

The Personality of Rudolf Steiner

and His Development

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This is the Introduction written originally for the French translation of *Christianity as Mystical Fact*.

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MANY of even the most cultivated men of our time have a very mistaken idea of what is a true mystic and a true occultist. They know these two forms of human mentality only by their imperfect or degenerate types, of which recent times have afforded only too many examples. For the intellectual of today, the mystic is a kind of fool and visionary who takes his fancies for facts; the occultist is a dreamer or a charlatan who abuses public credulity in order to boast of an imaginary science and of pretended powers. Be it remarked, to begin with, that this definition of mysticism, though deserved by some, would be as unjust as erroneous if one sought to apply it to such personalities as Joachim del Fiore of the thirteenth century, Jacob Boehme of the sixteenth, or St. Martin, who is called "the unknown philosopher," of the eighteenth century. No less unjust and false would be the current definition of the occultist if one saw in it the slightest relevance to such earnest seekers as Paracelsus, Mesmer, or Fabre d'Olivet in the past, or to William Crookes, de Rochat, or Camille Flammarion in the present. Think what we may of these bold investigators, it is undeniable that they have opened out regions unknown to science, and furnished the mind with new ideas.

No, these fanciful definitions can at most satisfy that scientific dilettantism which hides its feebleness under a supercilious mask to screen its indolence, or the worldly scepticism which ridicules all that threatens to upset its indifference. But enough of these superficial opinions. Let us study history, the sacred and profane books of all nations, and the latest results of experimental science; let us subject all these facts to impartial criticism, inferring similar effects from identical causes, and we shall be forced to give quite another definition of the mystic and the occultist.

The true mystic is a man who enters into full possession of his inner life, and, having become cognisant of his subconscious, finds in it, through concentrated meditation and steady discipline, new faculties and enlightenments. These instruct him as to the innermost nature of his soul and his relations with that impalpable element which underlies all, with that eternal and supreme reality which religion calls God, and poetry the Divine.

* This is the Introduction written originally for the French translation of *Christianity as Mystical Fact* and referred to by Dr. Friedenthal in his postscript to the preceding article.

The occultist, akin to the mystic, but differing from him as a younger from an elder brother, is a man endowed with intuition and a power of synthesis, who seeks to penetrate the hidden depths and foundations of Nature by the methods of science and philosophy: that is by observation and reason, methods invariable in principle, but modified in application by being adapted to the descending kingdoms of Spirit or the ascending kingdoms of Nature, according to the vast hierarchy of beings and the alchemy of the creative Word.

The mystic, then, is one who seeks for truth and the divine directly within himself, by a gradual detachment and a veritable birth of his higher soul. If he attains it after prolonged effort, he plunges into his own glowing centre. Then he immerses himself in, and identifies himself with, that ocean of life which is the primordial Force.

The occultist, on the other hand, discovers, studies and contemplates this same Divine outpouring, given forth in diverse portions, endowed with force, and multiplied to infinity in Nature and in Humanity. According to the profound saying of Paracelsus, *he sees in all beings the letters of an alphabet, which, united in man, form the complete and conscious Word of life*. The detailed analyses that he makes of them, the syntheses that he constructs with them, are for him as so many images and forecastings of this central Divine, of this Sun of Beauty, of Truth and of Life, which he sees not, but which is reflected and bursts upon his vision in countless mirrors.

The weapons of the mystic are concentration and inner vision; the weapons of the occultist are intuition and synthesis. Each responds to the other; they complete and presuppose each other.

These two human types are blended in the Adept, in the higher Initiate. No doubt one or the other, and often both, are met with in the founders of great religions and the loftiest philosophies. No doubt also they are to be found again, in a less but still very remarkable degree, among a certain number of persons who have played a great part in history as reformers, thinkers, poets, artists, statesmen.

Why, then, should these two types of mind, which represent the highest human faculties, and were formerly the object of universal veneration, usually appear to us now as merely deformed and travestied? Why have they become obliterated? Why should they have fallen into such discredit?

That is the result of a profound cause bound up with an unavoidable necessity of human evolution.

During the last two thousand years, but especially since the sixteenth century, humanity has achieved a tremendous work, namely, the conquest of the globe and the setting up of experimental science, in what concerns the material and visible world.

