkers do when they claim that evil is not real. If we reduce evil to nothingness or try to avoid it at all costs, we miss something important: the possibility that our encounter with evil bears within it the potential to be the place where we can become free individuals.

*Peter van Breda
is a priest of
The Christian
Community in
London.*

If we examine our soul life we can identify three central tendencies. One is more seductive. Its active presence is felt whenever we allow ourselves to become caught up in illusionary states of being, creating inflated, false or vain pictures of ourselves. Under the influence of these befooling seductive powers we are in danger of losing touch with our true being and we may begin to act irresponsibly. In its extreme form, this tendency can lead over into mental illness. Addictive behaviours can play a role in this kind of delusion.

The second pernicious power whose influence is rampant in our time is connected with materialism in all its forms. Materialism is not simply a question of accumulating excessive and expensive things. It creeps into all aspects of life when we exclude the creative presence and reality of the spirit. This negation of the spirit is not only to be found in scientific laboratories, in which only the world accessible to our senses or the instruments we create is observed and considered true. We all have to battle constantly with a strong tendency to attend only to the outer surface in our dealings with the sense world and also in our appraisal of our fellow human beings. We easily mistake the world that our senses perceive for ultimate reality. The denial of the spirit in every expression of life is more than a malady: it is tragic error. Many people today are ensnared by this dark power, which can draw us down into the depths of hopelessness. A dark, depressive cloud hangs over modern society, trapping people in a cage of materialistic darkness. Never before in history has the human intellect been so caught up with these deadening spiritless forces.

There is a third pernicious force at work in the world. It corrodes the very essence of our humanity by negating the true individuality of each person. The result is that human life has become balefully cheap. The true self and identity of a person is disregarded, manipulated and abused in a sickeningly malevolent manner. This dehumanising expression of evil attacks the very fabric of our inner being. This is a relatively new expression of evil.

There is thankfully another perspective to this rather bleak picture that we encounter in modern life. Those same adversary forces that could be our downfall, when harnessed, understood and properly mastered can become positive aids in our inner growth. This thought, that

the place in which we can achieve freedom and a new morality is to be found where the adversaries are strongest, is one to ponder on deeply.

Contemplating the stages of the incarnation of Christ can be a help here. Already in Epiphany, we witness how the Christ-child is born into the world of power-politics and deceit, when Herod tries to destroy him. Then the gospels show us how immediately after the baptism in the Jordan, Christ is confronted by the satanic forces who try to divert him from his mission. Through the three years that follow and through his descent into the underworld after the crucifixion, Christ works with and transforms these adversary powers through the power of his love.

It is true that our redemption in many ways lies in our own hands. The spiritual worlds want to help but they are held back. They are unable to do anything until we have consciously started the process of wanting to be healed. The angelic worlds do not know evil as we do. Evil has its centre of activity and expression only here on earth. Christ's deed within the human nature of Jesus was to re-create and forge once more the link to the heavenly worlds, making it possible for us to enliven all of earthly existence sacramentally and lift it into the realm of the spirit.

Christ, who became human and encountered the very worst of evil, is our helper. He stands before us as the redeemed Son of Man. We may walk with him and ask him to accompany us on our path through life.

Feeling his presence, we step out on to the path of man's consecration. We can learn to lift up our souls to the lofty spirits of the world in worship and in our artistic endeavours, without falling prey to illusion and fantasy. We can deepen our powers of divining and learn slowly but surely to perceive the spirit that is present beyond and behind the outer surface of all things. We can seek inwardly to deepen our experience of the essential expression of all living beings, never being satisfied by their mere outer appearance. We uphold the dignity, the individuality and spiritual core of every other human being, however fallen, without exception. To achieve all this, we need to unite with others to become co-workers for a future filled with hope.

Christ has aligned his whole being with the destiny of the earth and with humanity. He waits patiently, often painfully, for our recognition and our response. The adversary satanic and devilish powers of this

world are not imaginary: they are present, but they are also doomed, for they can and will never out-spirit Christ.

In Passiontide, we contemplate their activity; always mindful that the transforming power of Christ is with us always, as he promises, to the very end of time.

These lines from Christopher Fry's *The Sleep of Prisoners* express our challenge and our privilege:

*Thank God our time is now when wrong comes up
to face us everywhere,
Never to leave us till we take
The longest stride we ever took!*

Judas – some insights from anthroposophy

Cynthia Hindes

It belongs to one of the deepest paradoxes of humanity that the healing deed of Christianity came about through a crime: that of Judas. It is one of the deepest contradictions that we owe Christianity to Judas. Had not Judas betrayed Jesus Christ, the mystery of Golgotha would not have taken place. Indeed, living truth contains its own counterimage.

