

The Light of the World

Lecture delivered in Rudolf Steiner House

Owen Barfield

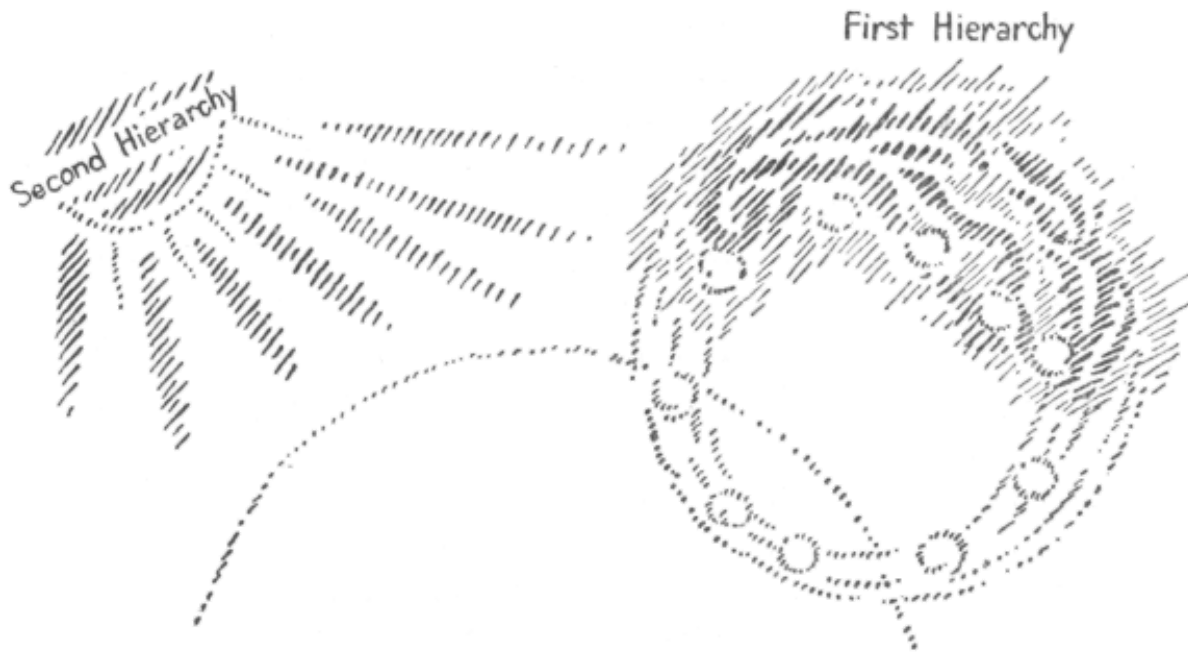
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WHEN man, in the exercise of his mechanical function, puts together a structure, he does it by adding one part to another, so that they lie side-by-side in space, and the whole is made up of all the parts added together. But when nature constructs, she follows a different principle—one which man also, when he is functioning not as mechanic but as artist or poet, must strive to follow.

In an organic structure it will be found that the parts interpenetrate and, as it were, express each other in a characteristic way, and that often a single part will seem at the same time to be the whole, or to be potentially the whole. And this is the structural principle which, at all levels from the highest to the lowest, Anthroposophy reveals to us as present in the universe itself.

We know, for instance, that the substance even of the physical world consists primarily, not of some extrapolated system of atoms or nuclei or quanta or probabilities, but of a vast number of spiritual beings and the relations between them. And this is equally true of the inner world of consciousness.



Anthroposophy adopts the Dionysian nomenclature and speaks of three Hierarchies of such Beings: of a First Hierarchy, consisting of Thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim; of a Second Hierarchy, consisting also of three different Orders or Ranks of Beings, for whom we usually employ the Greek names, Kyriotetes, Dynameis, Exusiai, and of the third and lowest Hierarchy of Archai, Archangeloi and Angeloi. And already, at this exalted level, we find it higher still at the level of the Divine Trinity itself; where, as is so precisely stated in the Athanasian Creed, "The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God." For, on the one hand, we think of the whole of the First or highest Hierarchy - that is, of the whole trinity of Orders which it contains - as being the Hierarchy in which the Father principle is especially manifested; of the Second Hierarchy as the Hierarchy of the Son and of the Third Hierarchy as the Hierarchy of the Holy Spirit. But, on the other hand, we also find Father, Son and Spirit manifest within each Hierarchy. For instance, within the First Hierarchy the Order of the Thrones carries the Will of the Father, while the Seraphim express the Son and the Cherubim the Holy Spirit. And so it is with the Second, and also with the Third Hierarchy, whose field of action is more the inner world of man's consciousness. Here it is the Archai, or Time-Spirits, who are the representatives of the Father.

