



## A READER'S JOURNAL

**The Burning Bush** by Edward Reaugh Smith  
**Terms and Phrases Volume I**  
An Anthroposophical Commentary on the Bible

Published by The Anthroposophic Press in 1997  
Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2002

*There was a bush or briar, a very thorny plant, and very weak and supple . . . entirely enveloped . . . by the abundant flame, . . . it nevertheless remained whole without being consumed, like some impassible essence, and not as if it were itself the natural fuel for fire, but rather as if it were taking the fire for*

*its own fuel.*

— Philo in "On the Life of Moses, I"

In coming to terms with the author of this book, we must necessarily start at the central metaphor in the title, which is the "burning bush" of Moses. What is it that burns in each of us that takes the fire for its own fuel? It cannot be our body because our body is consumed by the fire, either external flames as in cremation after our life in this body, or internal, slow combustion during our life. Whatever *it* is, it must have a unique name. "I have a unique name," you might be thinking, but chances are there is someone in the world, maybe many, with the same name as you. But there is one name you have that only you can use in referring to yourself. That name is "I". When anyone else uses it, they can not use it to refer to you; only you may do that. "I" is the name that we give our individuality in English, that immortal spirit that burns within us, that lives imperishably in our body and departs from it still burning when our body has been turned into ashes. Like the burning bush, our "I" is not consumed, but rather takes the fire that it burns with as its own fuel, as Philo so eloquently puts it in the quotation above.

As a materialistic scientist I learned that all the fuels that we consume on the Earth come from the Sun if we trace them back far enough. Coal and other fossil fuels come from plants that eons ago drew their nourishment from the rays of the Sun. Rightly understood, all sources of energy are solar energy - the difference is the *extraction* and *delivery* systems for harnessing the energy from the Sun that varies with fossil, nuclear, hydroelectric, fuel cells, or other sources of energy. As a spiritual scientist I learned that all the spiritual fire in my "I" also comes from the Sun, or better said, comes from the spiritual Beings who created the Sun. The spiritual Beings who created me (and inhabit the Sun as we inhabit the Earth), created my Individuality, my "I am". All these phrases are synonyms for my "I", my "burning bush" that takes the fire of the spiritual world as its own fuel. My human being is comprised of four nested entities during this Earth phase of evolution: physical body, etheric body, astral body, and "I".

The "I" is a relatively new addition to humankind, gradually emerging into human awareness only in historical times, thus the "I" was very new to Moses in his time. Abraham was the first human to become aware of his "I" when he was called to sacrifice his son Isaac. As he lifted his hand with the dagger to take Isaac's life, his hand was stayed by a thought that came to him: "Take a lamb and sacrifice the lamb in place of Isaac." This thought was placed in his mind by his Guardian Angel and established Abraham as the human possessor of an "I am" that was to flow via his blood into his numerous descendants. The potential existed for each of his descendants to have a fully developed "I am" but mostly they depended on Abraham to be the key individual who made decisions for all of the tribe. They were content to be nestled "in the bosom of Abraham," a phrase that illustrates the location of the "I am" of the tribe in their leader. Beginning with Abraham, any outstanding individual, someone who showed their "I am" by making

original and important contributions to the tribe, was called a Prophet.

With this background, it is possible to understand what Steiner meant when he said, "The time of prophets is past." He was explaining that humankind has evolved in the time since Abraham such that, culminating in our time, each human has an individual "I am" fully as powerful as Abraham did in his time. A paraphrase of Steiner would be, "The time is here when everyone is fully a prophet as Abraham was." Like water to a fish is so ubiquitous that the fish does not understand the concept of water, so the concept of "I am" or "I" seems to us today without some contemplation or study. Like the fish lives and moves in water, we live and move in our "I am" - it is the burning bush that lives in us and lives off of the fire that would else seem to consume it. This is the central metaphor of *The Burning Bush*; let us now turn to the central metaphor of the Bible itself as the author lays it out.

The Bible's central metaphor is the parable or allegory of the Prodigal Son which in microcosm parallels the entire opus that is the Bible in macrocosm.

**[page 1] In both we see the theme of two sons, one of whom leaves home, loses the original inheritance, comes to self-knowledge, and returns home transformed.**

In addition, as the author points out, the parable parallels "the human being's own evolutionary journey, itself macrocosmic" — encompassing the time scope from the birth of the solar system to the vaporization of the Earth, "when suns shall rise and set no more ." Prodigal Son to Bible to Human Evolution is the threefold progression - from seventeen verses to the whole Bible to the whole scope of human life in a physical body - from the microcosmic to the macrocosmic. Rightly understood, the Bible is the story of human evolution from beginning to end, a process that we are in the approximate middle of as I pen these words. It is the story of human evolution that Edward Smith has embodied in the series of books called *Terms and Phrases*, of which *The Burning Bush* is volume 1.