At the same time, Judas's life story reads like a mythological drama, the drama of Oedipus. Oedipus was raised as a foundling. He unwittingly killed his father and married his mother after having been set adrift as an infant because those very deeds had been predicted. When he realised his disastrous fate, he blinded himself. Oedipus was an illustration of a period of transition in human history when rebellious powers were arising against the blood ties of an earlier epoch. It is a destiny that is not merely personal. It is mythical. It represents the state of humanity at an evolutionary crossroad: the father in heaven forgotten by an intellect blind to the spirit, which sees only the material and mechanical; mother earth's riches prostituted by craving and the power of egotism, without human beings realising it.

Emil Bock relates an early Christian legend that puts the childhood and life of Judas in another parallel with that of Oedipus. Judas is set adrift on the sea as an infant because it is prophesied that he will bring great evil. He is raised as a foundling by an island queen and becomes jealous when she devotes her love to the son born after him. She tells Judas he was a foundling. He kills her son, travels to Jerusalem where he becomes a steward in Pilate's palace. In serving Pilate, he quarrels with the neighbour and kills him. Pilate gives him the neighbour's house and the widow as a wife. The neighbour, however, was his father and the widow his mother. One day his wife/mother relates how she had exposed her child to the sea. Judas

*Cindy Hindes
is a priest of
The Christian
Community in
Los Angeles.*



Judas and Peter, from Da Vinci's *The Last Supper*

despairs. His wife is a Christian, and she brings him to Jesus. In this version, Judas is Oedipus in a Christian setting, the destiny of all people. Judas doesn't blind himself but betrays Christ, the light of the world.

The Jewish people are also in transition. 160 years earlier, a priest and son of a priest led a revolt against the Seleucid empire. Judas Maccabeus had made a treaty with the Holy Roman empire in which they agreed to help each other against their enemies. After that, he called upon Rome

for help. 160 years later, Rome was still there, as allies yet masters. The Jewish people both admired and feared Rome. At the same time, they wanted to establish a world empire based on religion but modelled after Rome.

Judas Iscariot, the reincarnated Judas Maccabeus, was a man midway between Rome and Judaism. He had great hopes that Jesus, the Master, would overthrow the Romans and set up this divine kingdom. By then, Rome had made its Caesars into gods. But Judas was very impatient, unhealthily restless. He couldn't understand why the master hesitated so long.

Judas was also a social reformer, along the lines of communism. He held the apostles' common purse and kept the accounts, but laid claim to what did not belong to him. Having no relationship with sacramental worship, he thought Mary Magdalen's anointing of Christ before his burial to be a senseless waste of time and money. And it was Judas's relationship to money that gave Ahriman access to Christ. Ahriman made use of Judas to show Christ, on earth, what it means to make



Sketch of Judas by Leonardo Da Vinci

stones (money) into bread. Christ had to come under the lordship of Ahriman, the lord of death.

Judas decided to force Christ's hand, to bring him before the Jewish and Roman courts so that the great miraculous uprising would take place and the divine kingdom would come into being.

The Last Supper is Judas's undoing. He who has no relationship to the sacrament receives communion from Christ. Acceptance of the sacrament broke the link between Judas's I and his physical-spiritual nature. He was shattered by the sacrament unworthily received. Satan enters him and takes the place of his I. Judas was but a tool. Pregnant with evil, Judas leaves the last supper, fleeing into the night. In a kind of stupendous mystery play about human destiny, he accepts thirty pieces of silver and offers Christ the kiss that will identify him to the soldiers. It is not Judas himself who carries out the betrayal and accepts the silver: it is Satan. Judas waits breathless and tense during the trials. But when Christ accepts the death sentence, Judas and his high hopes, expectations and illusions collapse. He hurls the money into the temple

and hangs himself. Today we would call this the onset of psychosis: illusionary expectations strained too far. Judas's consciousness broke down into possession and psychic illness. A lack of inner control led to loss of ego. That moment, when his ego left, was when he truly died; only the sheaths were left to bring about their own end. Judas was a betrayer, but also in a certain sense a martyr.

Judas entered the world of the spirit on Saturday, Saturn's day, the day of the grave. Judas stands under the sign of Scorpio, November. Just as we cannot imagine a year without November in it, we cannot imagine that the circle of the apostles would not include Judas. It is said that if you create a ring of fire around a scorpion, it will sting itself to death. Judas, indeed the whole circle of the apostles, was stung by the scorpion.

