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# Perspectives Volume 93 No. 3 June-August 2023

It is I, I,
I lay between you, I was
open, was
audible, ticked at you, your breathing
obeyed, it is
I still, but then
you are asleep.

from 'The Straitening' by Paul Celan

Celan's poem, which draws on experiences he had during the Shoah, explores the loss of identity, of meaning and of life itself. In the devastation and seeming annihilation, the lines printed above appear without further explanation. Who is this one who synchronises with our breath and heartbeat, even as we sleep?

'In your middle there is one whom you do not yet know.' (John 1:26)

Michael Bauer once described Christ as the most familiar thing in the world. If this is true, we all experience him, long before we find words to describe him. He is there in the rhythms of our lives, in our creative core, in our encounters with each other.

All the articles in this issue are intended to help us to find words for the reality which is closer to us than breath and heartbeat.

Tom Ravetz

### Psalm 23

A rendering by Rev. Heinrich Ogilvie (1893–1988) Christian Community Priest in The Netherlands

Christ is my leader, I shall not fear. He leads me throughout life, He is the strength in all my works, He comforts me in life's suffering And into my darkness shines His light. Even though I go through the valley of death, I fear no evil For You are with me. Your hand shows me the way. You set the table for me With sustenance for my eternal being. You anoint my head with oil And spirit courage flows from suffering's chalice. Yes, Your strength lives in my weakness And Your life vanguishes my dying. You build in me with power the new Man.

Translated into English by Philip Mees

# The festival of Whitsun

### Ioanna Panagiotopoulos

### A Kintsugi fable\*

There was once a king who fashioned the most precious vessel. Smooth and light, it was destined to be the bearer of something great.

But one day, it was discovered that the vessel had mysteriously broken into many pieces.

The king shared his sorrow with his son, the prince, who one day would be crowned with the royal golden diadem. The prince secretly gathered the pieces of the shattered vessel, and his own diadem, and closed himself high within a tower. He locked the doors, and for many days and nights there was nothing to be seen but the smoke and flames that rose from the top of the tower. When he re-emerged, his golden diadem was gone, but in his hands he held the vessel, refashioned in the most wonderful way.

Between each broken piece, each crack, golden lines were woven, running each way through the precious vessel. All who saw it gazed at it reverently. And the king knew that his son had sacrificed his own golden diadem in the flames to reforge the precious vessel with its warm, flowing, light-filled strength. And all

who saw it agreed that the vessel was indeed more beautiful and precious than it was before.

Each and every human being is born a perfect vessel, a creation made in the image of the divine.

As we move through our life, we experience things that tarnish us inside, things that inwardly shatter us.

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<sup>\*</sup>Kintsugi is the art of repairing broken ceramics with lacquer mixed with gold, silver or platinum, and arises from the Japanese philosophy of embracing the broken and flawed.

The brokenness and the falling away from ourselves that we endure over a lifetime resounds like an echo of the great human story.

In all stories and myths of the world, we make our journey from the comforting arms of the starry heavens, to the stark and stony paths of earthly life that shake us with their storms.

And yet, as violent as it may seem, nature shows us that all things that bloom must first be broken: from the soil, to the seed, to the bud.

Air, fire and light conspire that the earthly bloom rises from its fallen place, revealing itself like a sun that rays out its petals with unsurpassed beauty.

What is it that moves us, despite our brokenness, towards healing? Where can our soul move to, once it has fallen, if not heavenwards? There is a power in us that wishes to lift the shattered pieces of our soul-life.

This power is called Truth.

A festival of healing is nothing without the power of truth that shines a light into our fallen, broken nature. Truth is the alchemy by which our soul is fired with the enthusiasm to lift itself to something higher.

For the wounds that broke us out of perfect wholeness are the very place the spirit is called into us, where wholeness can forge us anew.

If the night can be freed from its darkness with each and every sunrise, woven through with streams of gold, is it not so that our pure thinking, our loving heart, our willing devotion, can shine the gold into our brokenness?

The sacrificial fire of the spirit is the higher prince of our fable that descends into our uplifted, active waiting soul, refashioning us with true humanness.

Our fall is ordained by this healing spirit that would weld each and every shattered moment of our earthly life with spirit gold, that our vessel may be woven through with the spirit that makes the flower rise and bloom, that makes the night rise into the consciousness of day.

# Marc Chagall

**Deborah Ravetz** 

Despite all the troubles of our world, in my heart I have never given up on the love in which I was brought up or on man's hope in love. In life, just as on the artist's palette, there is but one single colour that gives meaning to life and art—the colour of love. MARC CHAGALL

When Marc Chagall writes about his upbringing in Russia, he describes himself floating in the starlight looking down on his village. Years later he would paint images of brides and bridegrooms, creatures, birds and bouquets, flying in the air. No mere images of a fantastical imagination—these scenes were real to him. The lovers, the blossoming trees, the angels and creatures and the moonlit world below are bathed in a paradisiacal light. His enchanted pictures act on the viewer like an elixir of health. Lovers celebrate their joyful union in a way that embodies the exquisite synthesis of opposites. They salute relationships, which are shown to be erotic, nurturing and releasing of potential. Chagall said of his work that it was painted in the colour of love.

Although Chagall was brought up in the Jewish religion, he always experienced himself as a world artist. He did not feel confined to this important but partial aspect of his identity.

He was steeped in the stories of both the Jewish and the Christian Bibles as well as a wide sweep of poetry, literature and mythology. It was out of this abundance his images emerged.

When we think about Chagall, it is those blissful paintings mentioned above, that come to mind first. This short article will explore two of

Chagall's paintings which emerge not out of bliss but out of suffering. In order to convey the depth and universality of that suffering he used both Christian and Jewish iconography to make his images.

Chagall lived through pogroms as a child. He experienced the Russian Revolution, in the aftermath of which he played a part as an artist, and he knew the trauma of the second world war and of exile. The reality of war and the horrors of antisemitism root *June–August 2023* 

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White Crucifixion, Marc Chagall

these paintings in both political and religious life.

In 1938 he painted his mighty White Crucifixion. Chagall was aware of a letter written by an earlier Jewish Russian painter Antokolsky. He had justified his choice to paint Christ saying that for him, Moses was practical, giving us laws while Christ, the Nazarene, was an idealist and a poet. Nevertheless both said we must love one another and

both united us by means of our conscience in our person-to-person relationships. Like Antokolsky, Chagall experienced Christ as a brother in a way that did not compromise his own background. Christ—or as Chagall saw him, the great Isaiah—was the Jew who died for truth and brotherhood. The painting absorbs the great Christian myth as well as Chagall's own Jewish myth and broadens it into something universal.