For this gigantic, herculean task to be successfully accomplished, it was necessary that there should be a temporary eclipse of man's transcendental faculties, so that his whole power of observation might be concentrated on the outer world. These faculties, however, have never been extinct or even inactive. They lay dormant in the mass of men; they remained active in the elect, far from the gaze of the vulgar. Today, they are showing themselves openly under new forms. Before long they will assume a leading and directing importance in human destinies.

I would add that at no period of history, whether among the nations of the ancient Aryan cycle, or in the Semitic civilisations of Asia and Africa—whether in the Græco-Latin world, or in the Middle Ages and in modern times, have these royal faculties, for which Positivism would substitute its dreary nomenclature, ever ceased to operate at the beginning and in the background of all great human creations and of all fruitful work. For how can we imagine a thinker, a poet, an inventor, a hero, a master of science or of art, a genius of any kind, who is not touched by a potent ray from those two master-faculties which make the mystic and the occultist—the inner vision and the sovereign intuition?

Rudolf Steiner is both a mystic and an occultist. These two natures appear in him in perfect harmony. One could not say which of the two predominates over the other. In intermingling and blending, they have become one homogeneous force. Hence we have to recognise a special development, in which outward events play but a secondary part.

Dr. Steiner was born in Upper Austria in 1861. His earliest years were passed in a little town situated on the Leytha, on the borders of Styria, the Carpathians, and Hungary. From childhood his character was serious and concentrated. This was followed by a youth inwardly illuminated by the most marvellous intuitions, a young manhood encountering terrible trials, and a maturity crowned by a mission which he had dimly foreseen from his earliest years, but which was formulated only gradually in the struggle for truth and life. His time of youth, passed in a mountainous and secluded region, was happy in its way, thanks to the exceptional faculties that he discovered in himself. He was employed in a Catholic church as a server. The poetry of the worship, the profundity of the symbolism, had a mysterious attraction for him; but, as he possessed the innate gift of *seeing souls*, one thing frightened him. This was the secret unbelief of the priests, entirely engrossed in the ritual and the material part of the service.

There was another peculiarity about him: no-one, either then or later, ventured to talk of any gross superstition in his presence,

or to utter any blasphemy, as if those calm and penetrating eyes compelled the speaker to serious thought. In this child, almost always silent, there grew up a quiet and inflexible will to master things through understanding. This was easier for him than for others, for he possessed from the first that self-mastery, so rare even in the adult, which gives mastery over others. To this firm will was added a warm, deep, and almost painful sympathy; a kind of pitiful tenderness for all beings and even for inanimate nature. It seemed to him that all souls had in them something divine. But in what a dense crust is hidden the gleam of gold! In what hard rock, in what dark shadows, lay dormant the precious essence! Vaguely as yet did this idea stir within him—he was to develop it later—that the divine soul is present in all men, but in a latent state. It is a sleeping captive that has to be *awakened from enchantment*.

To the sight of this young thinker human souls became transparent, with their troubles, their desires, their paroxysms of hatred or of love. And it was probably because of the terrible things he saw that he spoke so little. And yet, what delights, unknown to the world, sprang from this involuntary clairvoyance! Among the remarkable inner revelations of this youth, I will instance only one which was extremely characteristic.

The vast plains of Hungary, the wild Carpathian forests, the old churches of those mountains in which the monstrosity glows brightly as a sun in the darkness of the sanctuary, were not there for nothing; they were helpful to meditation and contemplation.

At fifteen years of age, Steiner became acquainted with a learned herbalist who was visiting the district. The remarkable thing about this man was that he knew not only the species, families, and lives of plants in their minutest details, but also their secret virtues. One would have said that he had spent his life in conversing with the unconscious, fluid souls of herbs and flowers. He had the gift of seeing the vital principle of plants, their etheric body, and what occultism calls the elementals of the vegetable world. He talked of it as of a quite ordinary and natural thing. The calm, coolly scientific tone of his conversation served only to enhance the curiosity and admiration of the youth. Later on, Steiner knew that this strange man was a messenger from the Master, as yet unknown to him, who was to be his real initiator, and who was already watching over him from afar.