Judas's destiny is the tragedy of all humankind of his time. Ahriman was killing the spirit to the point of ossifying the law and corrupting thought. Lucifer was busy in Rome corrupting the will. Christ had to be born and die between the two to win a dual victory. Judas's historical and political situation in Jerusalem was also his soul's fate. Judas's lower ego was filled with Lucifer and Ahriman. He betrayed Christ, the higher ego.

One legend says that when Leonardo da Vinci was looking for models for his painting of the Last Supper, he painted all but Judas and Christ. He found a model for Christ in a young man earning money for his mother and sister as a ferryman. Search as he might, the painter could not find a model for Judas, until two years later, in the most depraved circumstances, he finally found his model—who turned out to be the same young man.

The tension between Christ and Judas plays out in every soul. To become an ego-being is to become a Judas, an Oedipus turned out from the paternal home, caught up in the lower ego's sensuality and greed, a traitor to the higher ego. Humanity, especially now, stands before the choice: either awakening to the spirit, or psychic illness. The Judas in us, our lower ego, can and must become the vessel for the higher ego, for the historical betrayal of Christ plays out again in our epoch. The Judas in us represents that which brings everything down into the material plane. Judas represents everything that makes the human being egotistical, as opposed to the higher self in Christ who is selfless and brotherly.

The primacy of consciousness, as shown by natural science

John Marking

Science is the study of the world on the basis of clear and precise observations. In natural science, we are encouraged to make careful observations of the physical world using our senses, and then make conclusions as to the meaning and usefulness of these ideas. Only a minority of human beings are able to do this successfully. In spiritual science, the principle is the same, but the observations are made upon the supersensible world. Again, only a minority can do this well. We know that there is a very close relationship between these two worlds, and that our understanding of each relies on our consciousness. Natural science has led man to believe that consciousness can be derived from matter. This article tracks the progress of this idea, starting in the seventeenth century, and its complete reversal, still through natural science, in the twentieth century.

It starts in 1642. This is the year that Isaac Newton was born. This is the beginning of the end. By the time he was 30, he had discovered, or should we say invented, the picture of the force of gravity as being a force of attraction between any two material objects. He also interpreted the force of friction as being the force needed to make one object slide over the surface of another, and had put before mankind the laws of motion. So began the age of Newtonian physics, or classical physics. It led to a new way of thinking for mankind. It led to the

end of the experience of inner creative forces as a reality.

About 200 years later, Michael Faraday carried out many experiments on static electricity, the phenomenon revealed when a piece of amber is rubbed with a cloth and held near a feather. The feather is attracted to the amber. It was said that there was a force of attraction between them. And, of course, it was known that there was a force of attraction between a magnetic substance and a piece of iron. Gradually, these two forces were linked, and in 1860 Thomas Maxwell developed the laws of electromagnetism.

The understanding of these four forces led to Natural Science and the Industrial Revolution, and to a way of thinking that denies the soul and spirit. The aim of this article is to show that natural science led beyond this 'end' to a 'new beginning'.

Concurrent with these studies of forces, there was also the study of the nature of matter. First it was thought that each substance had its own specific atoms, and the atoms were tiny solid particles, with different shapes and sizes. Then it was shown that in nature there are only about 90 different atoms, and each substance has some of the atoms joined together to make molecules. The nature of the joining together was unknown. In the nineteenth century, the studies of electricity and of atomic nature came together. First it was understood that the phe-

nomenon of electricity was due to the separation of two entities, and these were said to be positive and negative. Then it was realised that part of the atom can be removed and moved on. This part was given the term 'negative', and the remaining bulk of the atom was 'positive'. Next came the first step in realising that matter was not as solid as we thought. The atom consisted of a nucleus (the positive part) and electrons (the negative part). The electrons whirled around the nucleus at some distance from it. Between the nucleus and the electrons was nothing, just space. Each atom was understood to be at least 90% space.

This is again the beginning of the end. But this time it's the end of the belief that matter is solid, hard and real. This was at the end of the nineteenth century.

Around 1900 came the first physics investigations that could not be explained by the classical laws of mechanics and electromagnetism. When a metal is heated, it begins to glow dull red, then bright red, yellow and white. It is always the same, whatever the metal. So, this phenomenon is independent of what atoms are involved. So, it must be due to the electrons, jiggling about faster and emitting radiation. But the classic laws did not predict these colour changes. Max Planck suggested that the electrons could radiate energy only in chunks, or quanta. An electron could be vibrating normally in the outskirts of an atom, and then suddenly lose a quantum of energy, radiating it as a pulse of light. This action violated the classical laws. But it must be so. It was the only way to explain the thermal radiation, the light given off by a hot body. This was the beginning of the quantum theory.

