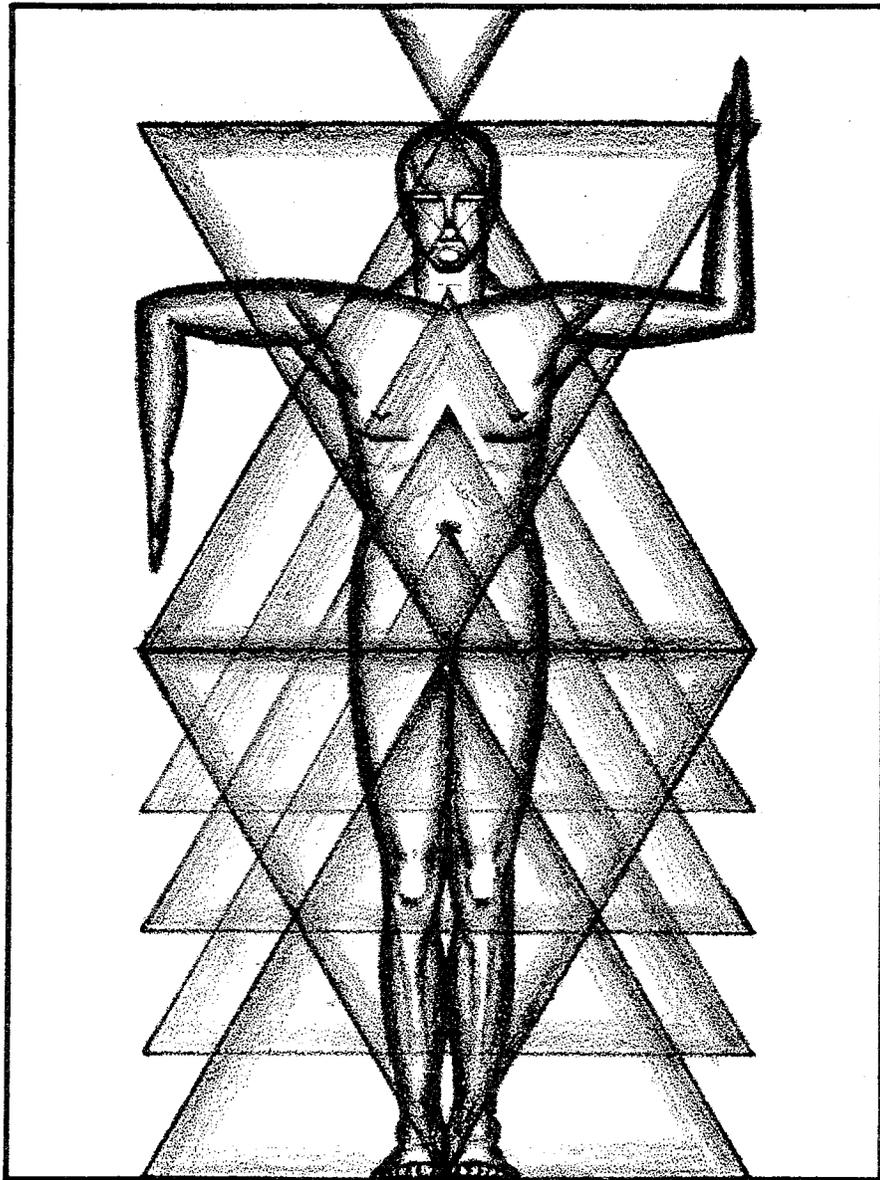


LIVING



Devoted to man and his transcendental nature

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EDITORIAL

THE BIRTH IN THE MANGER

When days grow shorter we remember the story of Jesus' birth in a stable — around him animals, shepherds, and gift-bearing travelers from far places. We sense, however, that the story has a deeper meaning, than discloses itself in the accepted Christmas tradition.

We find indeed that traditions down the ages have related this dark time of year to the inner meaning of birth. They hail the newly climbing sun at end of the dark period. It foretold for them the time of seed-planting and the miracle of new life. They also called the earth itself by strange compelling names — cave, manger, wilderness.