The image is dominated by the calm figure of Christ on the cross. The painting is inspired by Orthodox icons, but instead of the picture being made up of compartments, different subjects are gathered together on one canvas and united with a grey background.

The still point of the painting is the crucifixion. The upper left part of the painting shows male and female soldiers. They are descending from the sky and the hills with arms and weapons outstretched, attacking a village, which is reminiscent of Chagall's home village, Vitebsk. The red flags and demolition of the houses depict the destruction of the community as well as a religious tragedy. As the houses burn, so too does the synagogue. On

its facade are the traditional images of two lions. The image has a double meaning in this painting. In Christian iconography the lion is connected to the gospel writer St Mark. In this painting Chagall introduces the western spelling of his name which reminds us of the painter Marc Chagall evoking Christ but firmly connected to the synagogue.

This is a political painting conceived in the face of the Nazi Aktion of 15th of June 1938 where 1500 jews were rounded up and taken to concentration camps as well as the later burning of the synagogues in Munich and Nuremberg. Displaced people sit upon the ground homeless; the old man on the left wears a plaque around his neck. Before overpainting, the plaque read 'Ich bin Jude'. The figures in the boat, survivors of this particular holocaust, are pointing to the figure of Christ and asking why Christians are killing Jews. They point to the central figure of Christ who is depicted as a brother and also a suffering Jew.

When it was first exhibited in 1940, Benois, a fellow countryman of Chagall, who had also experienced the pogroms of St Petersburg, saluted the power of the painting born out of suffering and responding to the cruel events of 1938; events that were to herald the catastrophe of what was to become a world at war.

The second painting, *Exodus*, was painted much later. Chagall worked on different versions of the painting between 1952 and 1966. In an early

black and white sketch the work is more personal. Despite the title the image is dominated by a radiant Christ figure encompassed by a shining sphere. It is the right hand side of the painting that depicts the story. The Jewish people have crossed the Red Sea to safety while the figure of Moses stands amongst them giving them the law. The left hand side



Exodus (sketch), Marc Chagall

of the sketch is autobiographical and depicts Chagall and figures from his own life.

### The painting

Chagall developed the sketch into what was to become his final painting. Once again, it brings together his wide and humane vision. The left-hand side of the image no longer depicts biographical details of Chagall's life. Instead it depicts the fate of the Jewish people in contemporary history. The rest of the image is now devoted to a great crowd representing the people of Israel. There is a rich panorama of characters illustrating the stories of the Hebrew Bible. The two women in the centre of the image suggest the judgement of Solomon. Elijah is there beside the woman whose dying child he restored to life. Nearby is the bride from the Song of Songs. With all this added richness of imagery the figure of Christ remains centrally important, now encompassed in a silver disc. Moses is also there in the right hand corner of the painting but now given much greater prominence than in the earlier sketch.

Chagall was brought up in poverty and insecurity. Still the village life and its characters and rhythms rooted him in tradition and love. When he left that life he was exposed to a formal artistic training and then all the modernist movements of his time. The Fauvists, Cubists and Surrealists all presented him with codified ways of seeing as did the strict geometry of the art that came out of the Russian Revolution. Still no group was able to make him their possession. Instead he learned from everyone, crafting what he learned into a way of making art that was worthy of his poetic and completely original vision, a vision which is so loving and joyful, that we find ourselves connecting, with him, to the meaning that lies beneath the surface of our lives.

The same was true of his spiritual life. Judaism gave him his foundation but his poetic soul was able to encompass the poetry of the Nazarene, who like Moses said, 'Love your neighbour as yourself'. Chagall had the power to share the shining truths of the Jewish and Christian traditions and bring them together in a song of love. He was said to have eyes so blue that to look at him directly was to be transported to heaven. With those blue eyes he saw the world in its joy and pain, in its bliss and its despair and gave it back to us filled with the conviction that we are a community, each with different roles and traditions and yet with much to give each other.

# The Annunciation of John the Baptist today

**Douglas Thackray** 

You yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ but have been sent before him. He who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore the joy of mine is now full. He must increase, but I must decrease. He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth, and of the earth he speaks. He who comes from heaven is above all. He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony. He who receives his testimony sets the seal to this, that God is true. For he who God has sent utters the word of God, for it is not by measure that he gives the Spirit. The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hands. He who believes in the Son has eternal life. He who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon him.

John 3:28-36

The above gospel is the last recorded message of John the Baptist to his disciples. Here he summarises his life before going towards diminishment and death, as he says, referring to Christ: 'He must increase and I decrease.' This decision was triggered by the evidence that Jesus' disciples were baptising more people than his own. This gave him a clear indication that his task of 'preparing the way of the Lord' had

been fulfilled and that a new chapter was about to open which would open the way to quite another dimension, as we will see shortly.

John's testimony rays out as a shining light to us, showing how his life had culminated in fulfilling his mission by baptising Jesus in the river Jordan.

Douglas Thackray is a priest emeritus of The Christian Community living in Cornwall

One can say that this was the most important moment in the evolution of mankind, witnessed by the Holy Spirit in the presence of God. John describes how he is instructed by the Spirit, 'He who sent me to baptise with water said to me, "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is he who baptises with the Holy Spirit." Later on the Baptist describes this as a joyous supersensible event, as a wedding, in which he was the friend of the groom, saying: 'The groom has the bride but the friend of the groom when he hears the voice of the groom rejoices exceedingly, and finishing he exclaims: 'This my joy is now fulfilled. Later on we hear again of the Baptism of Jesus, this time indirectly when John the disciple describes the incarnation as a wedding between heaven and earth: 'And the word became flesh and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth'(John 1:14). In seeking to understand John the Baptist we can be reminded of Jesus describing him as 'the greatest man born of woman yet the least in the kingdom of heaven, and 'none is greater than he. In another context he is described as 'a burning and a shining light'. We see from this how John the Baptist as a prophet of God was guided in his acceptance of his new phase of diminishment. This change would silence the voice of the lion heart that roared in the desert as it spoke to the conscience of the people, striking fear into their souls, commanding them to repent in order to be saved from their sins. The last of his public appearances was when Herod, whose curiosity was aroused, went to see John as his fame spread throughout the country. There was King Herod in all his finery, surrounded by his entourage of servants and courtiers, meeting John who was clothed only with a sheepskin and who, when seeing him, pointed his finger and reproved him for the many sins he had committed and for having taken his brother's wife for his own. This public humiliation of the most powerful man of the region caused him to be imprisoned and eventually executed.

