

The Inner Side Of Church Worship

by Father Geoffrey Hodson

FOREWORD

by Archbishop Frank W. Pigott

CATHOLIC Christians claim that the Church, with its threefold ministry tracing spiritual descent by the laying on of hands from the earliest Apostles of Our Lord, its seven sacraments or means of grace and its elaborate ceremonial, is a Divine Society; that is to say, it is a body corporate which is ensouled by the life of the Lord Himself; or, changing the metaphor without in any way changing the sense, it is an apparatus, a piece of intricate mechanism, by means of which grace or spiritual benediction is brought from on high and distributed far and wide on the Lord's people here in this world 'in the body pent'.

It is a high claim to make and, indeed, an unique claim; there does not seem to be any other society or organization in the world which makes quite such a claim as that. Yet the Catholic Church makes that claim unflinchingly and has been making it for something like two thousand years.

It is worth while examining the basis of such a claim. What are the grounds on which Catholic Christians for so long a time have dared to claim that their Church is a Divine Society, and still make the claim? Briefly they are three. First, there is tradition. Since the very beginning the belief that the Lord gives Himself to His people in His church by the operation of the Holy Spirit has been held by Catholic Christians and handed on from generation to generation. This is the tradition of the Church. Next, there is the experience of Christians themselves. For two thousand years or thereabouts Christians have 'felt' the presence of their Lord at their sacraments, at their worship and at all the holiest moments in their churches. This feeling has nothing to do with the exercise of any of the five senses. It cannot be described or explained, but it is a fact to those who know the experience. Then, supplementing tradition and experience, there is a third ground or basis for the claim, which so far has been recognized as a legitimate ground for belief on a large scale only by members of the Liberal Catholic Church; that third basis is the revelation which is the result of clairvoyant investigation and research. There are people in the world, only a few perhaps, but still some, who have so trained their faculties that they can perceive that which is hidden from normal people. Using this extended means of perception some investigators have been able to verify what the Church has claimed, namely, that the life of its sacraments does indeed proceed from the Lord Himself and, further, that in the work of distribution of His grace the officiating clergy and the devout worshippers have as co-operators with them hosts of angelic beings.

Those then are the three grounds of belief on which Catholic Christians base their tremendous claim for their Church. Any one of them without the support of the other two might well be considered an insufficient basis for such a claim. Tradition might err in this matter as it has erred in others even over a period of two thousand years. Inner experience cannot always be relied on; even when millions of people over a period of hundreds of years testify to the same experience, still caution is needed, for experience can and sometimes does play strange tricks. Occult research may quite easily be faulty, for this is

a comparatively new method of investigation, and the investigators are so few that they cannot compare notes on a wide scale, and so verify and confirm each other's results. So this alone, no more than tradition or experience alone, can be taken as sufficiently substantial ground to bear the weight of the tremendous claim that Christians make for the Catholic Church. But the three together, by supplementing and strengthening each other, do make a very substantial basis which cannot easily be demolished.

Now the importance of this book is that it provides Catholic believers with just that third ground for their belief, a ground which would do so much, if they could recognize its value, to strengthen their own foundations. From an altogether unexpected quarter there comes this strong support for the Catholics' claim. Clairvoyant investigators, such as Geoffrey Hodson, actually see the tremendous things in which Catholics only believe. They cannot prove it of course any more than traditional Catholics can prove their own experiences of the reality of their sacraments, but it is surely a very strong piece of additional evidence that the Catholics' beliefs are well founded.

Next to C. W. Leadbeater, whose book *The Science of the Sacraments*, though all too little known at present, is likely to become a classic of occult research work, Geoffrey Hodson is perhaps the most reliable and certainly not the least devotional investigator in this particular field. In the following pages he both describes what he has seen clairvoyantly as in Chapters II, IV, V and VI, and makes useful suggestions for church members and worshippers in Chapters I and III; suggestions which are valuable enough in themselves but all the more so since they are supported by the knowledge acquired by the clairvoyant method and are offered in a truly devotional spirit.

Alike then for its evidential value, for its general interest and for its devotional spirit the book is worthy of the strongest commendation. I can wish for it no higher reward than it shall achieve that which its author wishes it to achieve, namely, that it shall strengthen the claims which Catholic Christians make for their Church, and help them the sooner to make permanent that union with their Lord which in some degree they experience at every Eucharist.

THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF A CHURCH

One of the great questions of the day concerns the nature, validity, and usefulness of the Church as an institution. The whole position of the Church is being challenged by various advanced teachers and thinkers, and particularly by the members of the rising generation. The author, having observed this fact, sought by means of meditation to gain a deeper understanding of the significance and purpose of the Church.

While pondering this question, he fell into a brown study in which he became aware of the presence and attention of an angel who appeared to be well aware of the nature of his broodings and to be willing to assist in the solution of the problem which occupied his thought. A close mental union occurred, in which the angel seemed perfectly to understand the author's needs and to invite him to share the angelic outlook and wider knowledge concerning the subject of his meditations. This knowledge seemed to flow into the author's mind and brain in terms of ideas and even of language. In the following chapter he attempts to record, and to share with others, the results of this angelic ministrations.

A church is a magnetic centre, established at a certain point on the surface of the globe, at which special conditions have been created to permit of the free passage of power, life, and consciousness from the spiritual to the material level, and from the material back to the spiritual.

Ideally, every man should provide within himself these conditions, but at the present stage of human evolution only those who have advanced far ahead of their race are able to achieve this end. The ideal before each worshipper is that, dispensing with the necessity for an external church, he should himself become a church in miniature, bearing the power, life, and consciousness of God to man, and the love, adoration, worship, and service of man to God. Until this ideal has been reached, churches, temples and mosques would seem to be necessary as channels for the outpoured beneficence of the supreme Father on high to His sons travelling on their long pilgrimage on earth below.

The establishment of such a magnetic and spiritual centre as a church, greatly reduces the resistance to the flow of spiritual power from on high, and makes possible the presence and service of the holy angels. They find in it a harmonious environment in which they are protected from the normal vibrations of ordinary human life.

Four great streams of power flow into and through a properly consecrated church. These emanate, firstly, from the human and superhuman Hierarchy known to us as the Great White Brotherhood of Adepts, each member of which is a channel for the influence of the three aspects of the Holy Trinity; secondly, from the angelic hierarchy, reaching right up to the Seven Spirits before the Throne and to the angelic aspect of the Logos Himself; thirdly, from the centre of the earth; and fourthly, from the sun. These four streams meet in the church; each contributes its own particular influence, and all are used by the Lord Christ, who sums them up in the most glorious perfection which He has achieved and makes of them a single instrument for the particular work which He does for the world through the Christian faith.

Of the work of the Great White Brotherhood, and of the august Official who is the Supreme Lord of every faith, much has been written elsewhere. Of the forces of the earth and of the sun little, as yet, is known, but of the holy angels one may say that they are the intelligent agents and directors of all the forces which the Church employs. These forces are visible to them, and the method of their evolutionary progress is such that it is as natural for them to direct super-physical forces and to build super-physical forms, as it is for man to dwell in physical bodies and to handle physical matter.

Yet the angels must not be thought of as wholly separate from the forces which they control; they are themselves the embodiment of the type of energy with which they work. They influence these flowing powers from within, changing a relatively unintelligent force into an intelligent one. So adept are they at this work that, in their hands, the whole stream of power which they are manipulating becomes an intelligent and conscious expression of the angels' mind. In other words, they ensoul the forces with which they deal, so that their own vivid intelligence pervades them and governs all the results which they produce. This gives to the flowing energies a cohesiveness and an adaptability which almost amount to self-consciousness in the selection of the best channels and the best methods of achieving the desired results.

The angels labour in this way throughout the whole solar system; they are active in every kingdom of Nature, in each of the four elements, earth, air, fire, and water; they

are present in the sun and in all his planets, and range freely throughout the vast fields of interplanetary space.

From the angelic point of view, the church is a solar system in miniature. In it the spiritual powers behind the solar system manifest in a highly concentrated state through the Lord Christ, who, from this point of view, represents the sun. The mighty Ones who compose the Great White Brotherhood represent the super-physical planets, whilst the members of the physical hierarchy of the Church may be thought of as the physical planets. The walls, floor, and ceiling of the building form the ring-pass-not, beyond which the ensouling forces cannot pass. The angel and nature-spirit servants of the Church and the congregation represent the angelic and the human races, who side by side are using the solar system as a field of evolution.

The purpose of the existence of this ecclesiastical microcosm is precisely that of the macrocosm, namely, the evolution of its inhabitants to a certain standard of perfection. In the Church, that standard is "the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ," of which our Lord Himself is the most perfect and resplendent example. The processes by which the standard is reached are the same both within and without the Church, but as the forces within are more highly concentrated, so the standard may be more quickly attained. Every worshipper is a Christ in the becoming, and the great purpose of the whole system of the Church, with its many converging streams of power, life, and consciousness, is to quicken that Christ in him, until it shall be perfectly and fully manifested.

As the solar system is part of a universe, and the universe, in its turn, part of the cosmos, so is an individual church part of the universal Church which includes, primarily, all other religious institutions, and secondarily, all religious establishments, of whatever faith, existing on this planet. This universal Church on earth is, in its turn, part of the major religious work for the solar system. This principle can be extended indefinitely, from solar systems to universes and from universes to cosmoi. By dwelling upon its wider applications, the unity of all the departments and sects of the Christian faith may be realized; beyond that, the unity of all faiths upon this planet, and still further, of the whole religion of the solar system with all its manifold expressions in the different worlds.

As church members, we may well remind ourselves of this unity, and strive to expand our consciousness beyond the confines of our own Church, religion, or even planet, into a realization of that aspect of the power of God which is behind all religious work throughout His system. Such expansion is of the utmost value, for each one who achieves it thereby becomes a more efficient channel for the power and life of God which it is the function of religion to release throughout the world.

The religious activities on the different planets of the system exercise a quickening influence upon all the life evolving upon them. They serve as an additional means of expression for the power, presence, and consciousness of God, who is primarily manifested, as the divine Immanence throughout the whole solar system, and secondarily within each conscious, sentient being in all the kingdoms of Nature.

The Church may also be regarded as providing an organized system whereby the divine power may be more readily contacted and released. An individual church is, therefore, most properly named the House of God, for His power, His consciousness, and His Presence are manifested within it in a specially concentrated form.

We may also look upon the Church universal as a body in which God is incarnate. Human beings and angels are cells in that body, and each individual church is a member, [Anatomical.] or an organ. The World Teacher of a planet serves God as a mighty force-centre, through which His power reaches the organs and the cells. In His manifestation as a founder of a faith, He serves as the heart through which the life and love of God are poured forth upon the world.