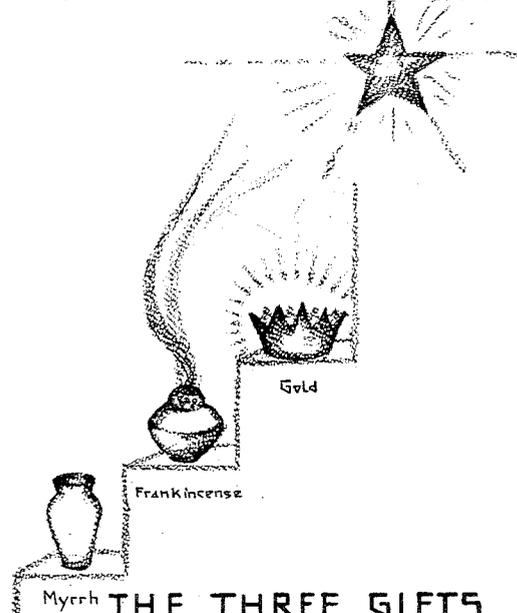
We act upon our knowledge that from a seed will come the color and fragrance of a flower. We know that certain conditions of planting, cultivation and chemical exchange will bring about this metamorphosis. We bury the seed within its bed of earth. Birth of man in earth is really a planting, an imprisoning. As within the seed is held the flower so within the life of man dwelling in earth, is held for later flowering a growing consciousness.

The animals, too, beside the bed of Jesus hold for us precious meaning. As the cow makes milk from grass, so we direct alchemical change within ourselves, to make from our experiences healthy food for further growth. We may gain wisdom and humility, if we will, to heed the shepherd's call, as do the sheep, and pasture on far uplands — the wiser self, our shepherd. Or we may swing from grubbing in lower earth to fearless walking beyond highest mountain crags, as does the goat.

Vicissitudes of earthly life bring us to that state of consciousness thru which we may catch new glimpse of the soul's beauty. We see at last that birth in earth is really death, until we bring new birth within ourselves thru conscious understanding. So we cannot but rejoice with those above the earth and those within the manger who came to welcome the great pattern maker Jesus to earthly life. As well do we rejoice with those far elder brothers, of old traditions, who knew the mystery of birth and the planting of seed, and hailed with profound rejoicing the time of winter solstice and the returning sun — as symbol of that birth in man which gives to him new life.

Oh man—seed in earth, let us rejoice in the return of sun! Let us live deeply and well our life within the deep, dark cave of earth! Let us drink deeply of its good — grow strong of limb, and heart, and mind! But let us fail not to look up, and know that this is but the seedling's life. Real life lies far beyond in mystery of that other birth — the consciousness of soul, which leads in turn toward the great Sun of Spirit.

PAGES FROM THE SCHOOL WORKSHOP



THE THREE GIFTS

It is customary in the western world to conceive the gifts of the Wise Men at the crib of the child Jesus as distinctly Christian. Few know that in esoteric teachings it is said that angels, at the command of God, bring these same three gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to Adam and Eve after they have left Eden. Since Adam and Eve are the names of the masculine-feminine aspects of the soul when, as a seed it first descends into earth, these gifts are symbolically indicative of what all men, all races have received.

These three gifts are the basic embryonic equipment of all souls in earth, — namely, body, heart and mind. Thru them, or rather thru the experiences which they make possible, men slowly distill the qualities and stature of their being. When they have become enlightened they offer up these three gladly to the making of the perfect man, as did the Wise Men of old. Of this stature Jesus was and continues to remain the symbol, yet the symbol and gifts apply to all men.

MBM

PURPOSE OF THIS PUBLICATION
Believing in the double value of life lived consciously, that is, in the understanding and pursuit of the patterns and the higher evolution of men, this publication calls to the full range of man's being. It presents a higher practical perspective the evidences of non-physical faculties the pattern of this transitional period steps to "interior" or subjective growth extracts from Universal Principles glimpses into Sacred Teachings These are stimuli in drawing out latent capacities in material, vital, psychic, mental and spiritual living. How will you cooperate with us to make this purpose increasingly effective?