Later we hear of Herod as a postscript when the disciples are sent out by Christ, two by two, to go into the villages and towns healing and preaching the good news.

On their return they are amazed at the powers they had received which they bestowed on the people they healed. In the middle of this report of their return, Herod is spoken of as 'the tetrarch who had heard

all that was done by him, and was perplexed because it was said that John had risen from the dead, and some said that Elias had appeared, and others that one of the old prophets had risen again.' We can be amazed at the accuracy of these rumours. We need to remember that at the Transfiguration of Christ, or shortly after, he says of John, 'For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John, and if you will receive it this is Elias who was to come' (Matt. 11:13–14). We can understand from this that it was the mantle of John Elias which was placed on the shoulders of the disciples when they were sent out to heal and to prepare the way for the coming of Christ.

We can be somewhat surprised, taken aback even, in seeing John the Baptist in Grünewald's painting of the crucifixion. The genius of the artist reveals the spiritual reality behind the factual event that shows that the 'friend of the bridegroom' had never left his side. In the background is inscribed the saying 'He must increase and I decrease'. Indeed the whole purpose of this great painting is to announce to us the crucifixion as the free deed of Christ. The Baptist's gaze looks half at us and half at the cross, questioning whether we have understood the significance of Christ's deed, for us personally and for the evolution of mankind. Even now the Baptist continues to prepare us for the understanding of this turning point in history. At John's feet is a miniature depiction of the lamb of God; we see that a sword has caused a wound on his neck from where blood has flowed into a golden chalice. John said: 'See the lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world. With this imagery we are transported from the historical deed of Christ's death on the cross to the chalice of the lamb, moving in space and time to be represented in our time by the chalice at the Act of Consecration of Man. It is the same chalice that was given to the disciples at the last supper, which is offered to them with the words, 'Take, this is my body, this my blood'.

John the Baptist continues to prepare us to receive Christ into our hearts through his prayers. At St John's time, we hear in the Act of Consecration of Man that he spoke 'the word of flame, health-bearing and conscious of guilt, the word of annunciation'. This sentence describes the two sides of our human soul: the longing for healing whilst knowing that this can only come about through our conscience and awareness of personal guilt. 'The word of flame' can reveal what is pure in us; the

light, the flame within, can show us our shadow side, our error, delusion and lack of forgiveness, and cause us to repent. We would have fundamentally misunderstood Christ's mission if we solely restricted its meaning to the forgiveness of sin. It's rather that out of finding forgiveness we can become free individuals. Christ is the originator of life who gives away his life freely, to awaken the flame of truth within those who believe in him. John the Baptist appears in Grünewald's painting as a messenger from the world of Spirit who shows us the crucifixion as the picture of the free man in Jesus. When we rise to go to the altar to commune with Christ and receive his blood in the golden chalice it is with the longing that He can bring these two aspects of our soul into unity, the dark and the light, and that we can be forgiven and healed and become free.

Courage! For life is striding
To endless life along,
The sense in love abiding,
Grows clearer and more strong.
One day the stars, down dripping,
Shall flow in golden wine,
We, of the nectar sipping,
As living stars will shine.

From *Hymns to the Night* by Novalis

## Searching for Christ-finding Christ-making Christ known

Excerpts from the writings of Friedrich Rittelmeyer, 1872–1938, the first leader of The Christian Community

Louise Madsen

Towards the end of his life Friedrich Rittelmeyer wrote two books: Ich Bin, about the seven I AM sayings in the gospel of St John, and Christus. Shortly before his death he also gave three lectures which he called 'Christ as he describes Himself'. Of these lectures only his preparatory notes remained; they were published in English in the same year.

In these writings Rittelmeyer approaches his deepest and most pressing concern, that of finding and depicting Christ, particularly as He is represented in the Gospel of St John.

What follows are excerpts from these works concerning particular themes and topics.

What is needed? The most necessary thing is that a more vivid image of Christ should emerge. Even among seriously searching people a staggering 'Christ-blindness' can be found. Dogma, the teachings of the church, no longer provides a living picture of Christ. What they offer is too little, is not 'impressive' enough and does not inspire enough enthusiasm. Where individuals really stand behind it, it is still effective for many people, but there is not sufficient divine greatness in it. ... The Gospel of St John, to which many are blind, offers itself as a possibility [to find a living image of Christ], as it makes the strongest claim: 'I in you!' Did Christ say anything more concerning this 'I in you'? How does he want to live in people? The

Gospel does not fail to provide answers to appropriate and essential questions. There, Christ three times says 'My'. He does not speak of human qualities in the ordinary, normal sense; rather they are states of soul, spiritual attitudes. The answer to the question, 'What does Christ call "mine"?' produces—and this is a very remarkable thing—an all-embracing picture of Christ, a picture of a human being.

Louise Madsen is a priest emeritus living in Stourbridge. The first inner quality to which Christ says 'my' is Peace: 'My peace'. He says this three times emphatically, in the Farewell Discourses and after the Resurrection. 'Let your hearts not become troubled, neither let them be afraid!' 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you.' In Christ's sayings all the world's conflicts are 'taken as read'. We recall: the outer world has threatened this peace. Now comes something great and universal: something that the world can neither give nor take away: MY PEACE. Jesus demonstrates this to his disciples. Then the whole world immediately rises up against him: 'Already the master of this world is coming.' But Christ looks at him fearlessly. ... The world can do nothing against this peace; it cannot reach it at all. But it is only to be won at a price: Man must learn to love his destiny. It looks at him with a deep gaze, full of wisdom and goodness. But even more: he will need to learn to love the destiny of the world; to know the divine aim of the world—that it become the realm of love. And to love it. ...

Christ does not say, 'Peace I give you—now enter a cloister', but, 'Now go out into the world!' Peace is not submission but exaltation. Peace must be won in one's ego, one's 'I', but only in the 'I'; it must be contained just in the 'I'.

Peace is not the goal but the beginning. The world can only be understood out of its evolving, the evolving that *can* come to pass. Being, on its own, has something sad about it, something that makes us melancholy. Peace makes us to be at one with the world's evolving.