What the curious, second-sighted herbalist told him, young Steiner found to be in accordance with the logic of things. This confirmed an inner feeling of long standing, which more and more forced itself on his mind as the fundamental Law and as the basis of the Great All. That is to say: *the two-fold current which constitutes the very movement of the world, and which might be called the flux and reflux of the universal life.*

We are all witnesses and are conscious of the outward current of *evolution*, which urges onward all beings of heaven and of earth—stars, plants, animals, and humanity—and causes them to move forward towards an infinite future, without our perceiving the initial force which impels them and makes them go on without pause or rest. But there is in the universe an *inverse current*, which interposes itself and perpetually breaks in on the other. It is that of *involution*, by which the principles, forces, entities, and souls from the invisible world and the kingdom of the Eternal infiltrate and ceaselessly intermingle with the visible reality. No evolution of matter would be comprehensible without this occult and astral current, which, with its hierarchy of powers, is the great propeller of life. Thus the Spirit, which contains the future in germ, *involves* itself in matter; thus matter, which receives the Spirit, *evolves* towards the future. While, then, we are moving on blindly towards the unknown future, this future is approaching us consciously, infusing itself in the current of the world and man who elaborate it. *Such is the two-fold movement of time, the out-breathing and the in-breathing of the soul of the world, which comes from the Eternal and returns thither.*

From the age of eighteen, young Steiner possessed a spontaneous consciousness of this two-fold current—a consciousness which is the condition of all spiritual vision. This vital axiom was forced upon him by a direct and involuntary seeing of things. Thenceforth he had the unmistakable sensation of occult powers which were working behind and through him for his guidance. He gave heed to this force and obeyed its admonitions, for he felt in profound accordance with it.

This kind of perception, however, formed a separate category in his intellectual life. This class of truths seemed to him something so profound, so mysterious, and so sacred, that he never imagined it possible to express it in words. He fed his soul thereon, as from a divine fountain, but to have scattered a drop of it beyond would have seemed to him a profanation.

By the side of this inner and contemplative life, his rational and philosophic mind was developing powerfully. From sixteen to seventeen years of age, he plunged deeply into the study of Kant, Fichte, and Schelling. When he came to Vienna, some years later, he became an ardent admirer of Hegel, whose transcendental idealism borders on occultism; but speculative philosophy did not satisfy him. His positive mind demanded the solid basis of the sciences of observation. So he deeply studied mathematics, chemistry, mineralogy, botany, and zoology. "These studies," he wrote, "offered a much surer basis for a spiritual conception of the world than I could have gained, for instance, from history or literature, which in the German academic world of that time had no definite method and no significant prospects." Inquiring into everything,

however, enamoured of high art, and an enthusiast for poetry, Steiner did not neglect literary studies. As a guide therein he found an excellent professor in the person of Julius Schröder, a distinguished scholar of the school of the brothers Grimm, who strove to develop in his pupils the arts of speaking and of writing. To this distinguished man the young student owed his wide and discerning literary culture. "In the desert of prevailing materialism," says Steiner, "his house was for me an oasis of idealism."

But this was not yet the Master whom he sought. Amidst these varied studies and deep meditations, he could as yet discern the building of the universe only in a fragmentary way; his inborn intuition prevented any doubt of the divine origin of things and of a spiritual Beyond. A distinctive mark of this extraordinary man was that he never knew any of those crises of doubt and despair which usually accompany the transition to a definite conviction in the lives of mystics and of thinkers. Nevertheless, he felt that the central light which illumines and penetrates the whole was still lacking in him. He had reached young manhood, with its terrible problems. What was he going to do with his life? The sphinx of destiny was facing him. How should he solve its problem?

It was at the age of nineteen that the aspirant to the mysteries met with his guide—the Master—so long awaited.

It is an undoubted fact, admitted by occult tradition and confirmed by experience, that those who seek the higher truth from an impersonal motive find a Master to initiate them at the right moment: that is to say, when they are ripe for its reception. "Knock, and it shall be opened to you," said Jesus. That is true with regard to everything, but above all with regard to truth. Only, the desire must be ardent as a flame, in a soul pure as crystal.

The Master of Rudolf Steiner was one of those men of power who live, unknown to the world, under cover of some inconspicuous occupation, to carry out a mission unsuspected by any but their fellows in the Brotherhood of self-sacrificing Masters. They take no ostensible part in human events. To remain unknown is the condition of their power, but their action is only the more efficacious. For they inspire, prepare, and direct those who will act in the sight of all. In the present instance the Master had no difficulty in completing the first and spontaneous initiation of his disciple. He had only, so to speak, to point out to him his own nature in order to arm him with his needful weapons. Clearly did he show him the connection between the ordinary and the secret sciences; between the religious and the spiritual forces which are now contending for the guidance of humanity; the antiquity of the occult tradition which holds the hidden threads of history, which mingles them, separates, and re-unites them in the course of ages.