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PRAXIS CONSCIOUS SELF EXERCISE

By M. Benzenberg Mayer

Born an earthling
My way was lost in trails of clay;
Night is passing
Reborn into another day.
Waking out of ignorance into sight,
A soul am I,
Keeping the Fete of Light.
I know the Star called East,
And turn from self and sloth
Partaking of the Golden Feast.
George Renee

Man's potential equipment remains the most stupendous and thrilling material upon which you can work. Turning upon the self with your mind, it becomes the subject and you are the master. At this season of beginnings, fresh courage, new effort, of happiness and rejoicing, it is well to deliberately orient subjective exercises to the celebration of the rebirth of the sun as Light.

An important step in training is the breaking down of the threads of associative thinking, which literally keep the self in bondage to the past. Do you realize that the moment some idea is presented to you, dozens of subconscious thoughts and reactions spin a web of influence just below the threshold of your awareness, coloring and shaping your conscious response to the idea? These filaments inhibit free functioning of both heart and mind.

Try this experiment. Write down the headings of what comes into your mind with the following words: mouse; read; heaven; fascism; winter; God. Do not hurry the experiment. Take your time. And when you have done it, review the responses and ask yourself candidly how many are actually related to the original idea. You will be surprised. And you will have evidence of how you and others are bound to the past. If you were being tutored, this would come out still more clearly.

Now take the word: Christmas. Write down your associations. Then review them honestly. How many are related with the rush of the holidays, good times, vacation, gifts, decorated trees, candles, reunions with old friends, church, dinners, nuts, candy, plum pudding, the country, hymns, excitement. How many associations that are left are actually concerned with the festival itself, - "das ding an sich"? The central idea of Christmas is the birth of joy with the coming of Christ. But Jesus was not born in December. This is the ancient Fete of the Winter Solstice, the planetary celebration of the Returning Sun, the symbol of Light and Goodness, the awakening in man of his higher consciousness, the seed of the later christ grade or stature.

Do not put aside any genuine and beneficent beauty of the Christmas story, for it is a sym-

bolically true story. BUT DO TWO OTHER THINGS. Take its meaning home, close to the hearth of your own soul, knowing that it is to your own birth of higher stature that it would point, not to the worship of a Teacher. It is frustration and sorrow to the Teacher Jesus that men look to him for salvation, instead of understanding and following on the way. Christmas has no real value to you, unless you try at that time to awaken your higher consciousness.

And secondly, realize that the Winter Solstice celebrations have, as far back as men can read history, been observed and venerated, both exoterically by the multitude, and esoterically by the enlightened. Try to get into the spirit of it, for there is, at this time, a momentum in the ethers. This is why millions experience a kind of inner excitement, - yet do not know why. They think it is the shops, the bustle, - alas!

We will use a Theme this month which is in keeping with the season. It expresses the emerging from darkness to the promise of a greater day. Darkness means ignorance, misunderstanding, spiritual blindness, - and birth means a coming into knowledge, understanding, and these are accompanied by joy and the peace of a spiritual waking.

The earthling is everyman. He is at first lost in the ways of earth, forgetting what went before. He knows nothing but the present, and does not care to inquire further. Then come the experiences which are like the annunciation. They may be books, lectures, words which plant the germ which is to be born at the winter solstice. And then, at this great Fete, comes the light of the mind, like the sun, making a new day. That is waking, that is birth. It is the seed of the realization that each is more than flesh, that a higher consciousness in turn awaits its growth.

Deeply joyous is he who has come to this state. It is his christ-mas. He knows that the star of his own spirit is symbolically in the East, the place of beginnings. He turns from his lower self, his personality and its fixations... he has set his compass to a great Port!

May Christmas, the Planetary Fete of Light, bless you and draw you within its aura.

GOOD TIDINGS

THE GLAD MESSAGE OF YOUR OWN DEVELOPMENT

by G. Horchard

Here are indeed good tidings, for our page this month will be devoted to some first experiences of larger dimensions - the experiences of those who may have preceded the reader on a way which is equally open to him.

The way is open to all who will cultivate those transcendental faculties, which are theirs potentially, and whose development can lead on to wonders of which men do not dream as yet. If it were generally realized that mystical, transforming experience is actually accessible to all thru training, no effort would be spared that might speed the beneficent result.

Frequent reference has been made in these columns to extra-sensory perception, but the faculties of ESP, as they are called, must in no way be confused with the very different type now under discussion. Clairvoyance, telepathy, psychometry and the others of the ESP group are connected with the etheric counterpart of the physical body. The messages they convey are often striking, but they are concerned with the things of earth and matters of material interest.