One can put it that way; but one can also say that through the Archai the whole of the First Hierarchy enters into and works within the Third. Or rather that it may do so; for when it comes to the Third Hierarchy, a good deal depends on the activity and the free choices of man himself.

It follows also that in each Hierarchy you get one Order of Beings which not only expresses a Person of the Trinity, but expresses it in a special emphasized way. The Thrones are not only Father-Beings, but are Father-Beings within the Hierarchy of the

Father. So also, the Exusiai express the Son within the Hierarchy of the Son; and the Angels the Spirit within the Hierarchy of the Spirit.

If we now descend, from this brief glimpse at the structure of the Spiritual World itself, to man as he lives on earth, we find the like hierarchical, or organic, relation between the four principles of which he is composed- and one which needs the like mobility of thought or imagination for its comprehension. We speak of man as consisting of the four principles, Physical, Etheric, Astral and Ego. And here, too, we find that we not only have these four principles, as it were, primarily and in their own right; but also, if we confine our attention to only one of them, we shall find all four in a secondary way, manifested, reflected, aspected- how you will- in that one. In the physical body, for instance, we find the Ego principle represented - where? In the blood. And in the same way we detect the astral, the etheric and the physical as present in a special way in the nerves and senses, in the glandular system, and in the bones.



And so it is with the Etheric. Here I say "Etheric" rather than "Etheric Body", because, although man certainly has an etheric body, yet this body is not insulated from the rest of the etheric - and elemental - world in the same way that the physical body is from the physical world around it. In the Four Ethers of which Rudolf Steiner has said so much, we find again the four principles of which man is composed. We find physical, etheric, astral and ego in the Warmth Ether, the Light Ether, the Chemical or Sound Ether and the Life Ether respectively.

Here again, in the case of the Light Ether, we get that special emphasis of the principle within its own principle. Light Ether is the etheric in the etheric. Without going into the question how far it is possible to call any part of light "physical", I suppose, then, we are not far astray, if we think of this light from the sun that comes flooding in on us through our eyes, when we wake in the morning, as a sort of gateway through which our consciousness can enter into an experience of the etheric world - if we think of light as, shall I say, the etheric par excellence. And that is why I begin by considering our experience of light from this point of view, by considering our experience of the etheric cosmos.

We must, however, distinguish experience of the etheric from ideas we may form about the etheric before we have any experience. These ideas are likely to be - in my case they certainly were - not truly ideas about the etheric at all, but only ideas about the effects of the etheric in the physical. I well remember reading about the etheric body in Rudolf Steiner's book *Theosophy*, and getting from there the idea of the "formative forces" of which it is composed, and which keep the living physical bodies of plants and animals and men from collapsing like dead bodies. I thought of growing plants and, insensibly, there formed itself in my mind the picture of a kind of swelling, an expanding or inflating force - something like what happens when you blow up a bicycle tyre!

This really remained with me for years, and I was often much troubled by various allusions to the etheric in other contexts - lectures and so forth - which did not seem to square with it. Particularly, when I was told that the etheric forces work inward from the periphery. This seemed to suggest that my previous imagination contained the opposite of the truth, and that I ought really to be thinking, not of expansion from within, but rather a kind of suction from without. But of course that was no nearer the truth; because I was really thinking all the time, not of etheric forces but of physical forces.

It is indeed very difficult for minds - trained, as ours have mostly been, to assume that there is nothing between a physical force, at one extreme, and an abstract idea at the other- to learn to imagine, or to realize in experience, something which is a force, and yet not a physical force; something whose influence is inward from the periphery, not outward from the center; and yet which works upon that center expansively and not contractingly. But when one has overcome this obstacle, at least in some degree; when one has begun, in some dim way, to realize the etheric as etheric, then one begins to move forward into a kind of new and more intimate relationship with the world of plants. One begins, for instance, to feel, like a sort of tenderness in one's own heart, the infinite delicacy and tenderness that hovers about the growing point commonest weed. And at the same time or it may well be later -



it comes about that one will begin to feel a new, and again an intimate, relation with the light itself. One begins to perceive, or rather to feel, that the light itself- this light from the sun that comes to us through the senses - is etheric and that the etheric is a kind of light.

And this is a very deeply moving experience. Much deeper than mere observation. It goes to the roots of one's being, like the breath of life itself. One will begin to feel that the light is not only outside in space, but also within oneself. Indeed there are sure to be occasions when, for brief periods, one is aware, not only of seeing or feeling the light, but also of breathing it. Breathing it in and out, but especially in.

