

LETTER XIV

Temperance, Arcanum of Inspiration

Quotations for Reflection

An *arcantum* [is] something which one has to take hold of and apprehend beyond the usual plane of experience and thought. This invites us, therefore, to profound meditation—to a spiritual exercise. Let us follow this invitation. (pages 373-4)

What is the *message* of the Angel with two wings, in the red and blue robe, holding two vases, one red and one blue, and making water gush in a mysterious way from one vase to the other? Is he not the one who bears the good news that beyond the duality of “either-or” there is—or is possible—still that of “not only-but also” or “both-and”? (page 374)

The guardian Angel accompanies as a faithful ally the divine image in man, just as vicious inclinations have made their way into the human functional organism which was, before the Fall, the divine likeness. The guardian Angel undertakes the functions, destroyed by original sin, in the likeness, and fills the breach wrought by them. He substitutes himself for functions destroyed through the Fall. (page 375)

But what the guardian Angel does unceasingly is to *protect* the human being. Here he makes up for the failings of the human senses, which are deprived of their clairvoyance from before the original sin. He is the clairvoyant helping the non-clairvoyant with respect to psychic and physical temptations and dangers. He warns, informs and helps to appreciate. Nevertheless, what he never does is to suppress the occasions themselves of temptation. (page 376)

For true chastity is not to refuse to look at and to see, or even to deny, but rather to see the celestial prototypes through and beyond things here below. (page 378)

Therefore, dear Unknown Friend, think of your guardian Angel, think of him when you have problems, questions to resolve, tasks to accomplish, plans to formulate, cares and fears to appease! Think of him as a luminous cloud of maternal love above you, moved by the sole desire to serve you and to be useful to you. (page 379)

The organs of action are simply crystallised will. I walk not because I have legs but rather, on the contrary, I have legs because I have the will to move about. I touch, I take and I give not because I have arms, but I have arms because I have the will to touch, to take and to give. (page 381)

Wings express the will for movement according to a cross, i.e. not only that of expansion on a plane but also that of elevation to another plane. (page 382)

The two wings are therefore related to the contemplative and creative aspects of God which, in their turn, correspond to the divine *image and likeness* in man of which Genesis speaks... Now, the two Angelic wings are the Angel's links with the eternal sabbath and the eternal creativity of God—or, in other words, with *divine gnosis* and *divine magic*. It is by means of the “gnostic” (or “left”) wing that the Angel is in contemplation of divine wisdom, and it is by means of the “magical” (or “right”) wing that he is active in his capacity as messenger or “Angel”. (page 382-3)

The apostolic counsel “Pray constantly” (I Thessalonians v, 17) is the key here. It is impossible to pray unceasingly in full consciousness, but it is certainly possible to carry over prayer from consciousness into the unconscious, where it can operate unceasingly. The astral and vital bodies can pray unceasingly—which is not possible for the conscious self. The latter can certainly, through its initiative, establish a current of unceasing prayer in consciousness at first, then carry it over into the psychic unconscious (astral body) and into the vital unconscious (etheric body). (page 384)

Wings are formed only when the two currents—that of human endeavour and that of grace—meet and unite. (page 384)

The presence of authentic and legitimate wings in the human subconscious (i.e. the psychic and vital bodies) is not without effect on the consciousness of the human being. It manifests itself above all, and in general, as a constant orientation of consciousness towards God. (page 384-5)

If the law of wings is the love of God, that of arms is the love of neighbour. And the law of legs is the love of terrestrial Nature. (page 385)

No one can dispense with the Mary in himself—nor, equally, with the Martha in himself—and remain healthy in spirit, soul and body. “Pray and work” cannot be replaced by any other formula. For one cannot live either without contemplation or without action. (page 386)

The fact that there are tears of sorrow, joy, admiration, compassion, tenderness, etc., signifies that tears are produced by the *intensity* of the inner life. They flow—whether inwardly or outwardly is not important—when the soul, moved by the spirit or by the outer world, experiences a higher degree of intensity in its inner life than is customary. The soul who cries is therefore more *living*, and therefore fresher and younger than when it does not cry. (page 388)

There are three principal modes of authentic spiritual experience: *vision*, *inspiration* and *intuition*—or, perception of spiritual phenomena, spiritual communication and spiritual identification. (page 389)

The practical *arcanum* of inspiration is therefore the knowledge how to be active and passive at the same time: active—in what concerns the *question* or demand; passive—in what concerns the *answer* or solution. (page 392)

The arcanum of inspiration, the fourteenth Arcanum of the Tarot, is that of *two* sources and *two* simultaneous currents of thought, which mingle, unite, and constitute authentic *inspiration*. (page 393)

Dear Unknown Friend, say to yourself that you know *nothing*, and at the same time say to yourself that you are able to know *everything*, and—armed with this healthy humility and this healthy presumption of children—immerse yourself in the pure and strengthening element of the “thinking together” of inspiration! (page 395)

The great religions are therefore the inspirations of mankind. And the history of religion is that of inspiration. Misunderstandings with regard to inspiration and ignorance of its practical *arcanum* will also have distressing and tragic repercussions in mankind’s history. There will be people who will believe that inspiration is obtained through effort, and others who will believe that it is produced only in complete passivity of the soul. Thus all forms of *Pelagianism* and *quietism* will arise in the history of religion. All those who do not know that the arcanum of inspiration is that of activity and passivity simultaneously will fall necessarily either into Pelagianism or into quietism. (page 395-6)

Hermeticism knows the law of the “marriage of opposites” and it knows that inspiration is the marriage of activity and passivity in the soul. (page 396)