The place of the angels in this system will be readily recognized and understood by those who know their place and function in the solar system as a whole. They are the engineers of the life-forces of the Logos. Wherever His life, [Vide the author's book *The Angelic Hosts.*] His power, and His consciousness are manifested, there the angels serve as the active agents of the energies by which those attributes are expressed. They are beings of force, rather than of matter, expressions of the divine consciousness rather than sections, or monads, of that consciousness embodied in material form. As we have seen, they are unified with the forces which they direct and are thus able to manipulate them from within. The currents of power flow through their bodies so freely that frequently the distinction between the angel and the force, for which he is an agent, almost disappears. This close association and identification with the force enables the angel to control and direct it with great precision and perfection.

The whole angelic hierarchy, from the lowest nature-spirit to the highest solar archangel, serves the Logos in this way, in all the departments of His activities throughout His manifested worlds. A special section of the angelic hierarchy is concerned almost exclusively with religion, and the World Teachers of the various planets recruit their angel servants and ministers largely from this section. Our Lord has at His disposal great hosts of the angels of religion, whom He uses on His planet in a similar way to that in which the Logos employs the whole angelic hierarchy throughout the solar system.

As the Church universal may be looked upon as a reproduction, on a single planet, of certain aspects of the solar system, so also an individual church is a solar system in miniature. The powers of the Logos are concentrated within it, and are insulated from the external world by the act of consecration. The great streams of power, which find expression in every consecrated religious building, may be subdivided as follows:

1. The power of each of the Three Aspects of the Trinity.
2. The special aspect of God which is manifested through the sun.
The Second Aspect of the Blessed Trinity seems to predominate in this.
3. A measure of His power as He manifests in and through the earth.

This appertains more particularly to the Third Aspect. It arises from the interior of the earth as streams or currents, of force, and meets the descending power from the sun. These two streams are evoked and meet in every consecrated church; they supply the essential power, or "charge" of energy, by means of which the mechanism of church worship is rendered capable of effective service.

4. The power of the Great White Brotherhood. The teaching department, with its august Head, the World Teacher, seems to supply a large proportion of this power, though the Heads of each of the seven rays are also represented.

5. The specific influence of the Master Jesus, as the Adept in charge of the Christian Church.

6. The power and presence of certain great races of angels, more particularly those working on the first, second, and seventh rays.

All the seven rays are represented in the angelic hierarchy, and contribute to the work of the Church, but these three predominate.

7. The power behind the tradition of temple and church worship on this planet.

With regard to this last, it may be said that the church or temple method of approaching God was instituted very early in the history of human life on this planet, by the Great Lords from Venus who are called the Lords of Flame. They taught the infant humanity to approach the throne of God by means of sacred rites, dances, rhythmical gestures and movements, and by the use of music, words, and symbols.

In the early religions on earth, the sun was regarded as the physical manifestation of God. Sun-worship has existed throughout all the ages of human development, and many traces of it are still to be found in the inner side of Christianity.

A reservoir of power was placed at the disposal of the first worshippers on earth. As all services and religious rituals, from that day to this, have both added to and drawn from that original reservoir, its power is extremely rich and varied. All the great civilizations, from Lemurian and Atlantean times down to the present day, have contributed, and thereby imparted to it the specific vibrational characteristics of their race and time. The Christian religion was placed, by its Founder, in the direct line of that tradition, and linked to the reservoir of power which lies behind it. This reservoir may be thought of as a synthesis of the power of all the religions that have ever existed upon this planet.

These seven types of power, together with their appropriate intelligences, or "staff," are all represented in the consecrated church, which, as has been said, may be regarded as a microcosm, in which the Lord Christ Himself is the Sun. He shines upon His system through the Host, through the Angel of the Presence, and through His priests. The congregation are the inhabitants of the system, the seeds planted in the evolutionary field. The Lord shines forth upon the seeds, in order that they may grow into the image of His perfection. The services of the Church provide Him with special opportunities for pouring forth His life and of utilizing the several streams of energy which are placed at His disposal.

We may see, therefore, that the reason for the existence of the Church, with its wonderful systems of powers and presences, human and angelic, is to provide a forcing house within which the evolution of both man and angel may be quickened. The Church brings the worshipper and the object of worship into direct contact with each other by providing special conditions in which that meeting can take place; it also offers assistance to the worshipper, in his approach to the feet of his Lord.

This relatively external aid to communion is also intended to fill the devotee with a thirst for direct interior union with God. This longing will eventually become so strong and so insistent that the worshipper will be led to seek union, first with the God within himself, and then with the Logos, of whom the God within himself is an inherent part.

This great consummation is the object of all religion. Worship, praise, and adoration serve to lift both man and angel nearer and nearer to the heavenly throne of God, and to provide channels for the downpouring of His blessing and His grace into the heart and mind of those who thus draw near to Him. Although we may expect that an increasing number of men will rise above the need for the special help which the Church provides, it is none the less evident that the great majority of mankind will continue to need that help for many ages yet to come. Church services will, no doubt, become richer

in power and more beautiful in expression. Priests and congregations will become more and more self-conscious in their response to that power and beauty. Faith will become less and less blind and more and more based upon direct experience and knowledge.

Men will continually arise who, helped by the ministrations of the Church, will have emancipated themselves from the necessity for all further external spiritual support. Indeed, the value of a religion may perhaps be measured as much by the number of men who are thus liberated by its aid and recruited to the Communion of Saints, as by its more general effect upon its race and time.

The contribution which religion, organized and unorganized, makes to the welfare and evolutionary progress of the human race, cannot be measured by any human standard. It is probably because the power and blessing of the Church are relatively invisible and intangible that its value as an institution is doubted and attacked. Its assailants are, for the most part, those who do not possess the necessary degree of sensitivity and power of spiritual response to enable them to become aware of the value of the Church's ministrations. Failing to perceive and appreciate, they deny. In spite of this, in times of deep suffering and of need it is still to religion that the majority of mankind turns.

One concludes, therefore, that the Church will endure in spite of the challenge of the times.

THE SERVICE OF THE ANGELS

Whilst meditating upon the especial place of the angels in church worship, the author found himself in the presence of a vast company of angels gathered high in the air, above a great cathedral. From their midst he saw the stately procession of priests and choristers approaching the chancel. As they took their places, the angels by whom he was surrounded descended into the church. Some of them hovered in the air in the great dome above the altar, many took their places beside the priest, near the organist, and amongst the choir, whilst others drew near the worshippers.

As the service proceeded and the answers to the people's prayers descended from on high, the angels received them, and strove to bear them to their destination. As they laboured thus, the author saw how frequently they failed, for hardly any in the congregation paid heed to the wonderful outpouring of grace which they had invoked. As he watched, one of the angels, as if speaking to the souls of the human worshippers, began to explain the work of his brethren in the Church as follows:

"There is an order of angels attached to the Christian Church, who, being dedicated to the service of Christ, and serving as channels and conservers of His blessing and His power, attend every service held in His name. Filled with His love and compassion, they seek to bear those priceless gifts to the souls of men; at the great celebration of the mystery of the bread and wine they come, that every thirsting soul shall receive according to his need. Men know and see them not, and so the angel servers pass unnoticed and unknown. In the religion of the future they will emerge from their invisibility, and men will see them face to face. Between the present blindness and the future knowledge is a yawning chasm, which only those who have been taught the deeper truths of religion and of life can bridge.

"The eternal and the unchanging wisdom of the ages is the source of all the world's great faiths; at the founding of each, angels played their part. Throughout the centuries they have remained as living witnesses and guardians of the power which the Founder of the faith bestowed upon His followers.

"The new religion is already being born, and, as of old, the hosts of angels accompany its Founder, in His great mission to the world. It is a part of His plan that they should no longer pass unrecognized, and that those among the children of men who will answer to His call, and serve Him when He comes, shall learn to know His angel messengers, and to utilize their presence and power for the fulfilment of His labours upon earth; few will see them with their earthly eyes, but all may open wide their hearts and minds to them, invoke their presence, and salute them as they labour for the common cause.

"When you enter a church you are in the presence of the angelic hosts; turn your thoughts to them, therefore, inviting them to share your worship and your praise of Him who is the Teacher both of angels and of men. Release your minds from your material concerns, that they may become alert, watchful, and alive to the subtler forces of the church service. Strive to exalt your consciousness into recognition of the splendour and beauty of God's answer to your prayers, that you may more deeply reverence Him.

"The presence of His Son upon your altars breathes forth an infinity of love, and longs to draw you nearer and nearer to His heart. His angels watch, hoping that you will feel His longing, and throwing aside self-centredness, separateness, and pride, with which so many are imbued, will kneel at His feet, stripped of all that would keep you back from Him; they long to aid you in this difficult disrobing, but so often find both heart and mind enclosed in thoughts of self. The human soul is so self-blinded, that many leave the presence of divine and perfect love without ever realizing the splendour in their midst.

"Awake, O human brethren, and give to your worship a deep reality. With every power of your being, pour out the love of your hearts in answer to that love, so mighty and so tender, with which He holds out His arms to you. Do you not realize the privilege, the splendid opportunity, which is yours, that every day, through His divine compassion, you may be enfolded in the embrace of His most perfect love? Yet, week by week, your churches are empty save for a faithful few. How can there be such blind ingratitude in the presence of such selfless pouring forth of love?

"If the gulf between the past and the future is to be bridged, religion must become real; Christ and His angels must be known as living truths, as unfading realities, and worship must be full of joy. The 'thousand altars' of His faith must be approached with reverence and awe. Human life and human conduct must be made worthy of the privilege, so inexpressibly great, of that Presence ever in its midst. Every day must indeed become a holy day, every hour a holy hour, because of the, knowledge of His divine companionship.

"Then shall the human race move forward into the next cycle of the mighty spiral of its evolutionary path. As men progress, the angels shall travel side by side with them singing songs of celestial beauty and of joy.

THOUGHTS ON CHURCH WORSHIP

I. THE WORK OF THE CONGREGATION

A STUDY of the many problems, national and international, which are crying out for solution to the nations of the world, leads one almost inevitably to the conclusion that their solutions lie in the spiritual life of the individuals of which the nations are composed. The student finds himself forced to look to religion, not only for the preservation of the present civilization, but also for guidance in the building of the next.

In every department of human life the crying need is for spirituality, and for the spiritualizing of human life and conduct. Faulty though the existing systems of national and international statecraft may be, they could probably all be made to work perfectly if the men and women who are responsible for their administration were possessed of spiritual ideals. It is not the law which needs to be altered so much as the people who administer the law. The only means by which the hearts and minds of people may be changed is that of religion, and for religion we naturally look first to the Church.