Only a much more intimate kind of breathing so that one will feel –at times that one is in the light, not only as our bodies are in water when they swim, not only as they are in the air we breathe, but rather as we speak, in that significant English idiom, of people being in love. If one had to find a single word in which to sum up the more subjective aspect experience I am speaking of, there is only one word that could be used and that is - joy. The sort of joy that we see made manifest in the sunlight dancing on the water. Deep draughts of pure joy, which obliterate, while they last all anxiety, all sorrow, all considerations of karma, and even all memory of such things. A joy so uplifting and, if I may use the word, so thoroughgoing, that however short a time it lasts, it will leave some enduring effects behind it. It may indeed somewhat affect the whole personality - with reverberations even into the sphere of physical health.

It may bring a new and more intimate contact with the forces of growth and adolescence in us, so that we find ourselves developing a new strength to support our burdens, and a new energy for devising our tasks and carrying them through. In a word, it may lead to something which could perhaps be described, without altogether overstating it as - Rejuvenation.



Let us suppose that, with the effects of this new and joyous light of perception in us, we choose to turn our attention to some of the great writings past; it may be to one or more of the Mystics - or it may be to the New Testament itself. What sort of experience shall we have? We shall have read Rudolf Steiner's description, in the Cassel lectures on the Gospel of St. John, of how, when the blood flowed from the Cross on Golgotha, it was much more than a merely physical event. How there was then a change in the aura of the Earth itself, so that, from being a mere planet, a mere receiver of light from the Sun, it began itself to emit light. "Earth began to glow," he says, "first astrally and visible only to the seer, but in future ages the astral light will become physical light and the earth will be a luminous body - a Sun-body". And now we may well feel that something has happened, like the cracking of the hard rind of a seed by the new life stirring within it; as if a stone had been rolled away, not only from the tomb of our own sense-bound thinking, but from the whole historical development of Christianity. And we shall feel a sort of astonishment, when we reflect on the sombre and gloomy thing which has been made of Christianity - perhaps by the Protestant confession as a whole, but certainly by all manner of narrow, evangelical sects, which have sprung up in the West in the last two or three centuries. We shall feel this astonishment, when we read, for instance, in St. John's Gospel, certain utterances of the Son of Man, such as: "I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly," or: "These words have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." Above all, we may feel that we now understand in a new and triumphant way those solemn words of the Christ: "I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD".

Those five pregnant words "the light of the world" were uttered by Christ Jesus on three occasions, two of them recorded in St. John and one in St. Matthew. Rudolf Steiner often pointed out that the Gospels were not composed or arranged in any haphazard way. If we wish to deepen our understanding of any particular event or utterance, we must always also observe exactly whereabouts in the narrative it is recorded: what came before and what followed after.

The Eighth Chapter of St. John's Gospel opens with the coming of Christ to the Temple in the early morning - after the Feast of Tabernacles, which was celebrated with lighted candles. It describes how, while He was teaching the multitude, the Pharisees brought to Him a woman who had just been taken in adultery - "in the very act", as her accusers eagerly emphasized. The narrative of this encounter is too often quoted to need repeating here. At the moment I only want to draw attention to the fact that, directly after this incident has been described - immediately after Jesus' final words to the woman (those words which are quoted rather less often than the others): "Go, and sin no more" - in the very next verse the tremendous phrase occurs:

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life".

Now in the ensuing dispute with the Pharisees the Christ alludes very frequently to the Father. He refers, for instance, all moral judgments to the Father:

"I judge no man. And yet, if I judge, my judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me".

And He elaborates this argument in what at first sight seems a strange -even a far-fetched way. According to the Mosaic Law, the testimony of two witnesses is true; therefore His, the Christ's, judgment is true - it is true because it is the judgment, not of one, but of two- of Himself and the Father.

If we bear these words in mind, and the many, many other passages in St. John's Gospel where the Christ continually distinguishes Himself from the Father, refers all power and authority to the Father, emphasizes His obedience to the Father, as to one distinct from Himself; and if we set beside them other very different utterances such as "I and the Father are one", or His answer in Chapter 14, to Philip, when Philip says to Him, "Lord, show us the Father!" and if we meditate much and deeply upon them, we may hope to approach a little nearer to one of the great mysteries which St. John's Gospel seeks to reveal to us. The other mystery is the mystery of light and the two are most intimately connected. That is why, before I return to the light, I want to say a little more about the Father-being, as we read of Him in St. John's Gospel.