In the content of *The Burning Bush* as it quotes from Steiner's works, I have encountered several startling new concepts, in spite of the 112 books of his I've read over the past eleven years. In addition, the author's manner of presentation and his sparkling insights as to the meaning of many of the familiar concepts warmed my heart as they enlightened me. I had attempted to imagine in recent years how one might present all the works of Steiner in a harmonious way to completely naive newcomers to his works. I had mulled over various designs and approaches, but here in "Burning Bush" just such an approach is presented and in full bloom. What the author does is to assemble key phrases from the Bible and comment on them at length. Thus the subtitle of this is *An Anthroposophical Commentary on the Bible*. Rightly understood, it is equally a Biblical commentary on Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy. The two fields of endeavor, the Bible and anthroposophy, ratify each other in a powerful way that adds credence to both fields.

How does one begin so mammoth an undertaking as to understand the many books of the Bible or the 900 plus books of Rudolf Steiner? I have a saying that "when learning something new, it's best to learn everything about it before you start" — that concisely expresses the "bootstrap paradox". Do you, dear Reader, know what a bootstrap is and why it is called the bootstrap paradox? It refers to trying to lift yourself off the ground by pulling upward on your own bootstraps. Like Baron Münchhausen did with his topknot - he pulled himself and his horse out of a deep stream to safety. Your computer does it every time you "boot" it up. Where do you think the "up" comes from? We could easily have said, "boot it on" but we don't because of the bootstrap paradox and its image of pulling up. Here is the bootstrap paradox (BP) described in simple computer terms:

**To start a computer working you need to load into it a program. In order to do that you first need to load a program loader. The program loader can then load programs to run your application. The program loader is a program. How can you get a program into the computer without a program already inside the computer to load it? BP! In the 1960s we had to fat-finger the bootstrap program into the front panels every time we powered on**

**our mini-computers. Then we could load the program loader and then applications. This process is all automated today using read-only memory (ROM) and hard drives on our present personal computers. ROM holds the bootstrap loader. The boot sector of the first hard drive holds the primitive program loader — which is why your computer will not boot up if that sector is destroyed by a virus or errant program.**

Edward Smith has taken on the daunting task of teaching the reader *everything* about Steiner's work in *The Burning Bush*(1), and has done a phenomenal job of condensing for the reader the vast substance of Steiner's work therein. He creates for the reader a picture of the entire panorama, which is essential before any part of it makes sense. That's why he said that a second reading will be required of some parts. The entire book is the program loader that allows you to load the first program of understanding, in a sense. The more times you read it, the more sense you make of what you have already read. I mention this so newcomers to Steiner's works will not be too easily derailed or too soon discouraged as they read this fine book.

On page 2 is a list of 34 "dramatic new understandings" that is most helpful for newcomers to the book to comprehend the path ahead - it acts as a map, a syllabus of where we're heading in our journey through our study of the Bible in light of Rudolf Steiner's spiritual science or anthroposophy. This list comprises only a sampling of the treasures that await industrious readers therein.

**[page 4] To repeat, this list is only a sampling. The revelations go far beyond these examples, but they will suffice for now. From the perspective of human development, a thousand years from now Rudolf Steiner will be looked upon as the evolutionary equivalent of Abraham.**

Abraham was the prodigal son leaving home and setting out into the world, and Rudolf Steiner was the prodigal son returning home, infused with the knowledge gained by humanity during the 4,000 year sojourn away from home. As the author points out, Abraham preceded the incarnation of Christ by as many years as Steiner succeeded it. And it is rightly understood that after Abraham led his people away from their spiritual home into the wilderness of materiality, the apogee of humankind's journey was Christ's deed on Golgotha, following which the return trip home began, culminating with Steiner's revelations of the entire nature of the journey and the reasons for it all.

Such grandiose predictions of Rudolf Steiner's place in history seem to beg for an explanation of why he remains a relatively unknown scholar of the early 20th Century. Here is a quick summary of the author's answers to this concern. One wonders that Steiner is known at all today after reading this summary.

**[page 5] His teachings do not fit neatly with ecclesiastical dogma. . . His works are so extensive and interrelated that great commitment of time and effort is necessary to comprehend them. . . . The world conditions were not conducive to the spread of a German's spiritual teachings beyond the borders of Europe . . . Not until 1965 were even small volume printings of any of his works available in English.**

My own path led me to Rudolf Steiner, then away from him, then back to him, then away, and I kept wondering why I even bothered reading him. Donna Franz ran a small bookstore out of her motel office on Pasadena Street in Metairie, Louisiana, and when I began studying metaphysics in 1976, I was directed to her place. Her process of ordering books to fill her shelves was this: if someone had her order a book for them, she would order two books and place one of them on her shelves. This was her clever way of bootstrapping her bookstore and keeping books that were in the subject range of her customers and potential customers. This meant that her shelves soon held books by a lot of writers in metaphysics, but only one or two obscure titles by Steiner. I bought a book in the early 1980s and started to read it a few years later to find out who this guy was. I finally put it back on my shelves in puzzlement. What in the world was he talking about? I had no idea. A few years later I bought another small Steiner book - again a similar response. And again. Sometime around 1990 I read an entire book. Reviewed it in a short one-page

review. Read another one. Interesting. Read another one. Still not sure what he's all about. Soon I had read about ten books and I was *still* wondering what's Steiner all about. In 1996 I joined an Internet list devoted to Steiner's works and I was quickly directed to his books. Seems that I had been reading transcribed lectures he gave to people who had already read his basic works. Oh! Soon I was reading his *Outline of Occult Science*, and I began to see that my curious persistence in coming back to Steiner was paying enormous dividends! In that book was the body of work that, even after reading ten books, I was unaware he had written. And it was exactly what I had been seeking. That was my path to Steiner — no wonder this marvelous scholar and prophet of our time has been mostly unknown to the world outside of anthroposophical circles, up until now.

