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676

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THE CONCURRENCE

This Week's Consideration of a Famous Opinion



¶ In his *Paradiso* Dante has described very well the rings of light encircling a point that "darted light so sharp, no lid, unclosing, may bear up against its keenness." This is the spiral symbol of the Hierarchies. Beatrice, his guide, explains what he has seen thus:



*In the first circles, they, whom thou beheld'st
Are Seraphim and Cherubim. Thus swift
Follow their hoops, in likeness to the point,
Near as they can, approaching; and they can
The more, the loftier their vision. Those
That round them fleet, gazing the Godhead next,
Are Thrones; in whom the first trine ends. And all
Are blessed, even as their sight descends
Deeper into the Truth, wherein rest is
For every mind. Thus happiness hath root
In seeing, not in loving, which of sight
Is aftergrowth. And of the seeing such
The meed, as unto each, in due degree,
Grace and good-will their measure have assign'd.
The other trine, that with still opening buds
In this eternal springtide blossom fair,
Fearless of bruising from the nightly ram,
Breathe up in warbled melodies threefold
Hosannas, blending ever; from the three,
Transmitted, hierarchy of gods, for aye
Rejoicing; Dominations first; next them,
Virtues; and Powers the third; the next to whom
Are Princedoms and Archangels, with glad round
To tread their festal ring; and last, the band
Angelical, disporting in their sphere.
All, as they circle in their orders, look
Aloft; and, downward, with such sway prevail,
That all with mutual impulse tend to God.*

—DANTE ALIGHIERI, 1265-1321

To the Members of the Esoteric Hierarchy, Greetings!

At this stage of your studies, it may be helpful for you to know that the idea of the Celestial Hierarchy, established in the Mystery Schools long before either the Jewish or Christian religions came into being, was adopted into both of them as an important addition to their religious teaching.

I hope that you will understand the purpose of these frequent references to the fact that the Christian religion adopted a great many ideas, as well as many religious and theological principles, and a great many ceremonial features from the Jewish religion and from the ancient religions which some people call heathen religions. Even those which the Christian church adopted from the Jewish religion were originally Oriental and had been adopted by the Jewish people, or the Israelites, during their contact with the Oriental schools of mysticism. So many persons think that when Jesus came into Palestine, preached and laid his foundation for his Divine mission and great work that he criticized and tore asunder all of the Jewish traditions, ceremonies, sacred beliefs, and practices. They think that because Jesus criticized a few of those Jewish ceremonies and teachings—especially those few which he believed many of the followers were adopting in a hypocritical or blind manner—that he cast the entire Jewish religion aside and started a new one entirely. This is not so, and a little thought upon the matter will make it plain.

The early Christian church, the early practices of the first Disciples, and their later practices as missionaries in foreign lands, radiated and continued to maintain many of the Jewish sacred practices because they were spiritually sound, true, and beneficial. And these things are still retained in the Christian ritual and ceremonial forms and in the Christian doctrines, dogmas, and creeds. The Jews had taken many of these things from the ancient mystery teachings, and the early founders of the Christian church, in their deliberations in the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries, adopted other ceremonial and doctrinal features from ancient Oriental religious schools simply because they believed them to be divinely revealed and divinely ordained. Among these things adopted is this doctrine of the three triads, the nine holy orders, and the Celestial Hierarchy.

For instance, the one point of this Hierarchy's representing a body of spiritual or holy beings who intercede for us and help us in our pleas to God and our prayers for holy and divine protection and blessings: In the Christian church today that system has been slightly modified, but we still have, not only in the Christian church but in the Jewish religion and some others, the idea of holy, divine, or angelic intercession. The doctrine of intercession was a very important one for a long period in many religions. Out of this doctrine grew the practice of making statues of



TWELFTH DEGREE

NUMBER TWENTY-THREE

PAGE TWO

various saints as well as making official saints of those persons who had been holy in their earthly life and who had manifested an angelic spirit. They were, therefore, considered to be angels in the making and worthy of being canonized as saints after their transition. All of these saints, including the original Disciples and the angels, were looked upon as intermediaries acting individually and also as a group in the interests of mankind and holding a spiritual position of communication between the earthly individual and God. By way of explanation, it was said that God had divinely revealed this plan and announced that each saint or holy person could be relied upon to intercede for man in connection with different special matters.