I have said that there were many, many other passages; and indeed the words "the Father" recur so frequently throughout the Gospel that they positively seem to ring through its pages, like the note of a gong struck over and over again and coming clear upon our ears through all the other sounds. In the early part of the gospel Jesus speaks more of His having come down from the Father, having been sent by the Father, doing the works of the Father, and so forth. Towards the end, however, He begins to speak of going to the Father; and it is then that His disciples fail to understand Him.

Rudolf Steiner has spoken of this failure and has pointed out that they failed to understand that, when the Christ spoke of the Father, He was really speaking of what? Of death. When He said: "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world", it was really as if He said: "I came forth from death, that is from death in its true form, from the Life-Father". Only afterwards did it flash upon His disciples "that the world, as it surrounds them, is the outer expression of the Father and that the most significant feature in the outer world, its greatest maya or illusion, is equally the expression of the Father; that death is the name of the Father."

These are startling words; but I believe there is a road along which we can try to penetrate somewhat into their meaning. The ordinary conscious experience of a living being, that is, of a being in this world of maya, always has two sides to it, an inner and an outer. No matter what it may be of which I am conscious whether it is of houses and trees, or whether it is only of memories, or whether it is of the light itself, the physical or etheric light, there is always the duality, the subjective-objective duality, which is signified by the word "of". There is, on the outer side, that of which I am conscious, and, on the inner side, that in me which is conscious. I can never at any moment be conscious of that innermost in me which is actually "doing the business of being conscious". If I say I am conscious of it, I am deceiving myself - for I necessarily presuppose a yet more inner innermost, namely the "I" which is saying so. We get, in fact, what the philosophers call "an infinite regress".

But where the philosophers speak of an infinite regress, we speak of astral and ego; of the divine Hierarchies; and of the Father in us. For we assume that, besides the ordinary experience of human beings today, a different kind of experience is possible. We think that the part of us which is conscious as distinct from the parts of which we are conscious - is not just a sort of phantom subject of the grammatical sentence "I am conscious of...", but a Being in a world of Beings. And it is that world which we call the astral world, and, at a further stage, the spiritual world. Thus, the difficulty still remains; but it has ceased to be merely logical and has become awful. For it follows from what I have said, that to penetrate into the astral is to turn what by its very nature is an inner - what for ordinary experience is indeed inwardness itself - into an outer; into something like an environment. It involves - to use a very crude and perhaps rather offensive expression - a sort of turning inside out.

Now those who have read much of what Rudolf Steiner has written and spoken about man's life between death and a new birth, will know that it is precisely in such terms that he often describes the experience of the dead. He says that, whereas on earth we feel ourselves as looking out from a centre to a periphery, after death it is the other way. We feel the periphery as ourselves, and we look inwards to a center. It is the center which is now the "environment". This is very nearly unimaginable; and it is unimaginable, because it is the experience, not of the living but of the dead.

This break between the experience characteristic of the living and the experience characteristic of the dead- with the abruptness, the sharpness, the bitterness which it involves - does not lie between the physical and the etheric. It lies between the etheric and the astral. Physical and etheric are, both together, our outer world. Astral and ego are the inner.

If, therefore, a man who had penetrated to some extent into the etheric world, that soundless realm of interweaving, ever-changing forms - a world of joyous light, but a soundless world (and a colorless one) - wished to go further and penetrate into the realm where the Divine Word is not only seen, but also heard - namely, into the astral world - he would have to do -what? He would first have to die! Either he would have to die in the ordinary physical sense, or he would have to go through an experience very near to death, on the way of initiation. In one way or another he would have to take the great leap in the dark. He would have to cross the Threshold.

It is important to realize this. Not that penetration to etheric vision or experience is unimportant. On the contrary it represents, in our age above all, a real victory over Ahriman and, as such, is a matter for unqualified rejoicing. It may well be that the whole future of Science depends on it. But it is also very important to realize its limitation. Because, if things should have happened in the order I have been supposing (and it is by no means inevitable that they should); if we have first acquired, or perhaps have been granted by that "natural clairvoyance" which Rudolf Steiner foretold for many in the second half of this century, some measure of etheric vision, and if we then seek to progress beyond it, without making this abrupt break, this reversal of our whole attitude to life, we shall merely deceive ourselves. We shall never actually know the astral world. We shall at best know the effects of the astral in the etheric - that is, the Chemical or Sound Ether; just as we may formerly have recognized the effects of the etheric in the physical, without really knowing the etheric itself; that is, without actually experiencing it in our own etheric hearts - or glands.