### The holy T

The holy 'I' is the true redemption from the egotism of our time. Christians who do not grasp this become fearful when one speaks about the holy 'I'. They think that egotism will enter into the realm of Christianity itself. ... Whoever has fully felt, maybe only just once, how the word 'I' sounds when spoken by Christ, they know: here is the divine strength of the *true* I which, when they have been made aware of it, will cope with all [human] egotism. Having once read John's gospel with that in mind the immediate experience is that one no longer wants to use the word 'I' for oneself. It is as if a precious stone would be dipped into mud. And—one discovers that the author of the gospel himself must have had a similar feeling: he never says 'I', rather he refers to himself as, 'Him whom the

Lord loved'.... It is not some ethic that a human being has espoused, however lofty or elevated it may be, but a divine I that speaks freely in him....

For it is Christ in whom alone the human being sees their true I flash up, as if they could at every moment unreservedly take from him, 'I' in you.

It is good to look at the human I more specifically. The I is the small mirror to the world. In the human I the world can experience itself once again, but now as consciousness, as spirit.

Every sight of an animal can demonstrate what a regal gift an I is, that is created to carry the world as I in itself.

That is why John's gospel, the I-gospel, is also the spirit-gospel. 'God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.' 'You must be born anew of water and of the spirit.' 'I send you the Holy Spirit.' In that lies, amongst other things, also: I send you the spirit in its 'I form'.

The I can say yes to the world spirit that mirrors itself in it. The I can out of its own freedom become united with the world spirit.

On different levels of consciousness the I can wrestle to make the 'I and the Father are one' part of its own content. Outwardly that shows itself as 'holiness'; inwardly as 'peace'.

The more the normal human I becomes similar to the Christ-I, the more it takes into itself the Christ-I, the more it feels the *meaning of the I*, the more the *ideal of the I* is realised in it. That is why Christ says again and again in John's gospel: believe in me, in the I, that full of purity, clarity and greatness, stands before you. Christ brings the I to life for us in all its greatness, clarity and purity.

### On Baptism

Theologians have often regarded the baptism in the Jordan as the calling of Jesus. They said it was the divine hint which he had been quietly waiting for: that he should now begin his work. But that conception/view does not convey the meaning of that hour. It is not a calling, but a revelation. It is not a hint, but an ordination. This is not a new step, it is a new reality.

The gospel writers were much closer to this riddle when they reported Jesus' relations as saying, 'He is beside himself' (Mark 3:21). From that moment Jesus speaks out of another 'I', the 'I', that stands at the centre of St John's gospel. One could rather say, at that moment the Christ is

awakened in Jesus. For when we say, rightly, a new spirit is awakened in us, often, however, the true reality is that a spirit has been able to find a new dwelling in us. Therefore the old Christians understood the meaning of this moment better when they celebrated the day of the baptism as the true birthday of the Christ.

We see how Christ, as a divine I, permeates a human being who has completely given himself over to Him, and has, so to speak, become completely engrossed by Him. Looking upwards, this divine I is carried by the divine Father; in this way the divine Son stands before us. Looking downwards, this divine I permeates the human organism in spirit, soul and body; so stands the Son of Man before us.

Enlightened by the account of Jesus' baptism we can now accompany the life of Christ through the gospels. Again and again we can recognise the baptism as being the actual, real background to this life. And where one sees it shining through, there Christ radiates out into the world.

Even in the three mighty pictures of the Resurrection in John's gospel the threefold baptism-experience still shines bright and clear, and through that experience—Christ himself (John 20 and 21).

The first resurrection picture shows Christ in conversation with Mary Magdalene: 'Go to my brothers and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and to your Father, to my God and your God.' Again heaven is present, but now not opening out above him but receiving him into itself.

The second resurrection picture shows Christ in the circle of the disciples on the evening of Easter Day. 'As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.' The divine 'Son' stands before us, but now not to hear of the Father being well pleased, but to exercise the rights of the Father.

In the third resurrection picture Christ speaks to Peter at the Sea of Gennesaret; he speaks of love, of the strength of discipleship, of the will to care for the world. The spirit is again present, but now Christ does not receive it, he gives it. With his spirit he consecrates the leading disciple.

And when from there we look ahead to the last, the very highest revelation of the Resurrected One in the Revelation to John, it is like a renewed augmentation over against the Transfiguration, a final enhancement of the baptism.

Not only did 'his face shine', but 'his face was like the sun shining in its full strength' (Rev.1:16). Heaven was in him. He himself was heaven.

# Raphael and the beloved disciple II

**Rory Valentine** 

The second part of a study of Raphael's 1515 Cartoon, Christ's Charge to Peter. The picture has as its subject matter the final scene from the gospel of St John.

### The appearance by the sea

The picture (fig.1)¹ depicts the gospel scene just before 'Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following' (John 21:20). In the previous issue the identity and gestures of the various figures were discussed; a 'threshold of recognition' of the resurrected Christ was pointed to as being present, having as its marker the tower in the background.

Figure 1



### A scene of destruction

Centred about the tower a frightening scene of destruction seems to be taking place (fig.2). A fire rages in a building of which the entire front has been detached, a distinct plume of smoke is pointedly carried off by the wind, and to the right a domed building has fractured catastrophically. Further to the right of the tower a new calm has been restored; young saplings, vigorous and pliable, appear among the solid buildings, a pastoral peace reigns about the Risen One.

But what of this destruction and chaos centred about the strange tower? There is no reference to any of this in the text to add such radical symbols to the gospel scene seems presumptuous and one wonders on what authority the painter's confidence is based. But just which symbols are in fact being used? Fire is there for sure and a strong wind is shown to be present. Do the fractured buildings indicate earthquake?



Figure 2

### What are *you* doing here Raphael?

There is surely a correspondence between the figures of the painting and the landscape above their heads. As we come from the calm of the lakeside on the left towards the tower, trees are moved by a strong wind and garments, washed clean,<sup>2</sup> are seen to be hung out to dry (fig.3). Raphael shows an unstable

tower that seems to teeter on the brink, two of four obelisk shaped corner finials are missing, a headless statue occupies a lower corner. One wonders what the artist is hinting at here by his inclusion of elements which have no direct reference whatsoever to the gospel passage. There is a simple answer that can be put forward here: that to approach the realm of the living Christ all pomp, pretence and posturing will be challenged and must be left behind in ruins if progress is to be made.

However, deeper observations of the scene ask for more sense, a more complete narrative, to be made of Raphael's deliberate symbols.



Earthquake, wind and fire

Figure 3

Speak through the earthquake, wind and fire— Oh still small voice of calm—Oh still small voice of calm.