This point has always puzzled those who object to many features of the Roman Catholic and other ancient religions. It prompted the abandonment of such practices at the time of the Reformation and the establishment of the Protestant religion. This was due solely to the fact that such persons did not have a true mystical understanding of the Celestial Hierarchy and what was meant by intercession in a mystical and spiritual or esoteric sense. They saw it from a purely worldly viewpoint and so missed the real beauty, sacredness, and spirit of these things. In the mystical sense, it was considered that each of these saints, angels, archangels, or holy beings in the Celestial Hierarchy, would look after such events in the lives of the earthly people as appealed to him the most, or with which he was most familiar. Some apparently specialized in interceding in cases of illness; some in case of accidents; some in regard to warfare and peace; others in regard to the prosperity of a country, and still others in regard to the prosperity and happiness of the individual. For this reason, it soon became customary among the early Christians, as with some Jews and those of the Orient, to pray to these saints and angels for the things they needed, asking these holy beings to intercede for them with God. Those who were in need of health, or who prayed for someone else's health at a critical time, prayed to the saint or angel who they believed specialized in this, asking that saint or angel to intercede with God, bringing the plea to Him in order that a blessing or benediction might result.

This doctrine of intercession is a truly complicated one, and can be rightly understood only from a mystical point of view. From a purely earthly and churchly point of view, we might say that praying to God directly would be the better way. Persons who say this quote Jesus as teaching his disciples and others to pray to God direct. They say that this is all that is warranted by any of the holy scriptures. On the other hand, there are those who point to the fact that Jesus represented himself as an intermediary between man and God, and suggested that things could be asked for in his name. They point out that Jesus also said that he would intercede for the sinners who were upon the cross, intimating that he would assist somehow.



All of these viewpoints are based upon an interpretation of scriptural passages that are not literal but mystical because the interpreters read between the lines of what Jesus said, or God revealed, and claimed to have discovered the very esoteric and veiled scheme of God's way of working. Whether all of this is true or not, the fact remains that throughout the world large numbers of devout people of various religions still firmly believe in intercession. One need only travel through Europe to see that in all of the larger cathedrals, even those of modern construction, great space is allotted to the alcoves of the saints, which include not only the original twelve Disciples but many others. Prayers are offered constantly to these holy saints asking them to intercede in behalf of the petitioner. Many Christian churches and especially the Roman Catholic Church condone that practice and say it is not inconsistent with the Holy Bible.

In Dante's Divine Comedy and his other works, you will discover that Dante was not only a mystic and a Rosicrucian student, but that he was undoubtedly inspired by the Cosmic to write these works to picture the mystical side of the activities of the upper and the under worlds. I use these terms upper and under worlds because the Egyptians used them, and they became meaningful to the Orientals. According to them, in the early days the popular idea of the mystical principles taught in the mystery schools was that there were three worlds with which man became familiar and in which he had experiences. The first was the upper world, constituting the celestial life and spiritual realm; the second was the earth world or mundane world in which we have all of our earthly, physical experiences; and the third was the under world, or the Satanic world, a world of evil forces, suffering, punishment, and retribution.

From the more enlightened mystical and Rosicrucian viewpoint it cannot be assumed, however, that life is confined to our earth alone. We must contend that the Divine Consciousness will express itself in a vital force, a living entity wherever conditions favor a physical organism to retain it. Further, where sufficient time had elapsed for the emergence of a higher level of consciousness, there would be self-conscious beings equal to or exceeding man. The Earth is but one planet in one solar system. There are myriads of solar systems in our galaxy alone; and there are innumerable galaxies throughout the greater universe. The Divine principle would not be demeaned in any way by being manifest in many worlds. In fact, it would be further glorified.