If we accept this view, the Church must be regarded as the most powerful agent for good in the life of a nation - the nation's greatest asset - and its work as of paramount importance to every member of the race. The mission of the Church must no longer be regarded as limited to the performance of a certain number of ceremonies on certain days, but rather to the establishment everywhere of spiritual centres, whose radiant power and blessing shall illumine and enrich the national life, inspire every good work, and ceaselessly exert an influence for the spiritualizing of mankind. The Church can fulfil this mission only when it is a living reality to priest and laity alike. As members of the congregation we have a great responsibility, for unless we take our share of the Church's work and make our full contribution to its life, it cannot fulfil its great mission to the nation and to the world.

Let us, therefore, consider how we may best take our part in this all-important work.

A measure of self-training and self-preparation would seem to be essential. Approach to the Altar of the Most High is a privilege of which we know ourselves to be unworthy. It is of the utmost importance that we should endeavour to remove our unworthiness by a regular system of self-training, by continuous endeavour to live the Christian life day by day, and by special preparation for every service.

Self-preparation should always precede participation in ceremonial. In olden days ceremonial ablutions preceded attendance at all services; meticulous care was taken in order to ensure perfect physical cleanliness, both of the body and of the special clothing worn. In like manner we should prepare our subtler bodies by learning to cast aside at will all our personal problems, anxieties, and difficulties so that we may enter the church as free from these limitations of personality as it is possible to be. Our auras will then appear fresh, bright, and pure, instead of dull and impure, as they often are in these difficult times.

We may, of course, bring our difficulties, lay them at the feet of our Lord, and ask for His guidance and help, but He will be able to help us far more effectively if we have

first done our utmost to overcome them, and if we approach Him in an attitude of detachment from all personal considerations.

We receive much help towards self-preparation from the Church herself. At the sacrament of baptism an angel is given us to be our guide and helper throughout the remainder of our lives; this occurs at the prayer: "May His holy angel go before thee, and follow after thee; may he be with thee in thy downsitting and thine uprising, and keep thee in all thy ways". Thenceforward when we enter the church and endeavour to compose our minds in preparation for the service, our guardian angel begins to help us to purify and refine our emotions. He liberates within our auras a measure of the forces placed in his hands at our baptism - forces for which he is the intelligent agent - and uses them to produce the results at which he aims.

In addition to this interior assistance, we are sometimes met by one of the angel attendants of the church who greets us and offers his help. He sees our needs and begins to work from the outside to prepare us for the service, He tries to eliminate the dull and discoloured areas from our subtler vehicles, and to help us in the spiritualization of our personal consciousness.

When, before taking our seat we kneel in reverent adoration of Christ's presence in the Reserved Sacrament and make the sign of the cross, His power rays forth upon us, and illumines and blesses us. It is important, therefore, that as we make the sign of the cross we try to throw our whole nature open to Him, and to call out the Christ principle within ourselves, so that our response to Him may be as full and perfect as possible. If, however, we come completely self-prepared into the presence of the Lord and His angels, all the power which is expended in this work may be used to help us to gain elevation of mind and an expansion of consciousness.

As a next step we may then endeavour to achieve mental and spiritual unity with our fellow worshippers. By steady practice we should soon be able to expand our consciousness to include every member of the congregation, both visible and invisible, as well as the angelic ministrants. As we live in natural unity with them all in our ego consciousness, it will be helpful if, both in our public and private worship, we try to lift ourselves into a realization of that higher self.

One of the underlying principles which govern success in any work is that the higher the level of consciousness from which the work is done, the greater the power behind it. This is especially true of all spiritual endeavour. Therefore it would be extremely valuable if the congregation undertook a definite system of self-training, with the object of developing its capacities in this direction to their highest degree of unfoldment. Our preparatory meditations should therefore be directed towards gaining expansion of consciousness, and developing the ability to work from the higher levels of the inner worlds.

The "Shining Augoeides" or immortal principle in each one of us is a being of great splendour; his life of power and bliss is in marked contrast with the limitation and self-centredness which so often characterize us in the personality. If we can rise into our higher consciousness, therefore, we shall in all our work obtain results incomparably greater than any which we can achieve in the lower consciousness even with the entire concentration of our mental and emotional powers. An essential part of our self-preparation for the performance of ceremonial worship, therefore, is to contact our highest principle so that we may release and employ our highest powers and faculties.

When we have achieved a measure of success in this endeavour, and have sought to be one with all our fellow worshippers, we may well aspire to lift them and ourselves into the presence of the Lord in preparation for the great consummation of Holy Communion, by which we shall be drawn into union with Him.

As the service opens we should endeavour to identify ourselves with the celebrant and the sacrifice which he is about to offer in our name. For example, our response to the "Dominus Vobiscum" uttered by the priest provides a special opportunity for this, and should always be made with definite intent. The term "spirit" in this response seems to refer specially to the highest spiritual principle in man, and, ideally, the glorious, white, fiery radiance of that principle, together with the golden light of the Christ consciousness, should shine out in the subtler vehicles of the priest. If this were fully achieved, his power of serving as a channel for the blessing of the Lord would be greatly increased. At the same time, each one of us should experience a measure of this same spiritual illumination.

With a highly trained congregation utterly devoted to the work of the Church, such a result could be attained throughout the whole service. Tremendous power for the spiritualization and upliftment of the national life would then be liberated. Our share of the work would begin to be comparable to that of the angels, who labour in full realization of all the beauty, power, and significance behind the outer form of the ceremony. These ideal results can only be produced by steady practice, by self-training, and by a life of continuous spiritual endeavour. We must learn to evoke the spiritual will within us, and to use it so that our devotion may ascend as a living stream of fiery power; then the services of the church will produce clearly defined and wonderfully beneficent results.

A deeper realization of these possibilities may be obtained by visualizing the different qualities of human character in terms of colour; a beautiful sky blue for devotion, white for purity and power, rose for love, and a combination of these for spiritual idealism and aspiration; a soft green for sympathy and compassion, a burning white-gold for the Christ consciousness, and yellow for intellectual understanding. Every variation in thought produces new combinations and shades of these colours, and if a group of people would take the trouble to train themselves in these ways, their work would be marvellously rich in colour and in power, and would quickly become a more worthy offering upon the altar of the Most High.

Steady practice is the only way to develop these spiritual powers to their full perfection. Comparatively little can be done if we limit our efforts to the set time when we attend the services of the Church. We must practise regularly in the privacy of our homes, reverently trying to lift ourselves into the presence of God, of our Lord, of our Lady, and other members of the Communion of Saints, and to pour forth streams of love and devotion towards Them from the very depths of our being. Their gifts to us are rich and splendid beyond all telling. Our worship and service should, therefore, be the very highest and noblest offering of which we are capable. We can only achieve this in our church services by self-preparation beforehand, by self-training, and by carrying out as far as possible in our daily lives the teaching and guidance which the Church so freely gives us.

Great possibilities lie in each one of our services; but only a trained congregation can hope to attain them. How wonderful it would be if in every church there were a

growing body of people who had dedicated themselves to the task of 'improving and perfecting' their individual capacities as spiritual servants of the Lord, and of learning to serve Him as a congregation in a perfect blending of their many temperaments and faculties! The results would then be as splendid as possible and the outpoured blessing would daily grow more rich and more potent for the helping of the world.

Our churches would quickly become great centres of power, light, and blessing. The life of the nations would be quickened. The great reforms, which are so urgently needed and so long delayed, would be hastened. The Christ principle of the nation would shine forth and guide its leaders to evolve and pass measures for the amelioration of suffering, the elimination of cruelty in every form, and for the gradual improvement of the standard of the nation's life. Such, in part, is the great opportunity which the Church puts before us as members of the congregation.

2. THE EYES OF THE SOUL

"As soon as the Gospel is announced all sing the following, making the sign of the cross with the right thumb upon the forehead, lips and breast successively: I Glory be to Thee, O Lord.' " [The Liturgy of the Liberal Catholic Church.]

In this instruction our attention is directed to the importance of the sign and the word of power, both of which have a definite and distinctive place in the ceremony.

There is a stage in occult development when the voice becomes a channel for certain definite forces. This stage is reached in its fullness only when the hidden force-centres in the subtler counterpart of the body are vivified. These force-centres exist at seven points in the body, one of which is at the throat. This, when active, rather resembles a spinning and flame-like convolvulus flower, rising out of the spinal cord as a flower grows upon a stem. In the normal unawakened condition it is visible in outline, the centre being filled with a pith-like substance.

This is the higher creative centre in the human body, and when it is active the power of sound can be used to create and ensoul forms which will act as channels for influence and agents for power. Higher forces may then be liberated and the voice becomes a vehicle for the enormously potent creative powers of the mind and will. In addition, the opening of this centre is said to bestow the faculty of clairaudience.

The sign of the cross, made in the way prescribed at this part of the ceremony, and with intention, temporarily opens the force-centre at the throat. For this reason we should never make it, or indeed any other movement in ceremonial, in a perfunctory manner. Few of us, at present, are ready to have our force-centres permanently opened, for we should then become prematurely susceptible to the influence of super-physical intelligences and powers; and so, mercifully, these sense-organs of the soul are closed.

They may, however, be temporarily stimulated with safety and then serve as channels for super-physical energies. This stimulation may be achieved by a variety of means, one of which is the ceremonial use of symbols and words of power, as prescribed in the passage in the Liberal Catholic Liturgy quoted at the beginning of this chapter. The opening of the throat-centre at this point in the service has a spiritually quickening and stimulating effect upon us and enables us to participate more effectively in the ceremony which follows. It is most important that, side by side with this development which we are privileged to receive from the Church, we should practise control of speech, lest we

misuse the gift which is thus bestowed upon us. The ancient rule concerning speech control is that before we speak, we should ask ourselves whether what we are going to say is necessary, kind, sensible, and true.

Force-centres also exist between the eyes, and at the heart. These also should become vivified by the ceremonial signing of the cross over them: The centre between the eyes, when opened, increases the range of our vision by adding to it the sight of the higher worlds. The result of that wider vision should be to give us a deeper understanding of the mysteries of life and religion.

The opening of the heart-centre increases the power of human love by adding to it the quality of divine compassion. It is sometimes called the Mystic Rose which blossoms in the heart. Though it is not unlike a lovely flower built of light and glowing streams of colour, the true interpretation of the symbol of the rose is that it represents the unfolding of divine love and compassion in the human heart. Its unfoldment presages the birth of the Christ Child, who must be born in the heart of every man before he may enter into the kingdom of heaven. By a due and proper observance of the instruction given us by the Church, we may hasten the time when that great consummation shall be achieved.