Now this duality I have been speaking of, this awful contrast between an inner and an outer world, besides concealing the mystery of the Father, and of death - has very much to do with the mystery of light and the mystery of the sun. For it was through the sun that it was gradually brought about. Read the first few lectures of the other Course on the Gospel of St. John, and you will realize how the opening words: "In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... In it was life and the life was

the light of men" - take us back to the remote past, before the separation of the sun from the earth, before "Lemuria". There was then only what, from our point of view, if we could be suddenly be transported back into it, we should feel to be an inner" world; and the "life", which was in the Word, was not the organic, physical and etheric, life, which we contemplate as life today (contemplate rather than experience) - but the "life which we only know as death, or (to use Rudolf Steiner's phrase which I recently quoted) "the Life-Father".

And when light first began to shine forth as a manifestation of this life, this spirit-life, it was not the outer sunlight we know. That is why the Book of Genesis records the creation of light as having taken place before the creation of the sun and moon - which, if it is taken superficially - is nonsense.

The Lectures last referred to contain a description of how light, as we see it, only began long after the separation of the Sun, when the sunlight, as an outer phenomenon, began to be dimly perceived by man through the fogs of Atlantis. This, then, was how the inner first became outer; how the life became the light of men. This was also the beginning of sense-perception in anything like the mode of today. But even then, it was not until a long time after this that the perceptions of the senses, and that contrast between outer and inner which they mediate, grew sharp and clear, as they are now. Elsewhere Dr. Steiner has described how, in the long course of our own Post Atlantean cycle of ages, man's experience of the sun has undergone further changes. First, as we have seen, it was changed from an inner experience to an experience received through the senses. But since then it has gradually altered from a direct experience of the Divine in sense-perception into an experience of mere sense-perception. The Ancient Persians, he said, beheld the sun as the divine Bearer of light; the Ancient Egyptians as the divine Bearer of life; the Greeks received the sun - I say the sun, but in their case it was rather the whole surrounding sphere of the sun-filled ether - as a soul experience; they felt it as the divine Bearer of love. That is, of course, of that aphrodisian love, which is the potency of organic life on its way through the soul. The Greeks, he said, felt the sun as the divine Bearer of Eros. It has been left for the man of our time to feel it as the physical begetter of physical, organic life.

Now let us turn to the second occasion in St. John's Gospel, where those words "The light of the world" occur. It is at the beginning of the Ninth Chapter. Jesus sees the man who was born blind. His disciples ask Him whether this is a retribution for the man's own sins or the sins of his parents, and Jesus answers: "Neither - it was in order that the works of God should be made manifest in him". And now, once more there come those five brief amazing words. For He continues: "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world". And then He makes clay by mixing His spittle with the earth and anoints the blind man's eyes with the clay; and He tells him to go and wash in the Pool of Siloam; and the man goes and washes, and thereupon his sight is restored.

I cannot go fully into the account of this miracle; but anyone who studies it carefully - with the events and utterances which follow it - will notice several things. He will notice, for instance, that the first words which the blind man himself is recorded as saying after he is healed are the words "I am". He will observe that the writer goes out of his way to translate the Hebrew name SILOAM which he says means "sent forth" it was clearly a spring of water sent forth from the earth; and he will mark the Christ's words to the Pharisees, when they are disputing with Him afterwards about the miracle:

"For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind".

And then he will perhaps ask himself: What did the Christ really mean by those words: "That the works of God should be made manifest in him"? Remembering that one of the first "works of God" was the creation of light; remembering that *krima*, the word used for the English "judgment" has rather more the meaning of "distinguishing" or "discriminating" than of condemning. I think myself that both the miracle itself and the Evangelist's account of it are meant, with the words which follow, above all to emphasize the distinction between the outer light of the world and the inner: between the outer light from the sun and the inner light, which is sent forth from a source or spring within man itself, as it was sent forth in the beginning from the Father - who also spoke the words I AM, and, in doing so, revealed His holiest name.

I suppose the real question is, how seriously one intends to take these things. Only, our truest and inmost intentions are not always the ones that are best known to us. It may even happen that we first learn of our own intentions, not from within, but from without - from the things which happen to us. For light is not the only thing which has been mysteriously externalized -changed from subject into object. If we really accept the doctrine of Karma, we must also believe that the things which happen to us, apparently by accident, are not just accidents - are not even really external to us - but are actually a part of us, in something the same way that the visiting insects are part of the blossom they fertilize. And this belief may become rather more than a belief: it may begin to be realized as a positive experience, precisely then, when that other experience which contains the bitterness of death - the experience of the Threshold - I will not say, approaches us, but at least comes into view on the horizon. And this intimate relation between the inner life and the outer event is something which we shall find we can decidedly foster and cherish by meditation.