The transcendental faculties, on the contrary, bring rapport with supersensual worlds. They belong to the evolving powers of heart and mind, and they point toward the central Source of life and light, whose physical symbol is the sun. When the individual's higher awareness is born, with the emergence of these faculties - that is the true Christmas for him.

Within each of us is a spark of the Great Light - a seed, as it were, and it is possible for those who seek to bring this seed into development. Not one of us but can attain to some degree this birth, or re-birth, this initiation into a more dynamic, more abundant life.

That is the "gospel" or glad tidings our page would announce this first month of the new solar year. Surely if there is a logical time to speak of initiations it is when the Winter Solstice should direct our thoughts to the really great Beginnings.

At the School of Applied Philosophy all those who have carried on beyond the early stages of training have experienced initiation - the opening up of the transcendental faculties, even if only for a moment.

The Director of the School rarely speaks of these signal occurrences in the lives of her trainees, for they are profound and sacred steps, not readily understood by those who are not in training. Yet she has consented to give our page a few extracts from one of her files. They are the first ones she drew out, not the measure or number of the records, and they are

all merely first inklings of the development possible. Yet they give evidence of the reality of training toward valid mystical experience here in the western world, under the guidance of a teacher who knows how to open the doors of consciousness and perform the rites of the first initiation.

Brief excerpts only can be given. If some appear incoherent, it is because of that "ineffable" quality of the genuine mystic experience to which William James and other students of mysticism refer. The very lack of articulation is eloquent tribute to the rising sun of a new awareness.

"For the first time my physical body really disappeared from my consciousness. I became a part of something infinite - an important part. Eagerness and a peace full of activity filled me. I heard sounds as of music. Some problems with which you have confronted me suddenly became clear. Nothing really matters but that I should attain."

"I think I have been on a long journey, from which I have returned not as I was when I left. I seemed to see and experience many things - just how to describe it is hard. With it all I experienced such joyousness and splendor...."

"...First I felt icy and tingly - quivering. I tried to calm myself, started to pray. Suddenly there were tears in my eyes....I feel as tho my heart has received something I can't describe. I can't find the words to tell you."

"When...my body seemed to be permeated with a lightness....I started to pray....I could not help crying....I felt this presence....I gave thanks for the lifting of "the veil"....I had so peaceful a feeling...."

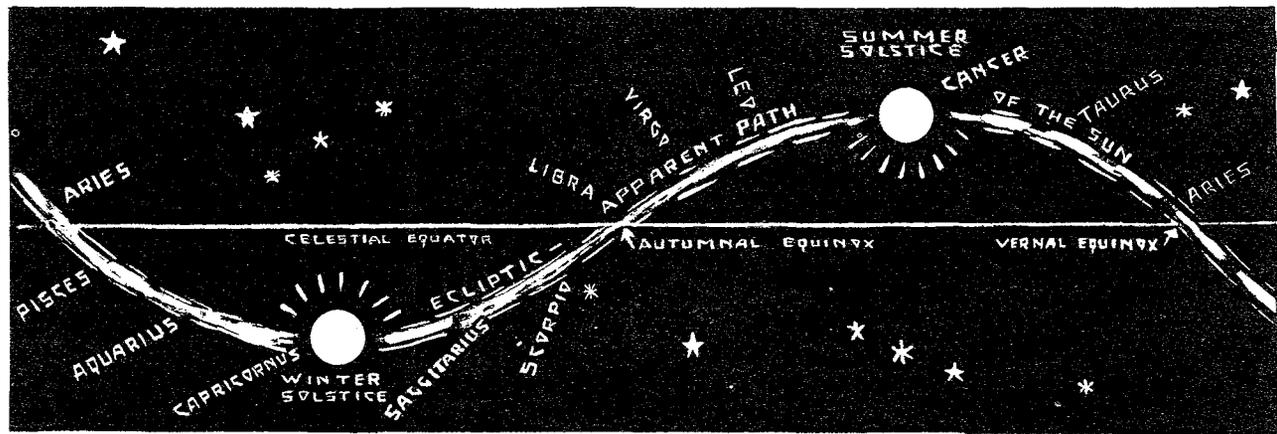
"...quiet fell on my soul. My whole being was more deeply stirred than ever before. It seemed as if my heart were being cleansed...not by fire but ice...yet the effect was warmth."