'Lord and Father of Mankind' is a much loved hymn known to many in the English speaking world, the climactic verse of which refers to a key event in the life of Elijah<sup>3</sup> who, when in hiding in a high cave on Mount Sinai, is asked by God, 'What are you doing here Elijah?' The narrative then has it that the Lord passes by and in the wake of his passing Elijah witnesses a mighty wind, strong enough to break stones—but the Lord was not in the wind, then an earthquake shakes the land—but the Lord was not in the earthquake and lastly Elijah is witness to raging fire—but nor is the Lord in the fire. It is after the passing of the raging elements that Elijah hears the *still small voice*.

The above passage heralds perhaps a huge step change, the beginning of the shift from the need for an outer authoritative God of reward and punishment to that of the guiding indwelling presence. Does Raphael make reference to this Elijah event on Mount Sinai, here in this picture? There is nothing in the gospel text to prompt it. We may well ask the question: What are you doing here Raphael? In order to attempt an answer to this question it may be helpful to look at what else was going on in the painter's life at the time of the creation of this picture.

### Santa Maria Del Popolo

In 1507 Agostino Chigi, the Pope's banker, acquired a plot of land adjoining the basilica of Santa Maria del Popolo in Rome. Chigi employed Raphael to design a mausoleum side chapel for his family's resting place, now known as the Chigi Chapel. Work on the chapel was underway in 1515 and was, no doubt, being overseen by Raphael as he worked nearby upon the picture we are now looking at. Raphael's design for the chapel included a pair of pyramid tombs made for Agostino and his brother (fig.4). There were also two niche sculptures, one of Jonah and the other showing Elijah at the entrance to the Sinai cave, drawing his mantle over his head, and a small angel whispering at his right ear (fig.5). It captures the moment of the hearing of the still small voice.<sup>4</sup> They had been recently conceived of by Raphael. This reveals that his artistic imagination of Elijah's meeting with the elements and the still small voice was vibrantly alive within him at the time of the creation of this cartoon. It seems that here in 1515, Raphael's thirty-third year, Elijah comes to the foreground in his life, which then kindles the impulse to undertake both a representation of the prophet's pivotal experience in the Chigi sculpture and also to present this scene by the Sea of Galilee in relationship to it. Through this lens it can be seen that the Beloved and his close companions are bearing witness to the still small voice, passing or having passed through the elemental trials, each to his own degree of completion.

### The bell tower of Santa Maria del Popolo

The distinctive bell tower of Santa Maria del Popolo was completed in the refurbishment of the basilica in 1477. Everyone in Rome would have recognised the unique pyramid-like profile of its spire which is framed by four upright corner finials; Raphael's design for the tombs echoes its steepness (figs. 4 & 5). In the painting we can see the elements of this

distinctive profile in the central building with the four finials having been replaced by two obelisks, as though the other two have already toppled in the destruction taking place (fig.2). The tower itself has been altered since Raphael's time: the circular clock on the southern side is a later addition, visibly oversized for the space between the window and the cornice. Another row of arched windows on this level was already walled up in the second half of the seventeenth century.<sup>5</sup>

It would perhaps be a mistake to overemphasise the Egyptian references made here by Raphael but nor may they be ignored, for pyramid tombs were far from unknown and mighty obelisks taken from Egypt have been scattered through the citysince before the time of Christ.<sup>6</sup> It is disquieting to see how these great power symbols,<sup>7</sup> belonging to another cultural era, have been so eagerly adopted by the church.

That this disquiet is shared by Raphael is perhaps made evident in the painting; could it be disquiet about the placement of Christ in amongst these iconic symbols of worldly power? To rely upon the power of awe inspired by the man-made surely reveals the presence of *doubt*? Raphael demonstrates in the picture the threshold that must be gone through in order to enter the realm beyond doubt. Faith in pomp, grandeur and external authority is allowed to fall, to burn and to be blown away. It all needs to be left behind before 'Galilee' can be entered.





Figure 4



#### Figure 6

### Galilee

The gospel narrative of this scene is so skilfully crafted that it is easy to forget that the scene is a description of a spiritual event; the disciples are after all instructed by Christ not to leave Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit is sent to them at Pentecost.8 This description of events in Galilee, at dawn by the shore, brings to mind the words of the angels at the tomb at Easter dawn: He goeth before thee into Galilee, there shall ye see him. The Gospel of Mark then goes on to describe meetings with the Risen One, none of which take place in Galilee. Clearly then, we are prompted to consider the meaning of the word *Galilee* apart from its geography, perhaps as an utterly fresh, spring-like quality of soul, a threshold rather than a place. The painter

somehow truthfully reflects all this subtle complexity of the narrative. In a sense we can say that he *rewrites* it, now however, exchanging the power of words for that of images.

### The Word

The still small voice, in some translations a whisper, heard by Elijah, comes in stark contrast to the blasts, rumbles and roar of the furious elements; it is an inner rather than an outer listening that is required to hear it. The mysterious auditory aspect of this supersensible scene on the shore is made evident if we look to the degree of visibility of the *ears* of those disciples who recognise Him and those who do not. Here we can experience another layer of the metaphorical completeness of Raphael's visionary composition; *everything* is somehow all there at once.

The John Gospel opens with a description of Christ and His place in the structure of the universe and His relationship to the formative power of spirit sound.

> In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God.

The Christ figure in Raphael's scene is not speaking; what the disciples hear is surely not by way of larynx and ear? Nevertheless, deep and precise communication is happening. That the Word is heard by way of the heart is suggested by the halted character on the threshold who has his hand to what we might call the organ of perception of the truth. The subconscious raising of hand to heart is a profound gesture indicating that a message has struck home—has been heartfelt.

### The missing element

Raphael points to this meeting, here with the Lord on this threshold, as coming in the aftermath of a journey through the purifying aspects of Earth, Fire and Air. The meeting takes place by the inland sea, alongside the missing element of Water—a blue tongue of which is shown to sweep behind the disciples, framing the scene, and touching the right arm of the Christ figure. Raphael has it that He stands here as the Good Shepherd who has brought His sheep unawares to the Living Water. It is notable that he has shown the grazing flock surrounding Christ to have eyes closed and ears pointing downward; they certainly belong with Him but neither see nor hear Him. Christ, seemingly pointing to the closed eye of one of the sheep, further emphasises this blindness. So it can be surmised that, for Raphael, Christ's instruction to Peter to feed my sheep has its substance in that which may enable the sheep to see and hear, and so to become conscious of the eternal Christ in their very midst. A profound question that is posed by both gospel passage and Raphael's picture is around the difference between the disciples and the sheep; what is it that sets them apart from each other?