There are today hundreds of thousands - perhaps I should say millions of people all over the world, to whom things are happening, which are very, very bitter. I am not thinking only of the violence and physical privation, which are as yet outside the experience of most of us here. There are other ways in which the consciousness soul has to meet the assaults of the world. It is, for instance, within my knowledge that there are people within this Movement who feel that they have just about reached the end of their

tether; who really do not know which way to turn; to whom life appears to be one long series of seemingly meaningless frustrations; people for whom, in their inmost souls - or what they as yet feel to be such - life really does, in one way or another, wear the mask of something like a living death. To such people it is not the province of a lecturer, and I am not qualified, to speak emotional words of comfort in tribulation. I do, however, feel impelled to quote one short, dry -perhaps even harsh- sentence of Rudolf Steiner's. It is this: "It is an indispensable condition of initiation that we should not wish things were otherwise". It is a short sentence, but it will bear long reflection.

I do not mean, by quoting it, to encourage anyone who feels despair to infer from that that he is a very important person, for whom initiation is only just around the corner. But all tribulation involves a kind of dying; and what matters is, not whether the next one, or the next three or four or five, of our many deaths is to be a physical death or an initiation death experienced in the body - but the inner attitude we gradually learn to adopt towards death. Christ, in accomplishing the Mystery of Golgotha, opened the way of initiation to all who truly seek Him. Physical death also is a crossing of the threshold, if we are prepared for it; and indeed we cross it every night when we go to sleep. And yet it depends on our attitude to it, on the strength we have, or have not, developed, whether we really do cross it, or whether we merely- sleep.

In the old conflict between those who represent Christianity as a religion of sorrow and gloom, which tells us only that this world is a Vale of Tears, and that it is absolutely necessary to be miserable now, because that is the only way of being happy later on - and those who represent it as being primarily a religion of comfort and joy - my own sympathies are all with the latter. But it has to be admitted that there are a good many passages in the Gospels which it is pretty difficult for us to get round. Take, for instance, the parable of Dives and Lazarus. It ends with Dives in Hell and Lazarus in Heaven. Yet it is nowhere even hinted that Lazarus was in any way a better, or a more loving, man than Dives - only, as Abraham expressly states, that he was more wretched. Or take the Beatitudes, as we find them recorded in St. Matthew and St. Luke. The overall impression is pretty uncompromising. Blessed are they that mourn! Blessed are ye that hunger now ... Blessed are ye when men shall hate you... Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh! And so on, up to the final climax of the terrible Ninth Beatitude: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for My sake: for great is your reward in Heaven!".

What are we to do with these very plain words? Are we just to pretend they are not there? To ignore them, and select others which we like better? Let us rather reflect that it is immediately after these very Beatitudes, as they are given in St. Matthew, that we come upon the Third of the three utterances of the Christ concerning the Light of the World. And then perhaps we shall understand to whom, and in what crisis, they are addressed.

Firstly, let me briefly recall the other two. The first followed immediately after the incident of the accused woman. She had just committed adultery. In her soul, therefore, she knew something - and, at that time, in Palestine, there must certainly have been among the bystanders many Hellenizing Jews, who knew something - of the power of the Eros content of the joy-bringing light. And here it is necessary to pause for a moment and ask a question which, in our particular phase of society, has become rather uncomfortably esoteric. Why is adultery prohibited by the Seventh Commandment? For the Decalogue is not, as the man of our time has been adroitly diverted into believing, an accidentally preserved list of primitive tribal taboos. It is, on the contrary, the framework, the scantlings - rather the blueprint - for man's own voluntary co-operation with the First, Second and Third Hierarchies in their age-long labor of constructing a human Ego out of divine materials.

When we commit adultery, in an effort to snatch the glory of the Eros-bearing light for ourselves, we surrender the conscious ego, which normally controls our actions, to the unconscious Father-forces of procreation in the physical body. We relapse, as it were, into the First Hierarchy, rather as -according to Solovyev - the individual animal rejoins the group-soul in the act of copulation. When we consummate a marriage - I mean a true marriage- we make indeed the same surrender; but now the Father mitigates and balances the surrender - humanizes it, if you prefer by - tentatively asserting His more recent sovereignty in the astral and ego organization - in the conscious ego itself; whether, as at first, from Sinai with thunder and the threat of savage penalties; or whether, as now, from His throne in the free will of each individual who determines, and in course of time effects, that the mutual consequence of the act shall be at least life-long. Through the First Hierarchy the Father reigns in the outer world, which includes our own physical bodies and their processes. Through the Time-spirits, who are His representatives in the Third Hierarchy, He will reign in the inner world of man's consciousness. Therefore these Time-spirits - the Archai - are also called Spirits of Personality.