According to this scheme (based upon a mystical understanding of man's experiences through evolution), man lives in the mundane world for the sake of experiences that will teach him lessons. Here he comes in contact with cross forces, cross influences, and vacillating, varying urges which constantly offer him the choice of selecting one thing or another. If he chooses wrongly, it counts against him as something for which he must make compensation; if he chooses rightly, it counts in his favor as something for which



he will be rewarded. If he deliberately and wilfully commits an error, not merely through poor judgment or decision, but through planning, and with evil intent, then he commits a sin, regardless of how serious or extensive that act may be, and he must make retribution and suffer some punishment. So, the mundane life is a school and a sort of laboratory. First, it is a school in which we learn lessons through our experiences, having the opportunity of receiving divine wisdom from above or evil wisdom from below. It is also a laboratory, because with this knowledge we may mix the principles together, burn out the evil and refine the good. We also have the opportunity to experiment and test this knowledge and see the blessings that come from the good and the suffering that comes from the evil. When it comes to receiving our ultimate rewards, blessings, and benedictions for the good we have done, we receive these through our experiences in the upper world or celestial, heavenly kingdom. When it comes to receiving our retributions and punishments and chastisements, we receive these through the lower world.

If at the close of a man's life, his balance sheet or list of merits and demerits shows that he has lived mostly an evil life and has done very little good, he must go into the under world for a while and there have his soul and body purged of this evil matter in the burning crucible. It was because the early alchemists, and even the earliest thinking men discovered that fire and water are the greatest agencies in dissolving matter or in purging and cleansing it of its undesirable elements, that the under world was symbolized by a fire in a crucible with clouds of steam rising, representing the moisture that assisted in the changing process. All of this later evolved into the idea of hell and hell-fire, which churches or religions adopted in their doctrines. On the other hand, the spiritual world became symbolized by those things which represented peace, harmony, and happiness, and for this reason the old idea of the Cosmic music or celestial music was used as a symbol. So the upper world representing the spiritual kingdom was symbolized as a place where there was much light and much beauty. This worldly existence then was symbolized by an admixture or combination of the principal elements of the other two worlds.

An interesting and logical idea grew out of the views regarding worldly existence, and next week I want to discuss it with you. In the meantime I trust you will continue to reread carefully these monographs and meditate on each paragraph. Perhaps some of you have already discovered by the results of your meditations why I have insisted upon this procedure. In fact, I have already had reports of unusual experiences which have come to those who have faithfully followed instructions.



May Peace Profound abide with each of you.