This is the next essential step towards the new beginning.

During these years, at the beginning of the twentieth century, when physicists introduced the idea of quantum energy, Einstein was introducing the idea of light having a quantum nature. Strangely enough, both these ideas were ignored by the scientific world. Yet, in 1923, Arthur Compton carried out experiments that confirmed the particulate nature of light. Light travels as a stream of particles called photons.

Also, during these years, there was an extraordinary parallel, or contradictory, development in understanding the nature of the atom. In 1925, Schrödinger opposed the idea of electrons moving in allowed orbits, and contemplated a mathematical solution. He introduced a wave function, a wave equation describing waves of matter. Electrons were thought to behave as though they occupied, not a tiny space called a particle, but as a cloud of negative electric charge. These clouds occupied various shapes and sizes, like spheres and lemniscates. And when these electrons moved, they behaved as though they were vibrating like a wave. So, not only has the three-dimensional image of the atom been shown to be mostly space, now matter is beginning to lose all substance. It is considered to be a moving, oscillating phenomenon, with only mathematical reality. So, by 1930, while forms of energy such as heat and light were shown to behave not only as waves but also as quanta, subatomic particles were shown to behave not only as particles but also as waves.

Next, it was the fate of the nucleus to suffer loss of solidity. Experiments

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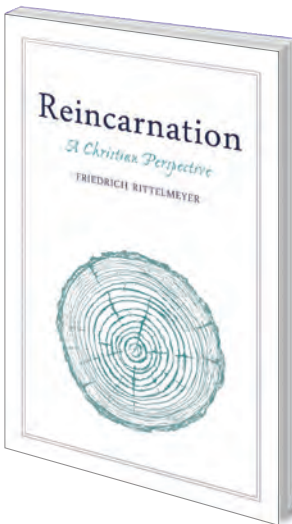
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were developed in which the nucleus was bombarded by high energy particles. Over the years, many streaks appeared on the screens of the technology used. Most were interpreted as particles. Theory developed, and predicted yet another particle very difficult to detect. It was given the name Higgs boson particle, or god particle. Eventually, quite recently, it was detected. Yet, the only evidence was yet another streak on a screen. None of these subatomic particles has ever been seen. So, by now, every atom has lost any claim to having a solid, fixed nature.

But it goes further. In the 1930s, Werner Heisenberg showed that if a subatomic particle has its speed of movement measured, we cannot be sure of where it is. Every single atom that we investigate could in the next instant be on the other side of the universe. Every atom is actually spread out all over the universe. He also showed that from any position, it can influence any other atom.

This is the end of classical physics as related to the nature of matter. Those four primary forces have to be reconsidered. Quantum mechanics shows there is no force of attraction between two objects. Gravity is understood as an inherent quality of the space/time continuum. How can friction be due to one hard surface moving over another, if each surface is made up of atoms that extend across the universe? Electric force between a positive object and negative electrons must be unreal if both elements are wave functions. And the same applies to magnetic force. All these forces are unreal.

No longer can there be any sense to the statement made by Richard Dawkins that 'the only watchmaker in

nature is the blind forces of physics.' (R. Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker*, Norton 1986, quoted in Paul Carline's excellent article, 'Questions of Evolution', *New View*, Summer 2019.)

The forces, on the basis of which our modern society is based, are unreal. The realisation of this opens up the possibility of recognising other forces that were known before Newton's time but have been pushed into the background. There can be a new beginning, given to us by natural science, to recognising the essential, real nature of cosmic forces, soul forces, sun forces, moral forces and life forces.

Now we come to the most astounding ideas about the nature of matter, so much so that the greatest physicists of the mid-twentieth century tussled over the meaning for decades.

I'll just give one experiment, the experiment that I consider to be the most important experiment ever. It's known by the term 'the two slit experiment'. We don't need to understand the details, so I'll keep them as brief as possible. It's the conclusion that's important. (A full explanation, with information about the individual scientist's approaches, is given in the book *Quantum Enigma* by Bruce Rosenblum and Fred Kuttner, Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd. 2007.)