"...there was a humming sound in my ears and a greater quiet than I have ever experienced anywhere.....when I finally opened my eyes.....It was strange but wonderful...."

"...My body seemed to loosen, or rather, it seemed as tho some other form could emerge from the outer existing form....I prayed for wisdom and understanding and not to have fear.."

"I am still under the influence of....experience....I felt myself rising steadily, slowly....I was seized by an overwhelming longing around the heart...."

THE WINTER SOLSTICE



The real festival of Christmas is the festival of the winter solstice, and it has to do, not with the birth of Jesus but with the Birth of the Light. It is perhaps not yet widely known that the early Christian church, which celebrated the birth of its founder on January 6, gradually felt the competitive pull of this greater and older festival in the Mithraic and other religions so that, at the end of the 3rd century A.D. it changed the date of its celebration of the Nativity to December 25. For those religions only followed in the footsteps of still earlier religions, so that it enters Universal Patterns.

What is the solstice - that it should be celebrated by all the great races of ancient days? The word is derived from "sol" (sun) plus "sistere" (to cause to stand); and the solstice is that point in the ecliptic at which the sun is farthest from the celestial equator, north or south. Hence, at the solstices (about Dec. 21 and June 21) the days are shortest or longest of the year.

Let us look at the chart. Because of the bending of the earth's axis toward the unknown Pole, half of the ecliptic circle (or apparent path of the sun) is above the equator during half the year, and below the equator during the other half.

Notice therefore, that the ecliptic circle (together with the belt of the Zodiac) winds like a serpent about the rod of the celestial equator as the two entertwine. Now these matters were known and deeply understood by the old Sumerians and Babylonians, thousands of years before our era. Anu was said to be the mysterious and all powerful Pole of the ecliptic, while Bel was seen as the pole star of the equator. Thus they named the celestial equator: "The Way of Bel", and the serpentine path of the ecliptic: "The Way of Anu".

At the autumnal equinox, when the days and nights are of equal length, the sun crosses the equator and, - for the peoples of the northern temperate zone - appears to gradually descend, while the days grow shorter and darker, until about Dec. 21, when the sun is just entering the sign Capricorn, when it reaches the lowest point.

There for about three days it appears to stand still (hence: "sol-stice") at that lowest, darkest point. Presently, about Dec. 24 or 25, the sun begins to move northward on the ecliptic path, and the peoples who watch, recognize with joy the "birth of the light" as the days begin to lengthen and grow brighter, and the period of the darkest days is at an end. For the true sun worshipper knew that the sun, and that for which the sun stands, is the source of warmth, life and light.

This is only the outermost basis for the Festival of the Winter Solstice, which is celebrated at the School, as it is among groups of the enlightened throughout the world, and eligibility to participation is greatly prized. Here too, this mighty Festival is celebrated on many levels, varying with the stage, the insight, and the experience of the participant.....

Beyond the obvious level of the season's turn, there are the psychic, the mystical, and the philosophical levels. The two latter have to do with the coming to life of the higher consciousness in man, which is the true meaning of the Birth of the Light. Then only can he lift up his eyes and begin to comprehend something of the mighty Drama outside him and beyond him.....

by E.G. Salt

WHAT OF THE SOUL ?

by E. D. Albisser

There have been people of every race and age for whom the soul was a living experience. There have been innumerable others whose lives were spent in an effort to know its nature and for whom it held the key to self-knowledge and to knowledge of the nature of life. As a word it is a symbol covering a vast range of ideas. "No one science is big enough to cover the question of the soul" says one writer. "Each new science will bring its contribution, and aid in our knowledge of it."

Indefinable, remote and thickly veiled, it re-currently resumes first place in the minds of those searching for clues to a better understanding of man.

So Alexis Carrel includes mysticity in the list of sciences which shall contribute to the synthetic knowledge forming the future science of man. Yet mysticity is in itself so vast a field that it alone contains the seeds of a potential synthetic science whose branches stem from the center of the inner life, the soul.