One day that Christ Child in each one of us will grow into "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" and we in our turn shall become Saviours of men. The purpose of religion is to help us quickly to attain to that great goal and to guide and inspire us in treading the Path which leads to the fulfilment of life.

3. THE HOLY ANGELS

Ye Watchers and ye Holy Ones,
Bright Seraphs, Cherubim and Thrones,
Raise the glad strain, Alleluya!
Cry out Dominions, Princedoms, Powers,
Virtues, Archangels, Angels' choirs,
Alleluya, Alleluya, Alleluya, Alleluya, Alleluya,
O higher than the Cherubim,
More glorious than the Seraphim,
Lead their praises, Alleluya!
Thou bearer of the eternal Word,
Most gracious, magnify the Lord,
Alleluya, Alleluya, Alleluya, Alleluya, Alleluya.
Respond, ye souls in endless rest,
Ye Patriarchs and Prophets blest,
Alleluya, Alleluya.
Ye Holy Twelve, ye Martyrs strong,
All saints triumphant, raise the song,
Alleluya, Alleluya, Alleluya, Alleluya, Alleluya.
O friends, in gladness let us sing,
Supernal anthems echoing,
Alleluya, Alleluya.
To God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit, Three in One,

Alleluya, Alleluya, Alleluya, Alleluya, Alleluya.

This glorious hymn provides us with a most valuable means of linking ourselves with the holy angels. The first verse directs our attention to the great hosts of the nine orders of the hierarchy of the angels; if we can sing this verse with knowledge, realization, and power, we shall undoubtedly make definite links with them and secure their co-operation in all our work. The underlying thought of the second verse carries us even beyond the nine great orders of angels; the third verse lifts us into the presence of the blessed Communion of Saints, while the fourth verse unites Saints, angels and men in worship of the Blessed Trinity.

The whole hymn could very profitably be used for private meditation. Indeed, it is necessary to have meditated thereupon, and to have obtained some realization of its power and significance, before it can be sung with full effect. Definite meditation upon a ritual, in preparation for its use as part of a ceremonial, is of great value to each one of us. By such preparatory meditation we can discover the reality behind the words; then, when we say or sing them together as an act of united worship, we may hope to produce the maximum results both of inward realization and the radiation of blessing over the world.

Contact with angelic consciousness is a privilege of inestimable value. Angelic co-operation makes everything we try to do, in both the spiritual and material worlds, far more vital and potent than it would otherwise be.

On a recent occasion, when the author was trying to observe the effect produced in the inner worlds during the singing of this hymn, it seemed that during the first two verses we had definitely become linked with representatives of the great orders of the angels who were attracted by and to our work. They had turned their attention upon us, and united with us as closely as possible.

When we sang the third verse, the angels who had been singing with us, and who were intent upon union and co-operation, withdrew their attention from us, became silent and bowed in most profound reverence for the members of the Great White Brotherhood to whom it is addressed. The author was greatly impressed by the change of atmosphere produced by this verse. For a moment we turned our attention away from the angelic towards the superhuman kingdom, and it was enlightening to follow the change of consciousness and rate of vibration which occurred in the church. At the fourth verse, the whole of the power which the hymn had evoked flowed upwards in a mighty, many, coloured stream of blended angel and human worship to the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity to whom it is addressed. In the higher worlds choirs of angels sang with their human brethren on earth so that a glorious hymn of adoration and of praise was borne up with the flowing stream, to the very throne of God Himself.

Only the merest glimpse was gained of this hidden glory and of the downpouring of our Father's blessing in response, but it held within it a promise of much greater things, of spiritual realization and unfoldment which the Church offers to all who will accept the treasures which she gives to her people with such prodigal beneficence. Surely we of the congregation should strive our utmost to gain the expansion of consciousness which will bring this wonderful inner life and hidden beauty within our personal experience.

The angelic hosts seem to live for ever in that great realization. They have not lost, as we have done, the sense of unity with God and with all that lives. Unity of ideal, of thought, and of action is extraordinarily close in the angel hierarchy. They blend their

wills, their knowledge, and their love so closely that their consciousness almost resembles that of the group-soul [see *A Study in Consciousness*, by Annie Besant.] of the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms of Nature. Our human evolution differs from theirs in this respect; our pilgrimage takes us one whole stage deeper into the material worlds, and our encasement in bodies built of physical material inevitably produces a temporary sense of separateness from each other and from God. This separateness is the root-cause of every human sorrow. We can, however, liberate ourselves from the "great heresy," as separateness has been called, by meditation upon unity and by the continual practice of perfect co-operation with the angels and with each other in our work. An angel once gave the author much useful advice on this subject; this is published in his book *Be Ye Perfect*, from which he may perhaps appropriately quote:

"In order to achieve this great result and win the prize of bliss eternal, he (the aspirant to the spiritual life) must undertake the task of emancipating himself from the age-long delusion of separateness. He must learn to pierce the veil of illusion, must know that many shadows may be cast by the one Light, that though the shadows may be as countless as the sands upon the shore, the Light is One; into that Light he must rise, must discover himself therein, and for ever win release from self-identification with the shadows of the shadow-world, through which he has evolved. He must learn to pass 'from the unreal to the real, from darkness to light, from death to immortality.'

"To aid him in this great task he must practise continually the art of Unification, the supreme art from which all other arts are born. He must learn to see himself in every form, to find himself in every guise, to recognize the light which is himself behind every shadow which is cast upon the ever-moving sands of space and time. He may begin with men, with animals, with plants or gems, with rocks, trees, flowers, birds, his own race or another, the downtrodden, the fallen, the saint, or the Saviour; he may take the mass or the individual, the tree or the single leaf, the ocean or a single grain of sand. In his long pilgrimage he will have found an affinity with Nature or with men which may serve as a starting place, from which he may commence the journey from affinity to unity, from unity to identity.

"Using the object to which he feels most drawn, he will meditate, seeking to find himself therein, to know and feel in and with another's mind and heart. Meditating, he will strive to catch the rhythm of another's life, and blend his own therewith. He will listen to the music, search for the vision, and feel the pulse of another's soul, and, having found, know them as his own.

"Life thus becomes for him a great experiment; the world, for him, a studio in which he practises his art. No longer does he ask what his brother thinks or feels; no longer does he dwell on colour or on form of landscape or of leaf, of shell or diatom, for he knows that that which once seemed to reveal, now serves but to conceal, the knowledge he desires.

"He seeks the soul of all things, great or small; to find it he must become the shell, the diamond, the blade of grass, the floweret, the eagle, or the dove; he must become his brother man, must know him better than he knows himself, must see more clearly than he the vision of his life. He must learn to drop a portion of himself down through the worlds into another's heart; he must fall into the depths of another's soul, as a pebble falls into a well. If the varied garb of Nature draws forth sweet beauty from his soul, then to Nature he must retire. Seated beneath the widespreading branches of an ancient tree, he may seek

to pass into its soul; he may learn to feel the mighty forces which surge from root to trunk, from trunk to stem, from stem to leaf, and through the leaf flow outwards in radiant and magnetic streams into the air; he may learn to sway with the tree under the pressure of the winds, to feel the strain and leverage by which its uprightness is maintained, may feel the evolving consciousness within, stretching along the lines of force which govern its growth, answering to the forward driving impulse of the Will Divine; may feel Its power pulsing through atom and through cell. If a leaf fall from a tree, he too must fall, knowing himself one with the leaf, and as it spins and floats, caught by the eddies of wind, he, too, must spin and float, and know the feeling even of the lightest pressure of air-streams striking into the leaf-curves above and below; he must sink with the leaf, fluttering to the ground, and there find rest, merged with a thousand other leaves.

"Thus, day by day, with unwavering patience, he will meditate, seeking to enter the inmost heart, the very life, of the tree. With intensity of desire, with concentrated and unwavering mind, he will rise to that level of unity where life of tree and life of man are known as one. Until achievement has been reached, this must be the daily practice of his life; every craving for the object of desire, every longing for union with the object of his love which he has ever known, must be transmuted and directed with flame-like aspiration, unconquerable determination, to union with the life beyond all form, to find the soul of unity, the very essence of union, to lose himself in the ocean of the one life, to unite himself with God." [Op. cit., pp. 18, 19.]

In all group work - and our church services may fitly be regarded as group work - we should do well to begin by making a conscious and deliberate attempt to follow this advice. At present we are far too individual in all our efforts. The angel directing the service has, therefore, to attempt to unify us; he extends his aura round us, draws all the many separate streams of force together and blends them into one. The priest, too, must experience a similar necessity, so that a certain amount of his attention and power is withdrawn from his other work in order to do for us what we ought to be able to do for ourselves.

We may first try to unify ourselves with each other, then with the priests and servers, and then with the angels, thus forming one unit, one living organism dedicated to the service of the Lord and ultimately to be united with Him. This act of unification is a fundamental and basic necessity in all our church life and work. We must get closer together in terms of consciousness, so that we produce one great stream of force which shall flow upwards to God, and serve as one perfect chalice for the reception and distribution of the spiritual power and blessing which He pours down in response.

Though we may not be aware of it, one person in a group who is out of harmony with his brethren, depressed, critical, or self-centred, may seriously mar a piece of work. However hard the rest of the congregation, the priests, and the angels may work, perfect result is not possible under such conditions.

Our responsibility, as well as our privilege as church members, is therefore very great, and it is important that we should come to church in a spirit of love, of unity, of reverence and self-effacement to serve and to worship the Lord. If we fail in this respect, and have to be carried along by the force of another's devotion, we may act as a drag on the whole service, and prevent the achievement of that flawless beauty and perfection of ceremonial by which alone our ideal of true worship may be reached.

If we will endeavour to unite our consciousness with that of the angels, we may learn much from them. Their attitude, for example, towards our Lord and our Lady and to the Reserved Sacrament, is one of intense reverence, humility, adoration, and complete self-effacement in the presence of transcendent glory and splendour. Reverence shines through all their work, so that it tinges everything they do with holiness and beauty, and with that indefinable spirituality, which is so marked a characteristic of the angelic hosts.

Mingled with their utter reverence there is also a joyousness which permeates their life and work. May we not learn from them, and ourselves try to achieve this ideal state? So often when we are reverent we are not very joyful, and when we are happy we are prone to lose our reverence. We forget the inherent divinity of all people and all things; the angels seem never to forget the Presence of the Immanent God. The divinity and holiness of everything seem to be continually apparent to them. Whether they are performing a purely religious task, directing streams of force, or working for one of the other kingdoms of Nature, there is always this reverence paid to the God within, which seems to be a fundamental quality of their consciousness. This does not make them pious in a narrow sense, because there is always love, gladness, and joy in their hearts.