Swiftly he made him traverse the successive stages of inner discipline, in order to attain conscious and intelligent clairvoyance. In a few months the disciple learned from oral teaching the depth and incomparable splendour of the esoteric synthesis. Rudolf Steiner had already sketched for himself his intellectual mission: "To re-unite science and religion. To bring back God into science, and Nature into religion. Thus to re-fertilise both art and life." But how to set about this vast and daring undertaking? How conquer, or rather, how tame and transform, the great enemy, the materialistic science of the day, which is like a terrible dragon covered with its carapace and couched on its huge treasure? How master this dragon of modern science and yoke it to the car of spiritual truth? And, above all, how conquer the bull of public opinion?

Rudolf Steiner's Master was not in the least like himself. He had not that extreme and feminine sensibility which, though not excluding energy, makes every contact an emotion and instantly turns the suffering of others into a personal pain. He was masculine in spirit, a born ruler of men, looking only at the species, and for whom individuals hardly existed. He spared not himself, and he did not spare others. His will was like a ball which, once shot from the cannon's mouth, goes straight to its mark, sweeping away everything in its path. To the anxious question of his disciple he replied in substance:

"If thou wouldst fight the enemy, begin by understanding him. Thou wilt conquer the dragon only by penetrating his skin. As to the bull, thou must seize him by the horns. It is in the extremity of distress that thou wilt find thy weapons and thy brothers in the fight. I have shown thee who thou art: now go—and be thyself!"

Rudolf Steiner knew the language of the Masters well enough to understand the rough path that he was thus commanded to tread; but he also understood that this was the only way to attain the goal. He obeyed, and set forth.

From 1880 the life of Rudolf Steiner becomes divided into three quite distinct periods: from twenty to thirty years of age (1881-1891), the Viennese period, a time of study and of preparation; from thirty to forty (1891-1901), the Weimar period, a time of struggle and combat; from forty to forty-six (1901-1907), the Berlin period, a time of action and of organisation, in which his thought crystallised into a living work.

I pass rapidly over the Vienna period, during which Steiner took the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. He afterwards wrote a series of scientific articles on zoology, geology, and the theory of colours, in which theosophical ideas appear in an idealist clothing.

While acting as tutor in several families, with the same conscientious devotion that he gave to everything, he conducted as chief editor a weekly Viennese paper, the *Deutsche Wochenschrift*. His friendship with the Austrian poetess, Marie Eugénie delle Grazie, cast into this period of heavy work a warm ray of sunshine, as it were, with a smile of grace and poetry.

In 1890 Steiner was called to collaborate in the Goethe-Schiller archives at Weimar, to superintend the re-editing of Goethe's scientific works. Soon after moving to Weimar, he published two important works, *Truth and Science* and *The Philosophy of Freedom*. "The occult powers that guided me," he says, "forced me to introduce spiritual ideas imperceptibly into the current literature of the time." But in these various tasks he was but studying his ground while trying his strength. So distant was the goal that he did not dream of being able to reach it as yet. To travel round the world in a sailing vessel, to cross the Atlantic, the Pacific, and the Indian Ocean, in order to return to a European port, would have seemed easier to him. While awaiting the events that would allow him to equip his ship and to launch it on the open sea, he came into touch with two illustrious personalities who helped to determine his intellectual position in the contemporary world.

They were the celebrated philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, and the no less famous naturalist, Ernst Haeckel.

Rudolf Steiner had just given an impartial lecture on the author of *Zarathustra*. In consequence of this, Nietzsche's sister begged the sympathetic critic to come and see her at Naumburg, where her unhappy brother was slowly dying. Madame Foerster took the visitor to the door of the apartment where Nietzsche was lying on a couch in a comatose condition, inert, stupefied. To Steiner there was something very significant in this melancholy sight. In it he saw the final act in the tragedy of the would-be "superman."

The author of *Beyond Good and Evil* had not, like the realists of Bismarckian imperialism, renounced idealism, for he was naturally intuitive; but in his individualistic pride he sought to cut off the spiritual world from the universe, and the divine from human consciousness. Instead of placing the "superman," of whom he had a poetic vision, in the spiritual kingdom, which is his true sphere, he strove to force him into the material world, which alone was real in his eyes. Hence, in that splendid intellect arose a chaos of ideas and a wild struggle which finally brought on softening of the brain. To explain this particular case, it is needless to bring in atavism or the theory of degeneracy. The frenzied combat of ideas and of contradictory sentiments, of which this brain was the battlefield, was enough. Steiner had done justice to all the genius that marked the innovating ideas of Nietzsche, but this victim of

pride, self-destroyed by negation, was to him none the less a tragic instance of the ruin of a mighty intellect which madly destroys itself in breaking away from spiritual intelligence.