The study of its nature as intuitively perceived in all races, the experience of its emanations, the quest for a vital relationship to it, are assuredly direct paths toward the gate of the mystery.

When the primitive spoke of 'the soul' it was of that part of the being which left the body in sleep or at death. His clairvoyant eyes observed its form which he described as having the body's shape, transparent and ethereal. Is this fancy, imagination, superstition? If so it is strange that words so similar to these describe the ectoplasmic substance of materializations in Seance rooms. May we not rather believe that primitive man possessed a sensitivity since lost which is to be regained by the careful observation of the forms and activities of the inner life in waking, sleep and after death states?

Surely there is a definite link between ancient beliefs and the findings of contemporary psychic research. "One step in the ascent of the soul to its own self-observation" as Sir William Barrett puts it.

But the soul is more than an entity surviving in subtle form and manifesting subtle powers. Other sciences must play their part in the furtherance of an understanding of its nature, among them the new psychology whose work with the unconscious has contributed so greatly to the knowledge of the human psyche. Through its techniques the first steps toward a valid regenerative process have been taken. Is this enough? Is a better grasp of the motives underlying conduct, a better adaptation to the outer life, the end? In the vanguard of those following its methods are the far-seeing few who seek

a means of lifting consciousness out of its absorption in the personal life and directing it in the search for that which is of the quality of the soul.

Intellectual terms vary from group to group, from specialist to specialist. Attempts to define mind, soul, consciousness, spirit, leave a trail of confusion. But grounded firmly in the inner teachings of all races as an inherent principle, is the idea of unfoldment from the earthly to the heavenly man, from the irrational to the rational soul.

And this is the Journey of the Soul, so finely set forth in Wisdom Lore in myth in allegory, in symbols and poetic imagery; efforts, these, to tell of that spiritual unfoldment which can be known only through prolonged and profound contemplation. Here is the vision of the longer span, the growth of the soul seed, the way and conditions of its growth, its changes, transformations, goal and fulfillment.

Here is the body of knowledge and experience of the inner life, formed by the intuitions of intense and powerful minds and by revelations of the soul's life, individual and infinitely varied. Down the ages the long rich vista of a deeper flow of life and flow parallels that of outer history.

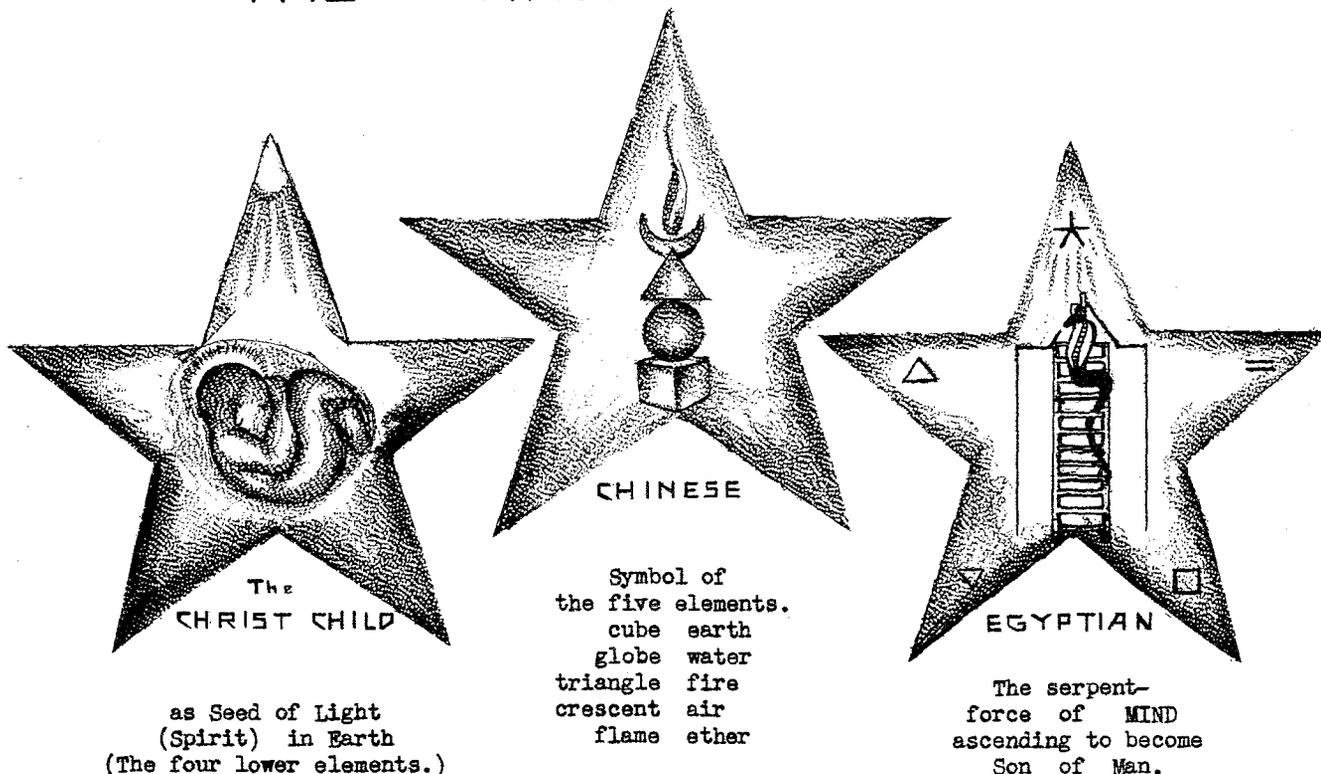
In this vast view the soul's nature emerges in clearness and detachment. It is serene and positive, warm and living. Mind-led it feeds on wells of unearthly beauty, knows boundless being, free-moving intensity. Serenity and upwelling sweetness are of its condition paired with the poise and balance of intensely vibrating life. It is strong, alone, and unafraid.