In placing immediately after this incident the naming of Himself by the Christ as the light of the world, it is clear to me that the Evangelist* intended to underline the distinction between the false light of the world and the true. He is indicating that, for Ego-men, the way to the Father is not the backward way through Eros and orgasm, but the journey on, which leads through death. In recording it again, during the healing of the man born blind, we have seen that he brought out the contrast between the outer light and the inner. The third of the three occasions on which these words occur - this time in the Gospel of St. Matthew - is during the Sermon on the Mount, immediately after the Beatitudes. But this time the sensing is different. This time Jesus is no longer addressing the multitude. He is alone with His own - with His disciples, who need no such instruction in discrimination. They have been "so long time with Him", as He once reminded Philip, and have so often seen the true Light of the world - the light from the source within - shining from His countenance, that they need no education in distinguishing that Light from any other light. Instead, therefore, He first prepares them by endeavouring to build

up in them, through those uncompromising Beatitudes, the kind of attitude to the deathly bitterness of tribulation, which I have already mentioned- the attitude which can detach itself from strong feelings and treat them as a means to an end; which does not wish disaster away; which can even accept it as a blessing. And then, after He has prepared them in this way, He speaks the Five Words.

But this time He speaks them a little differently. This time He does not say "I am the light of the world." This time He makes the terrifying, or the sublimely exalting, revelation. This time He says "Ye are the light of the world." And again "Ye are the salt of the earth!" And immediately afterwards He instructs them in the Our Father, the Lord's Prayer - the prayer which - except, perhaps, for one half-sentence - He could Himself join them in saying.

What did he mean by such words? He, who also said: "The Kingdom of God is within you". He, who also said: "The Father in Me, and I in you?" The "salt" of the earth is its essence, its true being; and it is this essence, which in future is to be the light of the cosmos gradually taking the place of the sun. When, therefore, He told His disciples that they were the light of the world, He was, in effect, saying to them: Once the Word was spoken by the Father, and the Word was the source of the true, the Father-Life, and the Life was the source of Light. And henceforth that Light, that Life, that Word and that Father are in you! "The Father in Me, and I in you!"

And what is He saying to us? He is saying the same thing; but He is also saying: The change in the earth's aura, which took place at the time of Golgotha, depends, if it is to grow and brighten, or even if it is to continue at all, on a change in man's aura. It depends on whether there will be enough souls of men struggling somehow on towards a time when they will not merely enjoy the light of the world, but will actually be it.

There are many of Rudolf Steiner's writings, which will take us on from here, and which will carry our thoughts into that astral region, where the light is experienced from within. We may take, for instance, the four printed Lectures, Mysteries of the East and of Christianity, particularly the description of the Sun at Midnight, and the account there given of the soul at night, looking down upon its own etheric and physical bodies and feeling itself as the sun which is warming and illumining them. Or The Inner Nature of Man and Life Between Death and Rebirth; where the emphasis is rather on the relationship which it is possible for us to have with the dead, precisely in that inner world. Or one may seek to study the relationship of this astral light to speech. Although we do not yet shine from within, we do already speak the word from within ourselves; and if we could really follow language back to its source, back to what is called the "Lost Word", we should come also to the source of light.

If, after penetrating to the source of light and uniting ourselves with it, we then return, and open our eyes, like the man born blind, to the outer etheric light, then above all is there a true rejoicing in the light. For I do well to rejoice in the etheric light, if I am so related to it as to be aware all the time that "I", that is, the Father in me, am the true

source of it; and not the blazing sun out there in space, which is now no more than a hollow reflector. When we absorb the light from without, we absorb also the fallen Bearer of the Light. We take Lucifer into our souls, and he gives us his strength and his enthusiasm, in exchange for a seat on the Father's throne in us. When we ourselves go out into the light from within the light - that is, from beneath the Father's throne in us - then, too, Lucifer gives us his strength and his joy; but now it is as a free gift, as a thank-offering for his redemption. And just as he brought Eros to the Greeks, so he brings us Agape - namely, the love whose well-spring is rather compassion, but whose intensity is desire. And, with that, he brings also -not so much that rejuvenation, of which mention was made earlier, but rather something, which is very like rejuvenation, but also very unlike it - the first, faint beginnings of something which could more properly be described as - resurrection. All this he can do, because he himself has fulfilled, in us, his old longing to rise again as the Holy Spirit.

The source of the light cannot experience the light objectively. It is the light. That is why, to one on the very verge, the very threshold, of union with it, the true spiritual world - the Supreme Identity, the Inwardness itself -looks, not like light, but like a darkness and a death. This is also the secret of the link between the many references to the light in St. John's Gospel and the still more numerous references to the Father. For the Father is the source. Indeed, that is what we mean by calling Him Father.