Madame Foerster did her utmost to enrol Dr. Steiner under her brother's banner. For this she used all her skill, making repeated offers to the young publicist to become editor and commentator of Nietzsche's works. Steiner withstood her insistence as best he could, and ended by taking himself off altogether, for which Madame Foerster never forgave him. She did not know that Rudolf Steiner bore within him the consciousness of a work no less great and more valuable than that of her brother.

Nietzsche had been merely an interesting episode in the life of the esoteric thinker, on the threshold of his battlefield. His meeting with the celebrated naturalist, Ernst Haeckel, on the contrary, marks a most important phase in the development of his thought. Was not the successor of Darwin apparently the most formidable adversary of the spirituality of this young initiate, of that philosophy which to him was the very essence of his being and the breath of his thought? Indeed, since the broken link between man and animal has been re-joined, since man can no longer believe in a special and supernatural origin, he has begun altogether to doubt his divine origin and destiny. He no longer sees himself as anything but one phenomenon among so many phenomena, a passing form amidst so many forms, a frail and chance link in a blind evolution. Steiner, then, is right in saying: "The mentality derived from the natural sciences is the greatest power of modern times." On the other hand, he knew that this system merely reproduces a succession of external forms among living beings, and not the inner and active forces of life. He knew it from personal initiation, and from a deeper and vaster view of the universe. Hence he could exclaim with more assurance than most of our timid spiritual teachers and startled theologians: "Is the human soul then to rise on the wings of enthusiasm to the summits of the True, the Beautiful, and the Good, only to be swept away into nothingness, like a bubble of the brain?" Yes, Haeckel was the adversary. It was materialism in arms, the dragon with all his scales, his claws, and his teeth.

Steiner's desire to understand this man, to do justice to all that was great in him and to fathom his theory as far as it was logical and plausible, was only the more intense. In this fact one sees all the loyalty and all the greatness of his comprehensive mind.

The materialistic conclusions of Haeckel could have no influence on his own ideas, which came to him from a different science; but he had a presentiment that in the indisputable discoveries of the naturalist he would find the surest basis of an evolutionary spiritual outlook and a rational theosophy.

He began, then, to study eagerly the *History of Natural Creation*. Haeckel gives here a fascinating picture of the evolution of species, from the amœba to man. He shows the successive growth of organs, and the physiological process by which living beings have raised themselves to organisms more and more complex and more and more perfect. But in this stupendous transformation, which implies millions and millions of years, he never explains the initial force of this universal ascent, nor the series of special impulses which cause beings to rise step by step. To these primordial questions, Haeckel was never able to reply except by admitting spontaneous generation,¹ which is tantamount to a miracle as great as the creation of man by God from a clod of earth. To a theosophist such as Steiner, on the other hand, the cosmic force which elaborates the world embraces in its concentric spheres the myriads of souls which crystallise and incarnate ceaselessly in all beings. He who saw the *underside* of creation could but recognise and admire the extent of the all-round gaze with which Haeckel surveyed its surface. It was in vain that the naturalist denied the existence of a divine Author of the universal scheme: he proved it, in spite of himself, in so well describing His work. As to the theosophist, he greeted, in the surging of species and in the breath which urges them onward—Man in the making, the very thought of God, the visible expression of the planetary Word.

While thus pursuing his studies, Rudolf Steiner recalled the saying of his Master: "To conquer the dragon, his skin must be penetrated." While stealing within the carapace of present-day materialism, he had seized his weapons. Henceforth he was ready for the combat. He needed but a field of action to give battle, and a powerful aid to uphold him therein. He was to find his field in the Theosophical Society, and his aid in a remarkable woman.

In 1897 Rudolf Steiner went to Berlin to edit a literary magazine and to give lectures. On his arrival, he found there a branch of the Theosophical Society. The German branch of this Society was always noted for its great independence, which is natural in a country of transcendental philosophy and of fastidious criticism. It had already made a considerable contribution to occult literature through the interesting periodical, *The Sphinx*, conducted by Dr. Hübbe-Schleiden, and Dr. Carl du Prel's book, *Philosophie der Mystik*. But, the leaders having retired, it was almost over with the group. Great discussions and petty wranglings divided the theosophists beyond the Rhine. Should Rudolf Steiner enter the Theosophical Society? This question forced itself urgently upon him, and it was of the utmost gravity, both for himself and for his cause.