We shall do well, therefore, both in our daily lives and upon our entry into the church, to combine reverence with joy. If we will but try to build into our characters these qualities which the angels possess in so marked a degree, co-operation with them will be more easily attainable and all the work which we strive to do for our Lord will be vitalized and enriched by union with our brethren of the angelic hosts.

The author has written more fully upon this subject in his books, *The Brotherhood of Angels and of Men* and *Thus Have I Heard*.

4. THE GOAL OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

The aim of all church worship and the goal of all spiritual endeavour is to enter into union with the object of devotion. For Christians, therefore, the goal is self-identification with the Christ principle within us, and, through that, with our Lord Himself, and hence with all manifested life.

It is not enough that we should develop certain occult powers, open the hidden centres, or learn to pour out streams of force. The possession of special abilities increases our usefulness as servants of the Lord, but in their development and use, our attention must never be wholly withdrawn from the real purpose of church worship and of the Christian life.

While paying due attention to the external acts of worship, to the pouring forth of love and devotion to God as manifested in our Lord and our Lady, in the communion of saints and the Holy Angels, it is important that we should always remember our own inherent divinity which it is our supreme duty continually to make manifest on earth. Ultimately we must be united with the God within us, for by the power of that inmost deity alone may we become saviours of the world.

To attain this goal there is, in reality, no need for church worship, for God is everywhere present. He is present in every living thing, in our homes, in the streets, in the country or in the slums, as He is also present in a special measure upon His Holy Altar. If we have once learned to see Him in any of these places we shall see Him everywhere. We cannot do this, however, until we have begun to find Him within ourselves, for it is only

with the eyes of the God within that we shall see the God without. In a Hindu Scripture, He most beautifully says- "He who seeth Me in everything and everything in Me, of him will I never lose hold and he shall never lose hold of Me." [The Bhagavad-Gita.]

Such divine vision must not be confused with the slightly extended powers of cognition to which the psychic attains. Unless we can see God in the physical world, clairvoyance will not help us to see Him in the super-physical. Psychism may even prove a serious stumbling-block. Thought-control and a special capacity for the projection of power are of little real value to us as church worshippers if we allow them to become ends in themselves and forget that they are only steps, and by no means essential steps, on the pathway to divinity. On the other hand, if we always keep the goal in view, all our work, whether in the spiritual, psychical, or material worlds, will be enriched by every new power which the Church assists us to unfold.

We shall become more efficient in our church work if we continually endeavour to realize the living presence of God around and within each one of us, and seek to be united with Him there. The ideal member of a congregation is surely one who works continually to bring all his powers and faculties to their highest degree of unfoldment and perfection, and who, at the same time, enters into an ever-deepening realization of the God within himself and in all men.

If we have the right vision - the Christ vision - we shall see Him through the eyes of all people.

However lowly or apparently degraded a person may appear, the Christ is within him, and, could we but pierce the veil; we should see Him there, perchance looking to us for that service of which the fallen are so urgently in need. Such service is rendered not only to ignorant and weak humanity, but to the Christ who dwells within and is the "hope of glory" of all mankind. Did He not say: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my little ones, ye have done it unto me"? When that vision of the Christ in man begins to dawn upon us we are indeed drawing nearer to the time of union, and the day of atonement is not far away.

The path to that glorious consummation is long and difficult to tread. The Church, however, is our unfailing guide and support. In her services and her life we may obtain the necessary upliftment and strength, and year by year we may make a definite advance towards the goal of our existence.

As we climb upwards we bear all men with us, as did our Lord. Splendid indeed will be the work of the Church in the world when she numbers among her followers a rapidly increasing number of men and women of true spiritual vision, power, and self-knowledge. Then will she begin to take her true place in the nation's life, as the inspirer of every reform and the unfailing source of that power which shall quicken the evolution of mankind.

AN INVISIBLE CONGREGATION

The inner effects of the Requiem Mass, Performed on All Souls' Day in St. Mary's Pro-cathedral of the Liberal Catholic Church, London

DISCARNATE SOULS frequently attend physical church services, but on this especial occasion of the performance of the Requiem Mass a very large number were seen to be present. Many of these arrived some time before the service began; gathering

for the most part round the sides of the church and in the gallery and filling much of the space under the roof.

In their higher consciousness many members of the physical congregation were able to greet their super-physical friends. The enjoyment of the many happy reunions which thus occurred, was in no way affected by the fact that little or no knowledge of them was brought through into the waking brain-consciousness. Most of the physical congregation had made clear thought-forms of their own particular departed friends and these were replaced later on by the friends themselves. In some cases the discarnate brought with them those with whom they had formed friendships on the other side. These, together with other visitors and the usual super-physical attendants, human and angelic, of the church, formed a very large congregation in the inner worlds.

The super-physical congregation faced towards the altar as the service began, and from that time onwards were gradually drawn nearer and nearer to the physical world. From the first they saw the candles clearly, for the light from a wax candle is visible in the inner worlds and is sometimes used as a signal to those on the other side of the veil. The blaze of light and power from the Reserved Sacrament was also clearly seen, as well as the angel ministrants and the streams of force flowing through the various symbols and jewels. Some, however, were strangely blind, in spite of the fact that their vision is not limited, like ours, by the possession of a physical body.

The general effect, however, was to reveal the physical plane interior of the church as though a stage curtain had been drawn aside. This withdrawal of the veil did not extend outside the church to the same extent. The whole of the congregation was insulated from the vibrations and phenomena of the outer world. A great angel, to whom reference will be made later, guarded this insulation and held the super-physical congregation within his aura and thus helped to provide conditions in which the veil could be safely drawn aside.

The Eucharistic angels were also careful to include both the living and the discarnate in the inner spiritual edifice in order that all might share as fully as possible in the influences which were out-poured. They helped individuals where it was necessary and possible, and gradually, as a result of their loving ministrations and of the service, the physical and super-physical congregations were drawn closer together. By the end of the service the discarnate were able to see the physical building, their friends, and especially the priests and servers within the Sanctuary.

This filled them with great happiness, although some experienced a vague longing, even a yearning, for a return to physical plane life and companionships. Some few had not found the new life as happy as it might have been, and felt lonely there. All were, however, made very much happier by their participation in the service.

For many, inner consciousness faded somewhat as physical awareness increased, though some few retained their vision of their own world. Some entered the auras of their friends and stood or sat with them, but the majority of those who had physical friends present floated just above them.

Nearly all felt the happiness of reunion and of receiving the loving thoughts and remembrances of their friends and relations.

Gradually, as all became thoroughly harmonized, the words and the music were heard with increasing clearness. This made them very happy, recalling to them old and pleasant memories. It was a great pleasure to them to hear the actual voices of their

particular friends who were left behind on the physical plane. They listened very intently to the sermon, and at the Creed all bowed their heads. Some of them evidently knew the words well and genuflected at the right moment, but all followed with reverent understanding and assent.

After a time all personal considerations gave way to the act of united worship, as the two congregations were caught up in the rhythm and power of the service. Gradually, with few exceptions, they became unified and harmonized, and the angels were able to treat them as one. The exceptions were those who had not been accustomed to church worship; these remained somewhat aloof, watching with interest, but not participating.

The Angel of the Presence shone forth in all the perfect spiritual beauty of the Lord, whose love and blessing poured continuously through Him. All were embraced in that wondrous outpouring, especially those who sat aloof, for the Angel seemed to turn his attention to them with a most tender and compassionate love which gradually overcame their aloofness and drew them in.

A great angel of a type entirely new to the author appeared at the west end of the church. Although he was essentially an angel of love, and poured forth a special quality of love and protection upon the discarnate, his external appearance was such as to make one think of the Angel of Death. He appeared to be a representative of the great God of Death, whose mighty hand severs the silver cord which binds the soul to the body during earth-life. His face was strong and awe-inspiring with its inscrutable expression of power and of mystery. He was dark green in colour and as tall as the body of the church. He held the invisible congregation very closely within his consciousness and exercised a strong protective influence upon them, so that no harm might come either to the living or to the dead. He stood motionless and impassive, guarding, as before mentioned, the insulation of the church from the outer world, and giving the impression of a huge, dark green, living statue of the Angel of Death.

In the after-death world, as in this world, there are many undesirable beings who would take immediate advantage of the special conditions of close interplay of force between the two worlds. This angelic protection was, therefore, added to the insulation provided by the original consecration of the church, and by the "walls" of the Eucharistic edifice.

There seems also to have been a general thinning of the veil in the outer world, but this was limited to the higher levels of the planes concerned. This seems to be the result of certain changes which occur throughout the whole solar system at this time of the year. The influence of the spiritual, as distinguished from the material, seems in some way to be increased and the division between spirit and matter as a whole to be less marked. Perhaps there is a cyclic law under which, at this time of the year, all the veils are definitely made thinner so that the formless and the form levels are more intimately associated and the planes within those divisions more closely synchronized. The higher sub-planes of the mental, emotional, and etheric worlds are affected in a pronounced degree. They are blended and interwoven with each other so that the play of life and force in and through the material world is much freer than is normally the case. Inside the church, where special conditions are provided, this extends through all the sub-planes down to the lowest, hence the need for special precautionary measures.

Apparently it is the function of the Angel of Death to provide the needed protection, for he is concerned with the passage of power, consciousness, and life from

plane to plane, and with the translation of human consciousness from the physical to the emotional plane at death. He may perform a function which is complementary to and the reverse of that of Our Lady, who presides at every human birth. Such a correspondence suggests itself, but the author is unable to make a definite statement on the subject.

Returning to the service itself, it was found that the repetition of a name in a ceremony instantly links its owner, wherever he may be, with the officiant, and, through him, with the power of the ceremony. When the prayer for the dead was recited and the names of the deceased were mentioned, those named suddenly glowed with a greater light; the blessing of the Lord poured forth upon them from the Sanctuary and caused the Christ-principle to shine forth from within them. Those not actually present found their attention drawn towards the persons who sent in the names. In some cases they immediately came to the church, called by the power of the Lord and the love of those who remembered them.

The angels themselves brought to the church many of those whose names were mentioned, also gathering others, unnamed, as they did so. Many angels appeared like beautiful shepherds, each with their flock of these human "sheep" which they had gathered and brought into the presence of the Lord. Many human invisible helpers were also busily engaged in bringing discarnate people to the church and in helping them to assimilate the atmosphere and the blessing of the service.