And in those references we can find, if we seek it, a sure touchstone for detecting the presence of Lucifer, there, where he has his last, and perhaps his best chance for concealing it from us. That is, when he chooses to hide himself, like a maggot in an apple, in the very core of the high impulse of Johannine Christianity. Seated on the Father's throne in us, Lucifer will glibly and readily say: "I and the Father are one," hoping thereby to deceive us into mistaking him for the Christ. For those are the very words of the Christ. But Lucifer will never say the other thing. Lucifer will never say - as the true Christ said over and over again, according to the testimony of St. John: "I and the Father are two". Because his pride will not allow it; and because in any case he prefers to keep mum about the Father.

Rudolf Steiner often spoke of the time, from about 1930 onward, as a period in which the faculty of etheric vision would become more and more widespread. He pointed also to the middle of this century as a time in which there would be "violent breakings in of the new" from many directions. Perhaps therefore, just at this juncture in the life of the Twentieth Century and of this Movement, it may not be unimportant that we should come to distinguish more and more clearly between the outer light and the inner; between the etheric light and the astral light; between the conquest of Ahriman and the redemption of Lucifer; between the light in and for itself and the Source of the light in the Alpha and Omega, in the Word of the Father.

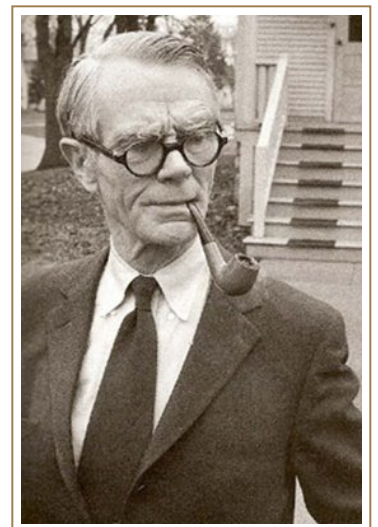
* I mean, of course - as anyone without clairvoyant knowledge must mean - actual compiler or compilers of the gospel as we have it in the Canon. It was Rudolf Steiner who first convinced me that the gospels yield their deepest secrets to those who ponder familiar text, rather than to those who lose themselves in the mazes of textual criticism; which, in the case of the *Pencope adulterae* (John VII, 53 -VIII, 11), has a long history stretching back to Jerome and Augustine.

From the Wiki:

Jerome reports that the pericope adulterae was to be found in its usual place in "many Greek and Latin manuscripts" in Rome and the Latin West in the late 4th Century. This is confirmed by some Latin Fathers of the 4th and 5th Centuries AD; including Ambrose, and Augustine. The latter claimed that the passage may have been improperly excluded from some manuscripts in order to avoid the impression that Christ had sanctioned adultery: "Certain persons of little faith, or rather enemies of the true faith, fearing, I suppose, lest their wives should be given impunity in sinning, removed from their manuscripts the Lord's act of forgiveness toward the adulteress, as if he who had said, Sin no more, had granted permission to sin."

About Owen Barfield

Owen Barfield (1898-1997) has been known as "the first and last **Inkling**." He had a profound influence on **C. S. Lewis** and, through his books *The Silver Trumpet* and *Poetic Diction* (dedicated to Lewis), an appreciable effect on **J. R. R. Tolkien**. Their contribution, and their conversations, persuaded both Tolkien and Lewis that myth and metaphor have always had a central place in language and literature. "The Inklings work... taken as a whole, has a significance that far outweighs any measure of popularity, amounting to a revitalisation of Christian intellectual and imaginative life."



Barfield became an **anthroposophist** after attending a lecture by Rudolf Steiner in 1924. He studied the work and philosophy of Rudolf Steiner throughout his life, translated some of his works, and had some of his own early essays published in anthroposophical publications. This part of Barfield's literary work includes the book *The Case for Anthroposophy* containing his Introduction to selected extracts from Steiner's *Riddles of the Soul*. Steiner is always a formative presence in Barfield's work, probably his major influence but Barfield's thought should not be considered merely derivative of Steiner's. Barfield expert G. B. Tennyson suggests that: "Barfield is to Steiner as Steiner was to Goethe", which is illuminating so long as it isn't taken as referring to relative stature. Barfield's writing was not derivative, it was

profoundly original, but he did not see himself as having moved beyond Steiner, as, in his opinion, Steiner had moved beyond Goethe. Barfield considered Steiner a much greater man in possession of a greater mind than Goethe, and of course he considered himself very small compared to both of them.

Source: <https://888spiritualscience.blogspot.com/2013/07/light-of-world-by-owen-barfield.html>



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