¹ A speech delivered in Paris, 28th August, 1878. See also Haeckel's *History of Natural Creation*, 13th lecture.

Through his first Master, through the Brotherhood with which he was associated, and by his own innermost nature, Steiner belongs to another school of occultism, I mean to the esoteric Christianity of the West, and most especially to the Rosicrucian initiation.

After mature consideration he resolved to join the Theosophical Society, of which he became a member in 1902. He did not, however, enter it as a pupil of the Eastern tradition, but as an initiate of Rosicrucian esotericism who gladly recognised the profound depth of the Hindu Wisdom and offered it a brotherly hand to make a magnetic link between the two. He understood that the two traditions were not meant to contend with each other, but to act in concert, with complete independence, and thus to work for the common good of civilisation. The Hindu tradition contains, in fact, the greatest treasure of occult science as regards cosmogony and the prehistoric periods of humanity, while the tradition of Christian and Western esotericism looks from its immeasurable height upon the far-off future and the final destinies of our race. For the past contains and prepares the future, as the future issues from the past and completes it.

Rudolf Steiner was assisted in his work by a powerful recruit and one of inestimable value in the propagandist work that he was about to undertake.

Mlle. Marie von Sivers, a Russian by birth, and of an unusually varied cosmopolitan education (she writes and speaks Russian, French, German, and English equally well), had herself also reached Theosophy by other roads, after long seeking for that truth which illumines all because it illumines the very depths of our own being. The extreme refinement of her aristocratic nature, at once modest and proud, her great and delicate sensitiveness, the extent and balance of her intelligence, her artistic and mental endowments, all made her wonderfully fitted for the part of mediator and apostle. The Oriental theosophy had attracted and delighted her without altogether convincing her. The lectures of Dr. Steiner gave her the light which convinces by casting its beams on all sides, as from a brilliantly glowing centre. Independent and free, she, like many Russians in good society, sought for some ideal work to which she could devote all her energies. She had found it. Dr. Steiner having been appointed General Secretary of the German Section of the Theosophical Society, Mlle. Marie von Sivers became his assistant. From that time, in spreading the work throughout Germany and the adjacent countries, she displayed a real genius for organisation, maintained with unwearied activity.

As for Rudolf Steiner, he had already given ample proof of his profound thought and eloquence. He knew himself, and he was master of himself. But such faith, such devotion, must have

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increased his energy a hundredfold, and given wings to his words. His writings on esoteric questions followed one another in rapid succession.

He gave lectures in Berlin, Leipzig, Cassel, Munich, Stuttgart, Vienna, Budapest, etc. All his books are of a high standard. He is equally skilled in the deduction of ideas in philosophical order, and in rigorous analysis of scientific facts. And when he so chooses, he can give a poetical form to his thought, in original and striking imagery. But his whole self is shown only by his presence and his speech, private or public. The characteristic of his eloquence is a singular force, always gentle in expression, resulting undoubtedly from perfect serenity of soul combined with wonderful clearness of mind. Added to this at times is an inner and mysterious vibration which makes itself felt by the listener from the very first words. Never a word that could shock or jar. From argument to argument, from analogy to analogy, he leads you on from the known to the unknown. Whether following up the comparative development of the earth and of man, according to occult tradition, through the Lemurian, Atlantean, Asiatic, and European periods; whether explaining the physiological and psychic constitution of man as he now is; whether enumerating the stages of Rosicrucian initiation, or commenting on the Gospel of St. John and the Apocalypse, or applying his root-ideas to mythology, history, and literature, that which dominates and guides his discourse is ever this power of synthesis, which co-ordinates facts under one ruling idea and gathers them together in one harmonious vision. And it is ever this inward and contagious fervour, this secret music of the soul, which is, as it were, a subtle melody in harmony with the Universal Soul.

Such, at least, is what I felt on first meeting him and listening to him two years ago. I could not better describe this undefinable feeling than by recalling the saying of a poet-friend to whom I was showing the portrait of the German theosophist. Standing before those deep and clear-seeing eyes, before that countenance, hollowed by inward struggles, moulded by a lofty spirit which has proved its balance on the heights and its calm in the depths, my friend exclaimed: "Behold a master of himself and of life!"

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