The waters from snow-capped spirit heights flow down and fill the Sea of Galilee and its environs with life. It becomes a land of eternal spring, a green land of burgeoning growth, a temporal place

in which the sea, its shores and pastures, mingle in harmonic coexistence with their heavenly counterparts, can mingle so readily that they may not be told apart. And if what Rudolf Steiner says of Raphael's relationship to the beloved disciple is so<sup>9</sup>, then there is no human being better qualified to show us this

Rory Valentine is a member of The Christian Community in Buckfastleigh. seamless weaving of matter with spirit that underlies all that is in both this gospel account and the picture made of it.

### Photographic credits:

Figs. 1,2 & 3: © Victoria and Albert Museum, London Figs. 4,5 & 6: Wikimedia Commons

- 1 The process of weaving the tapestries rendered Raphael's cartoons to be reproduced in fabric with left and right orientation reversed. This meant that the artist had to produce the cartoon in mirror image in order that the tapestry should represent the scene according to his final intention. In view of the importance of Left/Right to artistic composition the difficult decision was made to present the pictures in this publication that they may be viewed with Raphael's final intention in mind.
- 2 There are many references to the washing clean of garments; particularly relevant here could be Rev.3:4 and Rev.7:14 but perhaps Raphael had the following in mind: 'Behold, I send a messenger to prepare the way before me... But who can endure the day of his [the Lord's] coming and who can stand when he appears? Because he is like a refiner's fire and a fuller's soap.' (Malachi 3:1–2)
- 3 1 Kings 19:11
- 4 Work on the chapel began in 1513–14 under the supervision of Lorenzetto who was also the sculptor of the Raphael-designed niche figures of Jonah and Elijah.
- 5 Wikipedia entry: Santa Maria Del Popolo—Bell Tower.
- 6 There are more Egyptian era obelisks in Rome alone than now remain in the country of their origin. The Piazza di Popolo, which adjoins the basilica, now has at its centre the Flaminio Obelisk which was taken from Egypt in 10BC. Its sacred capstone is now surmounted by an ornate iron cross.
- 7 The tremendous difficulty and expense of quarrying, carving, transportation and final erection of these huge objects required an extraordinarily high level of command over human labour, energy and endeavour.
- 8 Luke: 24 and Acts: 1
- 9 See Rudolf Steiner, The Last Address 28 September 1924

### She Guides Us to the Edge

Mick Young

She guides us to the edge,

Of what the words might mean,

Gestures and objects to show,

Or conceal.

What is real.

Baked bread,

Slow.

A shining cup of water, wine,

Our faces mirrored,

Time,

A book, candles, a cloth,

That man's cough,

The scuff of languid shoes on the worn wooden floor,

As we walk to the altar-tomb-door

She gently lets go our hands,

And for a moment,

Lost in the space between,

And found,

The thing, the sound, the sight unseen,

The word, the womb of God,

The dust and light,

The breath of Spirit,

The fight,

The I and the thou.

She guides us to the edge,

Or beyond,

And back again.

Now.

And now.

Mick Young is a musician and podcaster living in Devon.

### Parousia, the return of Christ

### What did it mean in the New Testament and what it could it mean now?

### **Roger Druitt**

The aim of this article is to show how the nature of Christ, as he is in our times, can provide us with forces of healing, well-being and insights into spiritual aspects of life that were until now not available to humanity as a whole.

### **Against Fear**

May the events that seek me Come unto me; May I receive them With a quiet mind Through the Father's ground of peace On which we walk.

May the people who seek me Come unto me; May I receive them With an understanding heart Through the Christ's stream of love In which we live.

May the spirits which seek me Come unto me; May I receive them With a clear soul Through the Healing Spirit's light By which we see.

The promise of Christ's return is given in the Acts of the Apostles, in

Rodger Druitt is Priest emeritus living in Hereford. the account of Jesus' Ascension, where two figures tell the assembled disciples, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing into heaven? This Jesus who has been lifted up from you into heaven will return in the same way as you have seen him go into heaven. After this, 'a cloud received him out of their sight'.

This return has been called Parousia, literally 'presence', from the Greek pareinai—to be present. *Para-* 'beside', + *einai-* 'to be'. *Ousia*: being.¹ We might recognise it in Exousiai (Spirits of Form, or Powers), or Elohim, the world creators of which Jehovah was one. Ex-ousia indicates that such a creator spirit has the power to bestow independent being, or 'ex-ist-ence', upon their creation. This surpasses our normal human capacities, although some artistic creations may come close to it; they have the stamp of a super-personal power, which the earthly creator would not claim as theirs but might humbly acknowledge as their part. Zen teaching states that 'it creates', transcending 'I create'.

Many find their awareness of non-sense-perceptible phenomena has increased in the course of their life, or realise that earlier generations were more contained in the world of the senses and intellect than we are now. However, this intellect can, through an artistic approach to thinking, including using the heart as touchstone, be expanded into this realm beyond the senses. A good art training will do this. This realm is simply 'real' and as reasonable to consider and communicate about as the one we experience with our senses.

Some modern approaches help cultivate this, probably the most orderly and effective one being Anthroposophy.

However, taking the text of Acts as a guide, one can form a moving mental image of Jesus being taken into a cloud—the sense outlines and other qualities gradually becoming nebulous—then, using this mode of 'heart-thinking', a sense of 'outline' arises out of that nebula of all the life processes of the earth. An inner space unfolds. There is something 'there' but not in three dimensions.

The cloud: this is the link between the narrative in Acts 1 and the experience just now being described. Not a kind of magic where a passing cloud lifts Jesus away, rather that his resurrection 'body' had the same energy as does a cloud. Clouds contain powerful forces of many kinds—heat, cold, light, dark, electricity, magnetism—bordering on the outer limits of materiality. These properties are polar to material forces, so may be called life forces, raying in towards the earth from outside. Native Australian folklore tells of the Lightning Man who rules thunderstorms, powerful in fertility; his rain brings new seed-bearing life to the earth. In the right conditions, a thin veil of cirrus cloud appears over those dazzling, billowing cumulus ones, separated from them by a narrow space. This is the

threshold through which warm vapour from below becomes liberated from material conditions and becomes pure 'life'. Not easily described with molecular concepts but perhaps heart thinking may grasp it. It can be seen in the spring or summer, when thundery rain may follow.