The experiment works for both a ray of light (photons) and a ray of matter (atoms). These are the objects that will pass into the boxes D and E. These boxes are special instruments for trapping the objects, and transmitting them through a tiny aperture. B is a semi-transparent mirror which can both reflect and transmit the light or matter. C is a mirror. The ray is focused along the entrance line (A). It

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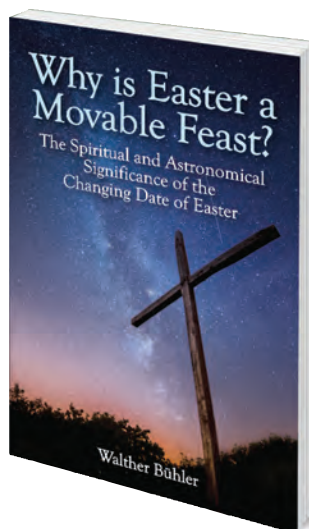
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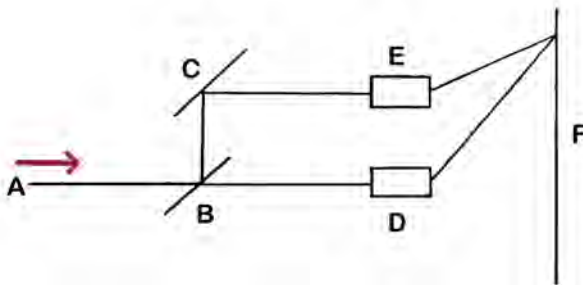
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observed in it, then box E will be found to be empty. If box D is empty, then the object will be found in box E. Thus, these objects can be in both boxes, but also in only one box! At the same time! And we also

can be adjusted so that either a single photon, or a single atom, meets the semi-transparent mirror (B). The object can go through into box D, or it can be reflected to the mirror C, and then into box E. The shutter of the box can be closed so that the photon/atom can be held in the box. It can also be allowed through either box and then reach the screen F. As we know, when light shines through a small aperture, it rays out in all directions. The diagram shows just one of these directions for each box aperture. Consider a ray of light, travelling as a wave. The waves travelling the routes shown will travel different distances to get to that point of focus. They can be in step or out of step. If two wave crests coincide at a point, there will be brightness. If crest and trough coincide, there will be darkness. The result is a series of bright lines, called an interference pattern. If our experiment, with a single photon, or a single atom, is repeated many times, the results on screen F show an interference pattern. Conclusion: the experimental object (single photon or single atom) passing into the apparatus can behave as a wave, and can go through both boxes, and is in both boxes before we observe it.

That is confusing enough. But it goes further. The experimental object can be observed in the box D or the box E. If box D is opened, and the object, the particle (photon or atom) is

known they can behave as waves, or a wave function.

Thus, we know a wave function is entering each box. But, if we make a conscious observation of one box, and find the object, there is nothing in the other box. Our conscious observation has determined where the photon or atom is, even though it was in both boxes before we observed it, and it is behaving as a wave. This is the enigma that has puzzled physicists from that time on. Before the conscious observation, or measurement, there is no reality to the object. Consciousness determines the existence of the object.

In the book *Quantum Enigma*, it is stated, 'what we have said about the position of an object being created by observation applies to every other property'. Also, 'The quantum experiment is thus objective evidence for consciousness.'

In conclusion, natural science has shown that every atom of our world is just a bundle of energy with no solidity, and no limit to its influence. It exists as a mathematical wave function that can be called into existence by human consciousness. This is what I mean by the 'primacy of consciousness'. And since consciousness is an aspect of the supersensible world, this leads us back to spiritual science as the primary source of understanding our world.

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(Matthew 7:7)

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Temple Lodge Club

a quiet oasis in the middle of London



Temple Lodge is a Georgian listed building in the centre of Hammersmith and was once home to artist Sir Frank Brangwyn. The house is now a guest house welcoming visitors to London from the four corners of the globe. The large studio he built for his work has been refashioned into a space for worship by *The Christian Community* in London. The mezzanine floor has been kept for its historical associations and has been home to *The Gate* vegetarian restaurant for the last 30 years.

Many visitors have described the peace and tranquility they experience upon entering the house as an oasis amidst the turmoil they leave outside. An experience of the garden can be gained from most windows, and this will be enhanced as a redesigning and replanting of the garden takes place.

The work in the garden follows work to build three new double-bedded garden suites, each with its own en-suite facilities. Guests now have access to and through the garden on their way to the dining room. A hearty and substantial vegetarian/vegan breakfast provides just what is needed for the new day ahead.

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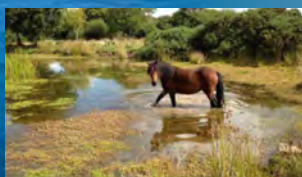
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