The Building Angel included all these in his sphere of work, and the Angel of the Presence greeted them with his glorious smile of love and tenderness as they arrived. The expression and the smile of the Angel of the Presence are wonderful to behold. The smile reveals so much more than any human smile can express; it includes a joyful recognition of an old and much loved friend, a deeply spiritual comprehension of all his highest hopes and possibilities, and the tender compassionate love of a parent for a favourite child. The expression on the face of the Angel of the Presence is always one of spiritual exaltation, while radiant power, life, and love pour forth through him continually. When he smiles, therefore, the beauty and profoundly compassionate love which are revealed are beyond all human conception, and no words can fitly portray the wonder of this glorious angelic Representative of Our Lord.

Such a vision of the Good Shepherd and His angelic servants and His flock shows at once that He knows every individual on this planet, that all men are enfolded in the embrace of His love, and that indeed "underneath are the everlasting arms". The Angel of the Presence recognized, greeted, blessed, and sent forth love to every individual who arrived, and drew forth the highest within each one in response.

The measure of this response varied considerably. Some were preoccupied and self-centred at the time and did not respond very fully; all were definitely helped, each to the extent to which he was able to receive and assimilate the outpoured blessing and the indwelling Christ could be awakened. Those who were wrestling with great difficulties when the blessing reached them - frequently accompanied by an angel - suddenly found themselves released from the strain and illumined with the solutions of their problems. To many it was a distinct turning point in the long cycle of incarnations; it may even influence the remainder of their pilgrimage towards perfection. As did the Prodigal Son, from this time they will "arise and go to their Father". A very real conversion took place, and they determined from that day onward to devote themselves to the spiritual life and to good work.

One sees, from this fact alone, the value not only of spiritual ceremonial as a whole, but especially of the Requiem Mass and of prayers for the dead; for many who are unresponsive and spiritually asleep during the whole of their earth-life may change completely after death.

Towards the end of the service, the invisible congregation were drawn nearer and nearer to the Sanctuary, and a great many of them seemed to receive the Sacrament through their friends. The auras of all of them glowed with increasing intensity as the moments passed, and at the close many of them were spiritually exalted and illumined.

Soon after the "Ite, missa est," the veil between the visible and invisible seemed to grow more dense, as if the curtain were drawn again over the stage of earthly life. Some, though not all, of the deceased remained for the final benediction, stayed with their particular physical friends for some time, and even accompanied them out of the church. Possibly they were able to enter into their life for the rest of the day in a way which is not normally possible. A few remained in the church to pray, but the main part of the invisible congregation dispersed after the final blessing had been given.

Watching these things, it seemed that in many ways religion might be much easier for the discarnate than for the living, for they can see far more of the inner side of the service than we can. The glowing radiance of the Host, and the outpouring of the power of the Christ through the Cross, the splendour and beauty of the Angel of the Presence, are clearly manifested before their eyes.

Their response to the service was far greater, on the whole, than ours. One realized how much the physical body prevents our realization of, and response to, the great spiritual truths and forces which are embodied in the church, and how much power, beauty, and knowledge the physical brain and body prevent us from perceiving.

Part of the value of the church service is that it stimulates and quickens our bodies and brains into a greater degree of sensitiveness and power of response; so that the veil grows thinner as we are led by our spiritual Mother deeper and deeper into the religious life. After some years of service and of prayer we ought to become as responsive to the deeper things as the discarnate members of the congregation. In the end, our realization will equal that of the holy angels themselves and we shall need the Church no more, save as a glorious field of service to the world.

THE HEALING SERVICE

The underlying principle by which all spiritual healing produces its results seems to be that a perfect relationship between the spiritual and the natural man is essential to perfect health.

In varying degree, according to the sufferers' power of response, a healing service removes from the vehicles of consciousness those obstructions which prevent or mar the perfection of that relationship. After the service the natural and the spiritual man are in a state of accord which is as harmonious and as perfect as possible. The degree in which this is achieved depends largely upon the perfection and realization with which the service is performed, the position in evolution of the sufferer, his karma and his inherent mental, emotional, and physical tendencies.

In all cases, however, his higher consciousness is definitely illumined and empowered; this upliftment helps him to continue more effectively the process of

adjustment in which he has already been engaged and to fill in the deficiencies of character which made possible the karma producing transgressions. This effect is largely achieved by a descent of power from the highest principle within the supplicant for healing grace.

In the normal individual the power of the highest spiritual principle, that of divine will in man, very rarely, if ever, reaches the personality. The reason for this is that the Christ-consciousness or divine love in man is not sufficiently awakened and developed at this period of human evolution to convey that power. In the services of the church, and especially at Holy Communion, however, our Lord in His tender love and care for mankind draws so near to, and unifies Himself so closely with, His people, that He Himself becomes the Christ-principle actively awake in them. By this "at-one-ment" He provides them with a vicarious contact with those highest spiritual worlds which are normally beyond their reach. This hastens the time when the Christ child shall be born in the human heart and makes immediately possible a descent of power and blessing from the very highest and most divine aspects of human nature, an occurrence which tends greatly to modify adverse karma. In cases of sudden and complete healing, the adverse karma is entirely neutralized.

The immediate effect of these influences is naturally far more apparent at the higher levels of consciousness than in the body. The spiritual man receives the full power of the healing service, and the exaltation of spirit which it produces enables him to liberate forces which greatly modify his karmic responsibilities. During the period in which he is able to maintain this exalted state, he is both adding to his favourable karma and neutralizing that which is adverse; for he liberates powerful beneficent forces, and for the time being becomes the embodiment of the virtues which oppose the transgressions and errors from which the adverse karma originated.

A great deal depends, therefore, upon the depth of realization of the supplicant as well as upon the length of time during which, as both the natural and spiritual man, he is able to maintain the exalted state into which he has been lifted by his Lord and the service of the church. In order to achieve the greatest possible results, participation in a service should always be preceded by a special preparation, both of body and of mind; it should also be followed by a period of meditation to the end that His "Grace may be so grafted inwardly in our hearts that it may continually be made manifest in our lives". For the rest of the day the worshipper should be living in the memory of his experience, and endeavouring to make permanent the expansion of consciousness which it has produced.

Let us now consider the healing service of the Liberal Catholic Church in detail, noting some of the effects produced at each part of the ritual.

OPENING PRAYER

"I pray our heavenly Father that He will send His healing Angel to minister unto these Thy servants here present, that they may be restored to health of mind and body. Through Christ our Lord."

A number of angels of the hierarchy of healing angels appear as the words: "I pray our Heavenly Father that He will send His healing Angel," are uttered. Clairvoyantly, this response appears as a line of angelic presences reaching from the sanctuary up to the causal worlds and presumably terminating in the mighty Archangel

Raphael himself. These angels are chiefly of a brilliant sapphire blue colour, and a stream of power of that particular hue descends down the column or channel into which their glorious and shining bodies are formed. This adds a new note and a new colour to the various forces already present, and for the time being this type of power predominates.

THE CONFITEOR

"O Lord, Thou hast created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of Thine own eternity; yet often we forget the glory of our heritage, and wander from the path which leads to righteousness. But Thou, O Lord, hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are ever restless till they find their rest in Thee. Look with the eyes of Thy love upon our manifold imperfections, and pardon all our shortcomings, that we may be filled with the brightness of the everlasting light, and become the unspotted mirror of Thy power and the image of Thy goodness. Through Christ our Lord. Amen."

The Confiteor, if repeated sincerely and with a contrite heart, is a surrender of the natural to the spiritual man. The material interests and motives which normally tend to dominate the daily life are transcended and the worshipper turns towards his Creator in deep humility. As a result of this, two of the greatest barriers between God and man - spiritual self-blinding and pride - are temporarily broken down. The natural man becomes receptive and responsive to the lofty spiritual influences which are about to flow from and through his own inner nature.

THE ABSOLUTION

"God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost bless, preserve and sanctify you; the Lord in His loving-kindness look down upon you and be gracious unto you; the Lord absolve you from all your sins and grant you the grace and comfort of the Holy Spirit. R. Amen."

The absolution brings with it a flood of outpoured blessing which blends the natural and spiritual man together; it corrects the alignment of the vehicles of consciousness and restores all their broken rhythms so that the divine life may play freely through them; in addition it tends to drive out inharmonious and impure thoughts and feelings. For a time the aura is pure, the bodies perfectly aligned, and the lower self illumined by the light of the higher.

THE VENI CREATOR

At the Veni Creator further power is invoked and placed in the hands of the healing angels and the priest. It is chiefly that of the Third Aspect, and may be thought of as the material or force with which the angels work.

THE EXORCISM

"O Lord, who hast given unto man bodily health and vigour wherewith to serve Thee, we pray Thee to free Thy servants from their sickness so far as may be expedient for them, and by the might of Thy blessing to restore unto them full health, both

outwardly in their bodies and inwardly in their souls. Through Christ our Lord. R. Amen."

The people are seated. Those who desire to be anointed are brought to the Priest one by one, and kneel upon a cushion. The Priest now says over each one;

"In the Name which is above every name, in the power of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, I exorcise all influences of evil, that thou mayest be rightly purified to receive this Sacrament of Holy Unction."

The answer to the prayer preceding the exorcism adds the power of the Second Aspect of the Blessed Trinity to that already present, and these combine temporarily to form a reservoir of power which the angels preserve until the moment of its employment at the unction and the prayer which follows. The particular force by which the exorcism is performed descends from the realm of spiritual will with power from the level of the Christ-consciousness as an accompanying influence.

At this point, by the operation of the law of spiritual correspondences which link together the highest and the lowest principles of man, the etheric double of the patient is directly affected, as well as the other two vehicles of the personality. The etheric double of a sick person inevitably contains congested areas and aggregations of impure and even poisonous etheric matter, which impede the circulation of the vital forces. The exorcism, if effective, instantly reduces the degree of congestion and tends to drive out the poisonous material from the etheric double, thereby permitting a much freer flow of the vital forces throughout the body. If undesirable entities, such as disease or other obsessing elementals were present, they would be instantly exorcised both from the emotional and the etheric vehicles. This again temporarily provides the higher self of the sufferer with a free and uninterrupted contact with his physical body. A unique opportunity is then afforded to the spiritual man of releasing his own interior healing and corrective forces - now enormously increased and reinforced by the service - and of changing the attitude of his personality to one more closely in harmony with the divine law.

Without this inner illumination and the change of attitude towards life which it should produce no healing, whether spiritual or physical, can be permanently effective. Unless the lesson of the suffering has been learned and the weakness of character overcome to a considerable extent there is always a danger that the disease-producing transgression will be repeated. The true healer must educate as well as heal.