For the soul is the core of the human being and as such is of Fire, impelled by its nature to fling forth of its radiance, the joy of its seeing. It can do no other than love. And man on the threshold of a new octave of growth can do no other than break through to that stage of experience in which the soul in awareness declares itself.

The science of man in earth and the science of the soul are indissolubly bound together. They are both in the making for this new age; the one to be developed by the synthesis of the physical sciences, the other by the assimilation of both past and present day findings in metaphysics, psychology and by the practice of age-old methods inherent in soul processes as understood and taught in Wisdom traditions.

Above all, this dual science of man will grow by the word and living of those who know somewhat of the soul's life and testify to its reality.

THE CHRISTMAS STAR



THREE EXAMPLES FROM THE SCHOOL WORKSHOP

THE CHRISTMAS STAR IS THE FIVE-RAYED STAR with one ray pointing upward.

Stars differ in symbolic meaning according to (a) the number of their rays, (b) the relative position of the rays to each other, (c) whether the odd numbered ray be turned up or down.

The five-pointed star is intimately associated with Man's evolution thru the lower elements and his final mastery over them, for the four rays are subordinated to the fifth which is placed so that it is upturned. This fifth is the prophetic token of man's eventual passage into the Cosmic Spheres.

The Christ who carried thru the human evolution and broke legitimately into the Cosmic regions, is the Christian exemplification of transcendent Man. He literally made visible the Passage into the Cosmic. In the especial sense that this task was uniquely His, as a Cosmic-Pattern-Maker on earth, the five-rayed Star is identified with Him. Thus this Star has become known as the Christmas Star, or the Star of Christ.

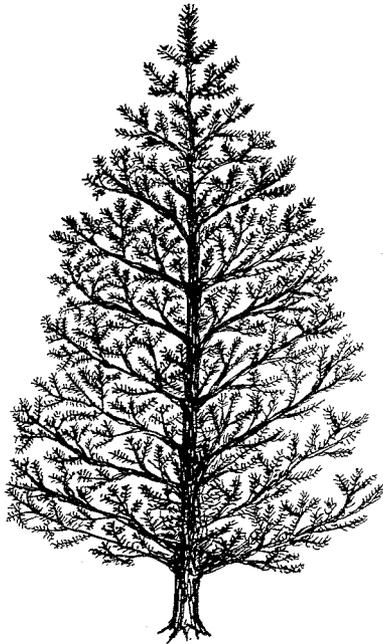
Interpreted philosophically, the four elements of earth, water, fire, air, are not only the

physical, psychic, upper psychic and mental regions, but are actually indicative of the problems and tasks awaiting man's conquering. The rays symbolize ways and means by which man climbs, - battles to be fought, - dragons to be conquered, - powers to be unfolded, - concord to be achieved and maintained. As man conquers, not by evasion but by sufferance and increasing understanding and mastery, he rises to higher capacities in himself. So the fifth nature, the spiritual, which is the fruit of the four, rises triumphantly above them. It points upward, revealing the logical continuation of the process in a still higher evolution.

