

LETTER XII

The Hanged Man, Arcanum of Faith

Quotations for Reflection

For what is the phenomenon of religion if not the manifestation of spiritual gravitation towards God, i.e. towards the centre of spiritual gravitation of the world? (page 306)

The Hanged Man represents the condition of one in the life of whom gravitation from above has replaced that from below. (page 307)

The attraction of heaven is so real that it can take hold of not only the soul but also the physical body. Then the body is carried up and no longer touches the ground. (page 308)

Jesus Christ walked on the water not by virtue of ecstasy—not by going out of his Humanity—but rather by virtue of enstasy, i.e. centering in himself, which is the active virtue of the formula “I am; do not be afraid”. (page 311)

The boat with his disciples is, therefore, and will be until the end of the world, the aim of the *I am* walking on the water. His enstasy, his profound centering in himself, does not distance him from the navigators on the agitated sea of history and evolution, and does not make him disappear into the other sea—the calm sea of *nirvana*—but rather, on the contrary, it entails that he walks, until the end of the world, after the boat with his disciples. (page 311)

The other characteristic trait of the *spiritual man* is that he is upside down. This means to say, firstly, that the “solid ground” under his feet is found above, whilst the ground below is only the concern and perception of the head. Secondly, it means to say that his *will* is connected with heaven and is found in immediate contact (not by the intermediary of thought and feeling) with the spiritual world. (page 316)

The will is an active force; it is not naturally an organ of perception. In order for it to be able to perceive it should not—it must not—become passive, for then it would fall asleep or fade away, because its very nature is activity, and in ceasing to be active it would cease to be will; no, it should change centre of gravitation, i.e. to transform “*my will*” into “*thy will*”. It is the inner act of love alone which can accomplish the change of centre that the will uses or around which it gravitates. Instead of gravitating around the centre “me”, it can orientate itself towards the centre “you”. This transformation, effected by love, is what one calls “obedience”. (page 317)

Practical Hermeticism therefore applies itself to educating thought and imagination (or memory) to keep in step with the will. This is why it requires constant effort of thought and imagination combined in order to think, meditate and contemplate in *symbols*—symbolism being the sole means of rendering thought and imagination capable of not being suspended when the will submits to revelation from above and enabling them to unite with it in its act of receptive obedience, so that the soul not only has a revelation of faith but also participates in this revelation with its understanding and memory. (pages 319-320)

Now, practical Hermeticism is—like Christian mysticism—based on the experience of authentic faith, i.e. the experience of the human being upside down, where the will is above intellectuality and imagination. Its practical aim is nevertheless to render the intellect and imagination equal companions of the will favoured by revelation from above. (page 322)

Thus the Arcana of the Tarot with which we are occupied constitute a practical school of education for the imagination, with a view to rendering it capable of participating on an equal footing with “solarised” thought and “zodiacalised” will in the revelation from above. (page 324)

The Hanged Man is the link between being and non-being, between darkness and created light. He is found suspended between the potential and the real. And it is the potential which is more real for him than the real properly said. (page 327)

For there is darkness and Darkness. The former is that of ignorance and blindness; the latter is that of knowledge going beyond natural human cognitive powers; it reveals itself to intuitive seeing. It is ultra-luminous in the same sense that ultra-violet rays go beyond the human eye’s scale of natural visibility. (pages 327-8)

Here we have a clear comparison of the certainty due to “active faith” and that due to the demonstration by reasoning. The difference between them is the same as that between a photograph of a person and a meeting with this person. It is the difference that there is between image and reality, between an idea that one makes of the truth and the truth itself, present and acting. (page 328)

And just as the Old Testament and the New Testament together comprise the Holy Scripture, so do the Jewish Cabbala and Christian faith-wisdom symbolism together constitute Christian Hermeticism. (page 330)

Dear Unknown Friend, be attentive to your heart and towards the nuances of intimate warmth which arises from its depths! Who knows who may go on his way with you without your eyes and your understanding surmising it? (page 335)

Do not scorn anything or reject anything, if you have authentic faith. It is this, and this alone, which renders everything truly useful and which gives them value which they would not have without it. (page 337)