The final effect of the healing service, or of any other form of spiritual healing, depends very largely upon the ability of the patient to make full use of the privileges he has received; if he succeeds fully he will be able to establish a free flow of the life-forces through all his bodies, and to make permanent the various temporary changes which the service has produced.

THE UNCTION

Taking upon his thumb some of the holy oil for the sick, the Priest anoints the person in the form of a cross upon the forehead, saying

"In the name of our Lord Christ, and invoking the help of the holy Archangel Raphael, I anoint thee with oil, that thou mayest gain refreshment, both of soul and body."

At the unction the Archangel Raphael is definitely attracted, and he may either attend in person or manifest his power and his presence through the angels of his hierarchy who are already in attendance. This naturally increases the amount of power available and assists the angels in its employment. The force-centres in the patient, which are situated where the oil is applied, begin to rotate more rapidly and to perform more perfectly their dual function as channels for life-force and organs for the manifestation of super-physical power and consciousness. This blends the higher and the lower self still more closely together, and so enables the former to take a greater share in the healing work.

THE PRAYER

The Priest proceeds to anoint, in the same manner as before, but in silence, the centre at the top of the head, the front of the throat and the nape of the neck. He then places both hands upon the head of the person with the definite intent to heal, saying

"Christ, the Son of God, look down upon thine affliction and heal thee of all thine infirmities. May the Light of His Love enfold thee forever."

A descent of the true healing power from the level of the Christ-consciousness occurs through all the vehicles as this beautiful prayer is said, thus causing them to glow with the marvellous golden yellow light which is characteristic of that level. At the same time the power which has been received during the earlier part of the service is now liberated into and through the natural man.

At the beautiful closing sentence of the prayer, a further and fuller measure of power and life pours through the officiant. This wonderful influence pervades and enfolds the aura of the sufferer; it surrounds him with an atmosphere of blessing and of highest spiritual love, making him temporarily unresponsive to the inharmonious vibrations of the outer world. This helps him to maintain the exalted state into which he has been lifted, and to dwell in the ecstasy of intimate communion and union with his Lord.

As suggested previously, a definite endeavour should be made to maintain this state of consciousness and to resist the tendency of the aura to return to its original rate of vibration. Repeated prayer and meditation combined with self-recollection will be found to be the most helpful means of achieving this.

THE BENEDICTION

The Priest turns to the people.

"Unto God's gracious love and protection we commit you; the Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His Face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up the light of His Countenance upon you and give you His peace, now and forever more. R. Amen."

At the Benediction the worshippers are finally committed to the protection of the Lord. A still further measure of power descends upon them, causing their auras to increase greatly in size and luminosity, and lifting their higher selves into a state of spiritual exaltation.

As we have seen, the degree in which all these influences actually affect the physical body depends a good deal upon the patients themselves. If they have already established a close contact with their higher selves, by means of preparatory prayer and meditation, then the personality will receive a full and rich measure of the powers and blessings which are so freely outpoured. If they have not done so, the service will help them to that end, and the healing will be proportionate to their response to that help. The degree of utter sincerity with which the Confiteor is pronounced governs to a considerable extent the degree in which the healing power becomes manifest.

The value of holding a healing service after the celebration of the Holy Eucharist will be apparent from this; there could be no finer way of preparing sufferers for the descent of healing love, and of enabling them to respond in the fullest possible way to the forces employed than the administration of the Blessed Sacrament.

The chief effect of the service is produced upon the subtler vehicles, and more particularly upon the astral body. People vary greatly in the degree in which they can forget themselves and throw them-selves open to the healing power of the Lord. The ceremonial method of spiritual training is of the greatest help in the achievement of that self-forgetfulness which is the basis of true spirituality. A sublime faith in the Compassion and Wisdom of God; an absolute conviction of His Power, and a complete surrender to His Will, in both the Healer and the healed, would seem to be essential to complete success in spiritual healing. Even our Lord Himself could not heal when these were absent for we read that "He did no mighty works in that place because of their unbelief".

Such qualities are extremely rare in these days, and it is therefore natural that, for the most part, the healing service appears to produce greater results in the invisible than in the visible worlds.

THE MASS

The Celebration of the Holy Eucharist is a ceremonial and sacramental method of awakening, quickening, and releasing the powers of Divinity in every form of life. Properly performed and producing its ideal results, it evokes the powers of the Blessed Trinity hidden deeply in every form within its sphere of influence, in the priest, the servers, the incarnate and discarnate congregation, the holy angels and the nature-spirits, in the material of the buildings and the furniture, and even in the natural surroundings outside the church.

From a purely human point of view the Mass might be regarded as a method of meditation, by means of which the worshipper passes progressively into more and more intimate union with the God within himself, and especially with the second or Wisdom Aspect of the Divine Trinity which is the Son. This process reaches its culmination in the reception of the Blessed Sacrament when, in His most divine love, the Lord Christ, made manifest in the Host, becomes one with the communicant.

Great floods of power and blessing are also liberated upon the world every time the Mass is performed. Every being who is touched by them is blessed, and experiences an awakening of the consciousness of the Divine within.

These three results of quickening, of union, and of blessing are achieved by two means. The first is the evocation of the triple powers of the Godhead from within all

manifested life in the immediate vicinity and sphere of the influence of the church and their employment by the officiants, the angels, and the congregation for the production of the great results at which the ceremony aims. The second is the external outpouring of blessing and stimulating power. This is drawn from many sources, though the primary force must be that of the Logos - more especially in His Second Aspect - and of the Lord Christ Himself as the glorious Representative of the Son of God upon earth. To this is added the power of the officiants, the angels, the congregation, the four elements of earth, air, fire, and water. All these various streams of force are united into one great stream, which is poured forth first upon the congregation, and then upon the world.

If we examine these results from the human and the angelic point of view, we find that their most direct effect is to arouse the spiritual Self in each one into increased self-conscious activity and life. Few men, at the present stage of evolution, are very wide awake at the spiritual levels of consciousness. The Mass helps us to stir in our egoic dreams and to begin to express down here the lofty powers enshrined in the "shining Augoeides" of man. The ultimate purpose of this wonderful help which our Lord has Himself designed for us is that we ourselves should reach that state of "The measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," and no longer be in any need of outward aids. Then we shall follow His most glorious example and in our turns become Saviours of men.

A spiritually advanced officiant, working with highly trained priests, is able to help us enormously by the fact of his own awakened spiritual consciousness: he can give us a certain vicarious self-consciousness in the higher realms by sharing his own powers and development with us during the celebration of the Mass: by these means we become lifted above our normal state and are able to live for a time in our highest selves and, therefore, to participate in the ceremony and to assist in the production of its two chief effects to a degree which would not otherwise be possible. Such an officiant is able to sweep the egos of his congregation into his own, and to allow his people to share his own vividly awakened spiritual self-consciousness. Every member of the congregation is offered a very great spiritual opportunity. Each one of them has his share in the work of the Mass, and during the performance should lose himself utterly in that work. It is of the utmost importance, therefore, that every worshipper should strive to reach the highest degree of spiritual awakening for himself. This is best achieved by a regular system of self-training, by daily meditation, by the study of spiritual subjects and by a life of service to the world. Many books of spiritual instruction have been written and the attention of the aspirant is especially drawn to the writings of Jiddu Krishnamurti, Annie Besant, C. W. Leadbeater, J. I. Wedgwood, and George S. Arundale. The author has, himself, contributed three books to the many now available. Their titles are *First Steps on the Path*, *Thus Have I Heard*, and *Be Ye Perfect*. Mr. Krishnamurti teaches especially the desirability of attaining to spiritual realization and self-emancipation by one's own unaided endeavours. His teachings are therefore of supreme importance to all aspirants to spiritual unfoldment. He proclaims once more the age-old truth, that man possesses within himself all the power needed for this achievement. He inspires and illumines those who hear him speak and who read his books with a measure of the power of his own exalted spiritual consciousness.

There are also many points in the ceremony at which an effort to achieve interior realization is suggested. At all the references to the Blessed Trinity, for example, we may think of and strive to realize the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in each one of us. In

addition to pouring out adoration to that Trinity objectively we might definitely try to awaken It subjectively, so that It shall shine forth in us more and more as the service proceeds, and shall eventually rule our daily lives. The opening invocation, the Introit, and the Kyrie which follows it, offer opportunities for this endeavour. The Lord's Prayer is a wonderful aid to that realization, both in the service and in our private devotions, for it opens with a direct appeal to the God within ourselves - the "Father which is in Heaven" - to send down His triple power day by day, and closes with a dedication of the lower self to the service of the higher throughout the long ages of the human pilgrimage. Whenever the various psalms and canticles are ended with ascriptions of glory to the Trinity, as they so often are in our church services, we should try to awaken the Trinity within ourselves. We may think, not only of the glory of the external Trinity which is the Logos, but also of the triune God within us, and affirm His glory there, so that He may shine forth and illumine our lives.

Even the nature-spirits, who have not yet reached spiritually to individual existence, find the path towards that realization made easier for them, while their elder brethren of the angelic hosts experience a quickening of their whole inner nature by their participation in the ceremony of the Mass.

Perhaps the purpose and effect of the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, which the devout Christian most appreciates, is the direct manifestation of the power, the love, and the presence of the Lord Christ; for in addition to the awakening of the Christ consciousness and Christ-qualities in man, angel, and in Nature, the actual living Presence of our Lord is made manifest. In His most tender love He appears in our midst in the mystery of the transubstantiation, as well as in the wondrous Angel of the Presence who shines with His immortal beauty and is filled with His divine compassion. Because of His own Presence in the Eucharist a deep and lasting sense of spiritual union and of close companionship with the Lord may be experienced in the ceremony which He has ordained to help us towards that end.

In the Liberal Catholic Liturgy we are prepared for this consummation by the beautiful prayer:

"Unto Thee, O Perfect One, the Lord and Lover of men, do we commend our life and hope. For Thou art the Heavenly Bread, the Life of the whole world; Thou art in all places and endurest all things, the Treasury of endless good and the Well of infinite compassion."

Immediately after receiving the Blessed Sacrament, the whole congregation unites with the priest in affirming

"Under the veil of earthly things now have we communion with our Lord Jesus Christ; soon with open face shall we behold Him, and rejoicing in His glory, be made like unto Him. Then shall His true disciples be brought by Him with exceeding joy before the presence of His Father's glory."

This heavenly ministration is not limited to the congregation alone, for whilst it is occurring mighty spiritual forces are being released upon the world. Although the spiritualizing effects produced outside the church by this irradiation of light and power are not comparable to those produced within it, they are nevertheless, very beneficial to the surrounding people and district for a distance of at least one mile. Wherever there is a church in the surrounding country in which the Sacrament is reserved, that church acts as a relay station, from which the power is further transmitted to reach a still wider area; in

addition, its individual power is quickened and its sphere of influence enlarged. So the power and blessing of the church travels on and on, through station after station, throughout the world.