While the Star is now associated with Christ, it is a symbol applicable at all times in all races, to this conscious transcending of the solely human state. The Star of Destiny! The Star of the True Light! The Star of all who become Sons of the Father! To those who understand, it points The Way. Hence the significance of the Star may be expanded thru Chinese, Greek, Egyptian symbols and remain essentially the same. It may everywhere be used to indicate where is the Christ (originally CHERSTOS, - the Perfected One.)

by MEM

THE TREE SYMBOL



Why has the Christmas tree become a part of Christmas celebrations?

Because the tree is a living thing, responding every year to the cycle of nature's rebirth. Because when it puts forth new green foliage, it is like hope in man, springing forth perennially to the promise of better things. This is why green is the color of hope.

Because in the pattern of higher correspondences, the new life in nature is like the new life born in the soul of man when an understanding of spirit is reached. This is the birth of christ (anointed) consciousness, a deep mystical experience, whose objective parallel is the birth of Jesus, as Christos. The celebration of the birth of Jesus (of which the date is unknown) was moved by Church Fathers in the fourth century from January 6th to coincide with the ancient and universal celebration of the Winter Solstice.

Jesus grows to manhood, becoming as a staunch tree to his followers. So the birth of spiritual consciousness in any soul is the young child who must grow to full stature; a spiritual tree. Thus trees are intimately linked to the great December festival when the return of the sun brings new life to the earth.

In bygone ages innumerable races have at this season carried trees or branches in processions, decorating them with colored ribbons and bright objects, anticipating modern customs by thousands of years. Ignorant folk used to worship the tree as a bestower of fertility. Enlightened folk revere it as a mystical symbol of spiritual birth.

by MBM

8 LIVING

THE SCHOOL OF APPLIED PHILOSOPHY

118 East 76th Street New York, N.Y.

The two "guest evenings" on Friday, November 19th and Tuesday, November 23rd were so successful that provision will undoubtedly be made for at least one more such occasion during the second semester, or possibly before it opens.

On both evenings the director of the School, Mrs. M. Benzenberg Mayer, was present and answered the very interesting questions asked. These related to the School, the aims of the Work, the reality of the soul, the means of developing latent faculties, and many others that reflected the increasing search among the public for knowledge of those things that most vitally affect life and are not answered in the usual type of school.

One visitor asked, "Can I really draw on metaphysical forces?" and MBM answered, "I must first ask, have you a drawing account?"

The Director's series on the "Veiled Realities", which began December 2nd, will continue on Thursday evenings during January, at 8:30, beginning January 6th. These last four may be taken independently of the three in December, but should be taken consecutively, to derive the full benefit. The first two will be on "The Veiled Powers of Higher Man" — energies and substances which are dormant. The third and fourth will be on the "Veiled Paths to Knowledge of Higher Realities", and will be on Occultism and Mysticism.

The Friday series at the Continental dinner hour, 6.15, will be held January 14th and 21st. The subject will be: "Jonah and the Whale are Mesopotamian" — the concealed description of an initiation.

On Sunday afternoon, December 5th, the Trainees gave a tea for the Pre-trainees. To the social side was added another, as usual at the School, for the meeting served also to make the Pre-trainees acquainted with the "Project", on which the Trainees have already been working for some weeks, and which is to be a central feature of the year's work for all in the Training.

The Project is focused on the civilization of old Mesopotamia, with emphasis upon the correspondence of its ancient and our modern problems, and upon the lessons to be learned from life on this planet in another era.

On New Year's Day there will be an Open House at the School for members and their friends. This has always been a joyous occasion in the past, with light refreshment for the body and more substantial food for heart and mind in the discussion around the open fire.