It is from this sphere that the risen Jesus Christ can reach down into our three dimensions, bearing within himself the distillation of resurrection—the 'healing medicine'—and showing himself to soul eyes, if one is ready to behold. 'Behold', *idou*, is the word that sounds in the New Testament when describing something with dimensions going beyond the material. The 'idea' becomes a window onto the Parousia of Jesus Christ. When our seeing takes on that quality of thinking where concepts are mobile, free from fixed preconceptions but connecting with each other out of their inherent content, we are on the right path.

Christ's Parousia works in the way our creative thoughts work, where the more earth-bound element gradually rises into 'cloud', is tossed around or annihilated, then gradually let down again into clarity of mind and warmth of heart.

The Ascensiontide service helps the listener into this mood by describing Christ in that realm of cloud that mediates between heaven and earth, between the divine and ourselves. And this connection is a dynamic one: it breathes, interweaves and flows according to the needs of the moment, rather than being a fixed link that leaves our relationship to God rigid and uncreative, as it threatens to become in legalistic religion. So much of 'Christian' moral teaching is permeated by this spirit, rather than the attitude, 'Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on sin no more' (John 8).

Recent history, from the second half of the nineteenth century until now, shows previous times as totally other. The world has changed unimaginably even in one lifetime. It looks as though the changes will not only be ever more rapid but also alter the nature of human beings. One danger is that we would regress back to the state of group consciousness—the very thing from which the Parousia is there to emancipate us.

Three areas of change in the ordering of human affairs are:

1. the use of statistics in assessing and predicting anything in the areas of life, feeling or destiny; i.e. anything that transcends measure, number and weight

- 2. the use of healing practices from around the world, hardly used before except in their own settings and deriving from disciplines that have not developed out of the Resurrection
- 3. the assessment of human nature, health and value on the basis of material criteria alone.

We can be sure that whatever is approaching us is world destiny which comes to us from the Father's Ground of Peace. This means that however grim things appear, something positive can be made out of them for the future.

We are called to bring to bear on them Christ's stream of love, to transform these trends and respond more freely to the challenges and crises of our time. Then the Spirit may take up what is achieved and so promote true, redemptive humanity.

With such an attitude, we might learn to see that many predictions, even when not magnified by the media, are statistical projections based on impersonal samples rather than real considerations of individual destinies. If we consult our experience, we might remember how we can come out unscathed when exposed to infection by flu. On other occasions, we contract it seemingly out of the blue; on reflection, we trace our vulnerability to infection back to our inner attitudes and behaviour. We might have noticed how treatments and remedies that work for others don't work for us, because healing is individual. Just as our susceptibility to infection is individual, the medicine that will help us will be individual, too. It will take account of the unique challenge and opportunity of this moment, when the destiny that we have received in order to balance out the residue from our past opens to the destiny that we want to create for this moment. This can often be illness but could also be an accident or something else that brings suffering to rise to and overcome. It cannot be generalised. If we shift our parameters somewhat, noticing that the value of a human life is not necessarily measured in the number of days we live, but the quality of those days, then we might even look at the healing that comes from intense illness sincerely engaged with may be more creative on our destiny path, whilst apparent healing, without engaging the Lord of our destiny in His Parousia, is not lasting. Statistical analysis does not reach here.

Can we strengthen our own health by our acceptance of this principle of destiny? If peace is about our inner relationship to the world, and we accept illness or tragedy in peace and fortitude, every 'blow of fate' is transformed into the occasion of spiritual and physical growth. I shall never forget my

tutor's comment on hearing of a death being caused by a particular illness, 'No! He died of good health!', meaning that before his last breath, the illness sent to heal a bad past destiny had fulfilled its task. This provides a positive attitude to illness—and that positivity helps our system protect us from illnesses that are not ours to catch. There is an opportunity here to start building a clear idea of the Healing Spirit.

Any separation of our active intentions from our capacity to execute them is a kind of illness; and wellness is re-establishing the flow of that execution, for illness need not prevent us carrying on, not even in soul troubles. A broken heart does not necessarily bring one to shut-down.

Accepting our destiny means accepting illness; rejecting it means rejecting the dispenser of destiny. 'Whoever denies the Son loses the Father as well; whoever confesses the Son gains the Father too' (1 John 2, 23). This is Parousia in practice. We start to experience how our basic constitution is transformed: it is no longer made up only of molecules but of life, and therefore ready for resurrection.

Putting these thoughts and feelings together, could it be possible that wherever one goes, one could be aware of the presence of infection; of the actuality of one's destiny as to whether the infection strikes or passes one by; and of the inner presence of both the power of resisting it and that of containing it from spreading? This would apply just as well on a sunny day, in a hospital wing for serious diseases or in a church. This healing force can be cultivated in our time through going out to meet the one who is re-appearing, re-focussing out of the nebula of the spirit; then accepting the presence and letting it be a way to resurrection in the midst of this our life here and now, even if death is a necessary step on that path.

Parousia becomes a time of complete transformation of human life and potential from what it was in the times of the spiritual darkness of materialism. We develop a new science: not what the intellect thought out theoretically (even including experimental results based upon those theories) but what the heart thinks out, built on a subtle experience of the 'cloud', that teaches the spiritual technology of illness and wellness. The new 'experiment' is independent freedom and conscience in managing life wholesomely.

1 more detail at https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/encyclopedia-of-the-bible/Parousia

### Seven steps to transubstantiation

### **Tobias Kaye**

The background to what I divine and share here lies in my interest in community. The space we create and share between us, deliberately or otherwise, is surely the space of the Holy Spirit. My discovery of the presence of the Holy Spirit in deliberate community came through Scott Peck's work as laid out in his book *The Different Drum*. The book describes Peck's development of a two-day workshop model that facilitates the arrival of true harmony between people. The three stages, and how that happens are beyond the scope of this article. The sense of parousia or of the presence of the Holy Spirit is strong, and often remarked in the third stage.

My personal experience lay in reading the book and phoning the number in the back to arrange a workshop in my own community. Over fifty people came together from a wide variety of backgrounds, maybe 25–30 percent from various local anthroposophical initiatives, medicine, education, care, religion etc. The turning point in my own

Tobias Kaye lives in Buckfastleigh, UK. He works with Sounding Bowls and offers short and longer courses in awakening through anthroposophy.

life came, in part from the experience, but more from the two facilitators the US foundation sent over. One of these clearly shared a karmic background with myself. As a Native Ameri-

can shaman/healer he showed me a side of life that Steiner talks of but no member of The Christian Community had mentioned to me.