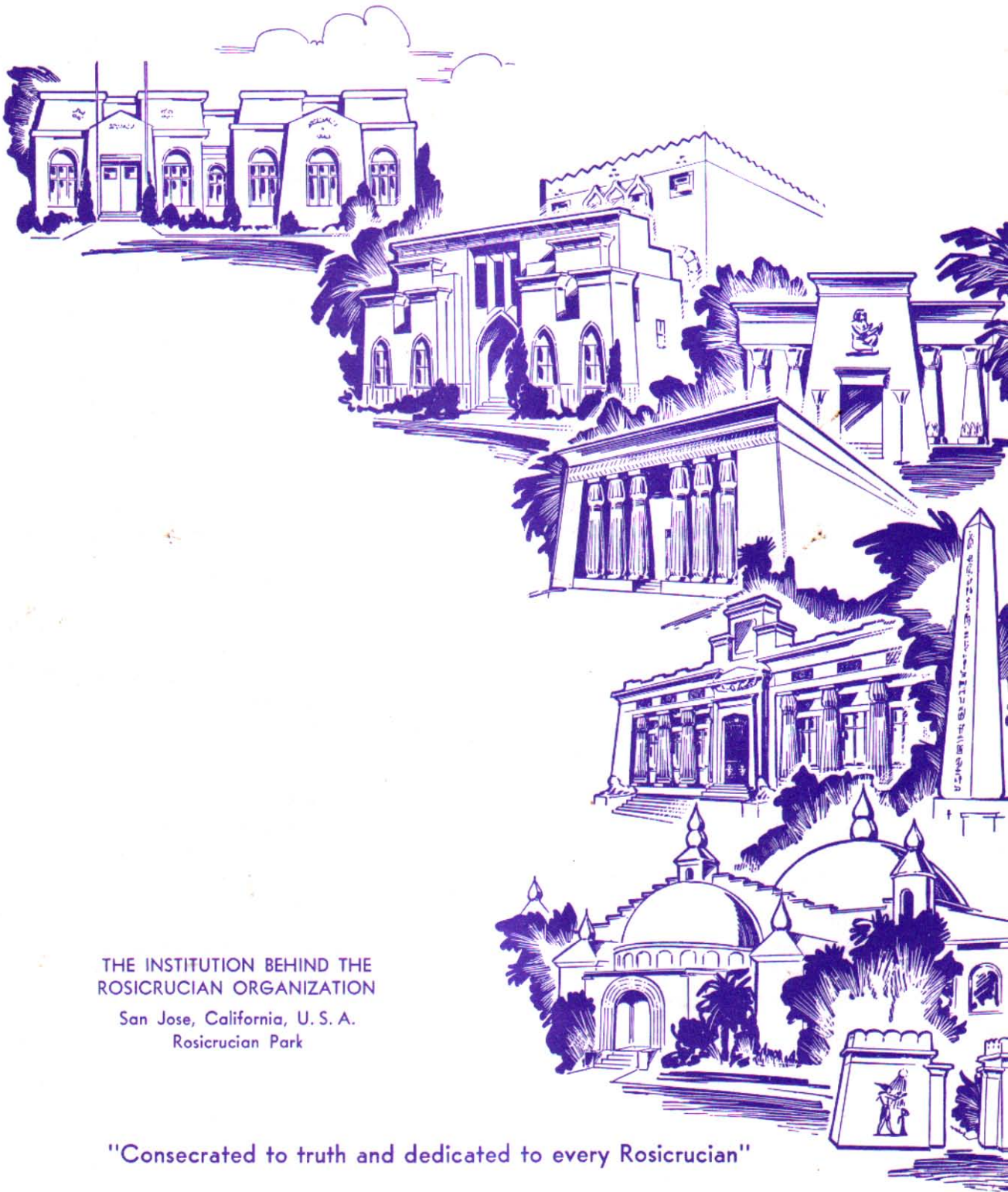
Fraternally, YOUR CLASS MASTER

Summary of This Monograph



Below is a summary of the important principles of this monograph. It contains the essential statements which you should not forget. After you have carefully read the complete monograph, try to recall as many as you can of the important points you read. Then read this summary and see if you have forgotten any. Also refer to this summary during the ensuing week to refresh your memory.

- ¶ The idea of the Celestial Hierarchy like so many long established fundamentals and ceremonies was adopted into the Christian church teachings from the mystery schools of the East.
- ¶ This Hierarchy represented a body of holy beings who intercede for us and help us in our prayers to God, and today in the Christian church, in the Jewish religion, and in some others, this doctrine of intercession is very important.
- ¶ The doctrine of intercession is complicated and can only be understood from a mystical point of view.
- ¶ The Egyptians, and later the mystery schools of the East, taught that there were three worlds: the *upper world*, or spiritual realm; the earthly or physical world; and the *under world*, or world of punishment and suffering. Dante pictured the *upper* and *under* worlds in his *Divine Comedy* and other works.
- ¶ A mystical understanding of evolution concurs with this ancient teaching, and we learn that this earthly existence is a school or laboratory, with the good we have done rewarded by experiences in the *upper world*; while our punishments for evil done are received through the *under world*.
- ¶ The *under world* was symbolized by fire in a crucible with clouds of steam rising; while the *upper world* was symbolized by those things which represented peace, harmony, and happiness, such as Cosmic music. A combination of the elements of the under and upper worlds symbolized this worldly existence.



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