A fourth result of the regular Sacramental services of the church, therefore, is the establishment of centres of power which, day by day, become stronger, more firmly established as the services are repeated. An extremely powerful centre exists at the Church of St. Michael and All Angels, at Huizen, in Holland. For miles before one enters that district, one's consciousness is stirred and touched by a power which deepens as one gets nearer and nearer to the heart of it, which is the church itself. Similar effects are produced by many old cathedrals on the continent of Europe and in England and in lesser degree by every Christian church. The author has not yet visited the countries of other faiths, but has no doubt that the same is true in varying degree of the temples and mosques of Eastern faiths.

Let us look more closely at some of the forces which are employed to produce these various results. As has been said, one of the great forces, the central force from which all others spring, is that of the Blessed Trinity manifesting in our system, on our planet, and in ourselves. Unfortunately spiritual realization is extremely rare in these days. The priests carry out the prescribed actions and repeat the written words, but for the most part they have little or no knowledge of the effects which those actions and those words produce. The highly proficient priest, however, working with direct knowledge, may consciously evoke that hidden Trinity; he is able deliberately and consciously to use the Mass and his own awakened powers to arouse the triune Godhead in his congregation, in the angels, in the surrounding matter, in the trees, plants and flowers, in the very soil on which the church stands, and in the material of which it is built. Under that quickening influence the indwelling life and consciousness and power shine forth more and more brilliantly as the ceremony proceeds, and, at a centre like the one at Huizen, at which the same people assist day by day, and are directly trained to participate consciously in the inner as well as the outer aspects of the service, the effect is most marked. By the end of the service the spiritual selves of the congregation seem to be made manifest through the flesh and to kneel at the altar to receive the Blessed Sacrament.

Of the three aspects of the Blessed Trinity, the Wisdom-Love of God is especially manifested through the Presence of our Lord. In His office as World Teacher, and as the Founder of the Christian Faith, He also manifests and releases power from the great reservoir of spiritual energy by which all the great religions of the world are inspired. One purpose of the Mass is to draw upon that reservoir, so that the waters of life, which are stored within, may be released.

The powers of each of the seven mighty Spirits before the Throne are also called forth and released upon the world. Here, again, the presence of an officiant whose spiritual vision is awakened, makes a wonderful difference to the degree in which these lofty forces are evoked. This power descends in seven great Rays [Vide The Seven Rays, by Ernest Wood.] in the inner worlds, and, in the outer, through the seven candles and seven crosses, each of which, in the Liberal Catholic Church, is dedicated to serve as channel for one of the Rays. The trained priest calls forth the power of each Ray, so that it shines forth and flows through the consecrated jewel in the candle and the cross into the church. This force awakens and stimulates the power and qualities of that Ray in each

member of the congregation. The great angels, who are the representatives of the Seven Mighty Spirits amongst the angelic hosts, pour forth their blessings and their particular type of power for the enriching of the whole service and the helping of the world.

Despite the rapid progress of modern science there still remain many forms of energy, many natural forces, which no physical scientist has yet discovered. Amongst these are the typical powers of the four elements, or principles, of earth, water, air, and fire, with each of which is associated an order or race of nature-spirits and angelic beings.

In spiritual science, and, particularly in the Mass, these powers of Nature are evoked and used to a considerable degree. During the Offertorium the forces of the four elements are invoked through the Altar Stone, which is in the centre of the altar, and upon which the Chalice rests. The corresponding Intelligences are also called upon and employed. Mighty powers reside in our physical earth and especially in the great principle in Nature which we call the element of earth.

An attempt to project one's consciousness down into the earth reveals the fact that, deep down in the centre of this planet, there is a mighty reservoir of solar power. This may be regarded as a relay station through which some of the forces of the sun itself are released throughout the planet. Science is just beginning to discover these in their electrical and magnetic manifestations; the priest who is a thaumaturgist consciously evokes them and the great order of angels and nature-spirits associated with them and adds their splendour, power, intelligence, and beauty to the human adoration and devotion which is being offered to the Most High.

Similarly the powers of air and the great order of the sylphs, or angels of air, may be swept into the aura of the church by the officiant when the elements are offered. Water and fire also manifest themselves in degree, according to the power and knowledge of the officiant. Where the church is by the sea, as at Huizen, in Holland, where much of the research on which this chapter is based was carried out, a wonderful opportunity is presented of gathering together in great hosts members of the order of the water-angels and water-spirits. It is possible for the priest, if he be sufficiently advanced, to send a great sweep of his consciousness far out into the *Zuider Zee*, on the shores of which the church is built and to gather together the water-hosts, in order that they, and all their forces, may converge upon the altar. Later he is able to release them to enrich the outpouring of power and blessing upon the world and for the production of the various results which the Mass is designed to produce.

During the special conditions provided, large numbers of angels have been attracted to Huizen. They attend the more important ceremonies, and join in the singing and in the acts of adoration and of praise. Sometimes numbers of them descend into the church and kneel beside the various human devotees. On occasions they bring the power of their higher and more vivid consciousness to bear upon this or that worshipper, helping him to express himself more freely, conserving the descending power of the ceremony and directing it more definitely into the minds and hearts of the various people. That, in itself, is a very beautiful service, for such angels, in their tender love for men and their reverence for our Lord, who is Teacher both of angels and of men, come very near to us and help us both to give and to receive all that we possibly can of His blessing and His grace. It is well that we should remember this sometimes, during the service; we little know when we rise from our knees feeling uplifted and inspired, how much we may owe to the services of the angelic hosts.

The co-operation, the power, and the blessing of the Great White Brotherhood, and particularly that of Our Lady and of certain Masters of the Wisdom, form another great stream of force by which the work of the church is illumined and enriched. All the Great Ones respond instantly and unfailingly to the prayers and invocations addressed to Them during the service.

Another order of power which is employed during the Mass, is the emotional, mental, and spiritual energy generated and released by all participants; this includes that of the officiant, of all the priests and servers, of the congregation both living and "dead," and of the angels and nature-spirits present. All these many streams are blended together by the ceremony, and especially by the directing angel in co-operation with the priest. If the officiant is sufficiently advanced he enriches all this by sharing his greater powers with all those who are participating in the service. If one of the assistants is not fulfilling his task as effectively as he might, instantly from the primary officiant goes forth an energy and power which makes the work complete. If the sensing, for example, is done by someone rather young in body, however old in soul -too young to produce very great extra effects- instantly the power of the priest goes forth and enriches his work, and sees that all is done in order and as splendidly as may be. All this inner work is in no way interfered with by physical activities that may be going on, for the true priest develops the technique of employing these forces by the aid of his higher consciousness, whilst still maintaining his full efficiency and perfection of action in the physical body. This is one of the great faculties which the ceremonial method develops.

The adoration, the love, the devotion, and the intelligent co-operation of a trained congregation add enormously to the power of the ceremony; the richness of the descending force which they evoke is to some extent commensurate with the degree in which these qualities are present, although there seems to be an irreducible minimum of splendour and of beauty which is produced by the service of the Mass every time it is celebrated; and that, in itself, is glorious beyond all our understanding. When, however, the Mass is used and celebrated intelligently and with all the extra powers of a highly spiritual priesthood and a one-pointed and efficient congregation, that minimum is far exceeded. The descent and the outpouring upon the world, of power and blessing from on high, is splendid beyond description. C. W. Leadbeater has given us an account of that hidden splendour in his great work, *The Science of the Sacraments*, beside which any attempt of the present author's far less inspired pen would be painfully inadequate.

There are, however, still other forces used in church worship which it is of interest and value to investigate. Each of the symbols and the colours, for example, are in themselves channels for power. A physical symbol corresponds to a super-physical force, just as a word corresponds to an idea. When a word is uttered the meaning behind the word is manifested, is realized, and the power behind the idea for which the word stand is then released. When a symbol is constructed and exposed for ceremonial purposes, the spiritual forces, of which it is an expression in form, manifest themselves in a certain degree; when symbols are employed consciously, as in sacramental processes, they become ensouled with living power and the great forces behind them are then released.

The simple act of the officiant in making the sign of the cross in the air releases a tremendous energy, the quality and kind of which is governed by the intent of his mind when he makes it. He can call on the powers of Spiritual Will, of Intuition, or of the Higher Intelligence, for example, when making the sign of the cross; when he makes the

symbol in the air there flashes into visibility, in the emotional and mental worlds, a glowing cross of light and colour which is a living entity created by him, and which may exist for many hours or even days. When, for instance, during a procession, a bishop makes crosses as he passes, he leaves behind a beautiful chain of living things, each radiating the force behind the cross symbol and in addition the particular type of power which he puts into it. He may also increase the durability and efficiency of these living powers, by associating a nature-spirit with them, so that they may become intelligently directed beings actively at work for a certain period of time.

As one studies these inner powers, it becomes increasingly clear that church worship is a wonder-fully ordered and scientifically designed means of spiritualizing the world, of helping man to draw near to and at last become one with God.

This great consummation is foreshadowed at the administration of the Blessed Sacrament. At that time in the service the very presence of the Lord Himself is made manifest with a nearness and an intimacy which is beyond all belief. From the moment of the Consecration His Presence descends closer and closer into the church. A marvellous change takes place in the Host, which is visible to any who have even the slightest extension of vision. The Host becomes glowing and wonderful, and the matter of which it is composed seems but the finest of films, enclosing the radiant, golden splendour of the Christ-life which is manifest within. And then, at the act of communion, it seems as if, in a way that is indescribable down here, the Christ and His devotee become one. Transubstantiation seems to occur in the communicant himself as the spiritual body and blood of Christ is received. Sometimes a marvellous change occurs in their appearance in the inner worlds, so that they seem to take on His likeness, and shine with a measure of His beauty and His light.

We are able to receive Him in this way according to the degree in which He is awake in us. Whatever that measure may be, the response is equal to it, so that the cup of every worshipper is absolutely full. There is nothing lacking in the boundless beneficence with which He gives Himself to all who approach Him at His Altar.

Thus He labours throughout the centuries, through His Christian Faith, pouring forth His life and love that His people may be lifted up as He has been. Gradually all mankind draws near to the time when such external aid will be needed no more; when the Christ child, which He has helped to bring to birth in every human heart, will have grown "unto the measure of the fullness of Christ". Then, by His labours, He will have helped the Creator of all worlds to produce a race of Saviours of men.