When I first took Bald Eagle, known as Rusty, into the chapel at our Christian Community building he went silent for maybe twenty minutes. I explained to him about the power of the transubstantiation, how its effects reach out for hundreds of metres in every direction.

After patiently hearing me out he said: 'I first saw this happen when I went to sit on the prairie alone for three days. I lifted a handful of dirt and said to the Great Spirit in the soil: "What do you want of me? How can I give myself to You? What is the service by which my life becomes your life?" I saw the soil change, it began to shine, I felt the light in my hand, like music. Spirit was revealed in that soil.'

When I took him into my studio, showed him how I turn wood on a lathe to make musical instruments, he said: 'This is happening here, too. The way you touch the wood, release the shavings, is releasing the spirit in the wood. Transubstantiation is happening here, too. Please send me a small package of your shavings each month—I can make effective "medicine" from this.'

A small group of those whose lives he had touched gathered on the prairie. Amongst other things we held a sweat-lodge ceremony. He had a colleague with him. He spoke to us about releasing things in us over the day or two before the ceremony: confessions, sorrows, regrets. 'This is important,' he said. 'We do not normally mix genders, beyond family, in this ritual. Untransformed substance can create problems,' he said. 'Please do this work of release.'

On the day, we thanked all the beings involved. Fire, water, the stones, whose sacred form was broken by the fire. We thanked the logs who gave up their fire and form to prepare for us. We thanked the branches that enclosed our lodge. We thanked the land and the sky. There is no substance, only being. These are our brothers and sisters, our mother and father, all that we are is in them. Then we entered, each one in prayer. Rusty and his colleague built up the heat. People felt their lives pass before them, some felt many lives, as we offered up all that we have become to the sacred movement of spirit through our human form and on into the love that is our future. Some fell to the ground, some rose up, their being as translucent as song. Hours became minutes, as minutes became hours.

I fall, again and again, into my body. This substance that the spirit seeks to fill. Over decades the meditations go deeper. The spirit moves, I seek to listen. One thing I notice is that community is still my Christ. Within me the full panoply of Grimm's characters circle around, each seeking to tell me their story. Outside of me, friends, colleagues and others play their part in my life. The two circles are one circle. This is my community. Forgiveness, within confession, dissolves blinding knots and I begin to see more.

One of the things that I see is the flow of substance. Light and dark

weaving within nine hierarchies, singing the song that invites us to join. Thrones completing themselves in releasing self into support. Cherubim whose existence is just the flow of support that makes all gifts possible. Seraphim holding the centre around which all things wheel. This they show me:

There are seven stages to transubstantiation. In each stage the dark and the light both have roles. I see this happening in both a fully realised sweat-lodge and in the Act of Consecration of Man. Where this happens, substance is transformed. These are the stages:

#### 1. Error

Soul substance in us that hoped to become part of our community development becomes blocked through our sinful impurities.

### 2. Inner Guidance

Our loving conscience is the action of Christ within us. This is distinct from the shadow-voices of the inner critic that condemn us. On seeing the blockage, our conscience experiences error and suffering within.

### 3. Confession

In advance of the ritual, an act of confession is made. This may be an inward clarification of an awareness of the blockage, or it may be a full-on, ritualised act with a religious practitioner. Either way the error/blockage/suffering is expressed in clear concepts, felt feelings or sentences.

#### 4. Offering

During the ritual the individual makes an act of confessional offering: 'This is the blockage/

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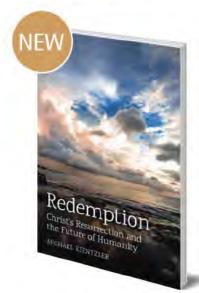
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suffering/error that I am aware of. This I offer up to Thee, oh guiding light of my life.'

5. The Division

Spiritually, the offering-in-ritual divides the sin from the error. The trauma-pattern that is holding up the forward-motion, holding it captive, is given up by the love-act of confession. The energy and potential good of the blocked motion returns to the pool of potential within the human soul.

Meanwhile, the love energy created by the confession is

Meanwhile, the love energy created by the confession is released into the ritual itself.

6. The Gathering

The combined love energy of the confessions is gathered into the substance of the ritual. The integrity and dedication of the religious practitioner, priest or shaman, becomes the conduit by which this substance performs a somersault through the inversion of the no-space/ time of the source being, the love substance through which all that is flows into being. Through this inversion it enters into the ritual-substance, be that bread and wine or sweat and breath. The power of the ritual is there to enable the partakers to support this power within the priest or shaman. The nearest comparison on the sense-bound plane is with the purification of water or alcohol through distillation.

7. Focussing this

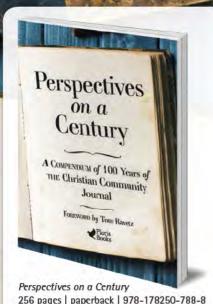
What happens to the substances themselves can also be seen like this: The gift of the hierarchies in providing us with the sensation of solidity creates a dead point in matter.

For them, this is a feeling of having reached an end point. When human consciousness makes a true connection with the love that creates that matter, the dead point is released, the feeling of being at an end is unblocked, and the creators of that matter re-engage with it. The radiance of this event is long lasting and wide spreading. In those who receive the transformed substance in this ritual the action that occurs uplifts the substance of the blocked motion within their pool of potential and returns to its original drive to enact change with their community, inwardly and outwardly.

The final points of this awareness appeared to me around five weeks after a friend had died. Though hundreds came to his funeral, many only understood his greatness in the way in which he appeared to several afterwards, in more light than he had allowed others to see while alive. Something of a 'partyanimal' I had dismissed him as a little lost. After these seven stages became clear to me, he explained: 'This is what I was doing at parties. I encouraged people to release their pain patterns into joyful surrender, and transformations took place. I attribute my understanding, in good part, to him.

The power to ritualise everyday life to the point where everything can be seen to be God is the ultimate priesthood or shamanism. Rudolf Steiner lays it out in detail, but even then it is hard to understand until we make the personal sacrifices required to see through. May your eyes be washed with love.

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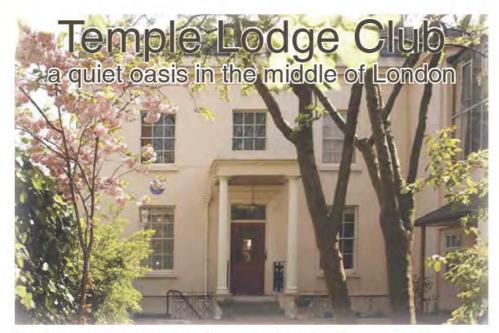
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