What Edward Smith has done in this 800 page volume is to extract Steiner's insights on Christianity and relate them to the original passages in the Bible. This is a massive condensation and correlation effort. He has accumulated the essence of 6,000 lectures that Steiner gave in his lifetime and related the pertinent passages to key phrases in the Bible.

In addition, he has added his personal insights along the way. For example, he points out that the 17 verses of the Prodigal Son story is a metaphor for the entire evolution of humankind, but there is a single passage of 23 words spoken by Christ Jesus that accomplishes the same result, rightly understood. ["Rightly understood" is a favorite phrase of Steiner. It can be taken to mean, "understood in the light of all the insights I have written and spoken of." Edward Smith can be said to "rightly understand" Steiner's works.] The three bodies symbolized by the "three measures of flour" correspond to the physical, etheric, and astral bodies of the human being. They are the ABCs of understanding the human being. The physical body is like a spiritual pattern into which the minerals accumulate during this Earth Epoch, and a corpse provides the best example of what a mineral-physical body looks like: an inert, pure mineral form. The etheric body is the life body and the best example of a human with only a physical and etheric body present is a person sleeping or in a coma. The astral body is the sense or passion body and the best example of a human with only these three bodies present is a person who is awake — they are aware of their surroundings, but their "I" has not fully entered yet. Minerals have only a physical body. Plants have a physical and etheric body. Animals have all three: physical, etheric, and astral.

**[page 10] He [Christ Jesus] condenses the human journey from seventeen to a single verse in Mt 13,33, "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened."**

In my review of [Lewis Creek Lost and Found](#) by Kevin Dann, I wrote a poem *Ark of Ages* which has the following refrain:

*Ark of Ages, Cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in me*

It occurs to me just now that there is the theme of hiding again — the leaven was hidden in the three measures of flour. The ark of ages, my three bodies (physical, etheric, and astral), cleave or split open to accept or *hide* within themselves the leaven or "I" which eventually will lift me, my *resurrection body*, into the spiritual world. When baking a loaf, one lets the yeasting flour rise, and then performs a paradoxical action: one punches the risen loaf so that it falls flat, re-shapes the loaf, and lets it rise again. In this mundane process one can see a metaphor for the process of reincarnation. In the next passage the author sums up the whole process of reincarnation and karma in a nutshell.

**[page 10] The development of the higher human components requires many lifetimes on Earth. After death, the physical body dissolves into the mineral world, the etheric body into the etheric world, and, after a period of purification (sometimes described as "judgment," "burning," "refiner's fire" or terms of similar import), the astral body into the astral world. But an extract is saved from the etheric and astral bodies, the transformed fruit of the experiences of the immediate past life. This unites with the**

**immortal Ego. Together they become a "Seed" that now begins a sojourn in the world of spirit, where its spiritual elements will be built up. There, in accordance with the extract or fruit of the past life of the Ego, with the help of spiritual beings, creates an archetype of a new human being, the personality it can become in its next earthly life. Thus the destiny or karma of the next life is determined by the accumulated fruits of an Ego's past lives on Earth. And through its deeds on Earth, a human being can evolve more and more into a spiritual being. Because an individual's actions also have an outer effect on other human beings and on the life of the Earth, these deeds also contribute to the spiritual evolution of humanity as a whole.**

After several risings and deflatings of our leavened flour, we place it risen into the oven to be baked. At that point the physical body of the flour becomes hard and crusty, i.e., mineralized. The human being has undergone that same process, if we understand the import of Christ's metaphor of the three loaves.

**[page 17] The fourfold human of Earth evolution is composed of three bodies (physical, etheric or life, and astral or sense) plus an Ego. The physical body is not synonymous with the mineral body, for the latter is an attribute of the physical only during Earth evolution. A comprehension of this distinction is essential if one is to understand the physical body as the "resurrection body." . . . Human beings came first, but descended into mineral materiality last. Thus, the skeletons, fossils, and remains of the lower three kingdoms, in succession, demonstrate themselves to archaeology, whereas the skeletal remains of humanity are of but recent origin without any connecting link to its origin existing in mineral form.**

To understand the above passage is to ken the incredible scope of the insights of Rudolf Steiner as he overturns Darwinian evolution. He lifts the adamantine rock of scientific evolution for us and we can see the fossils of materialistic reductionism staring out at us from its bottom. The materialistic scientists can never see evidence that in the evolution of humanity it was human beings who came first because their very instruments of materiality, their external sensors, can never detect the existence of the non-mineral humans of our evolutionary origins.

Steiner revealed a process in [\*The Principles of Spiritual Economy\*](#) that goes like this: people only discuss things they don't know. When knowing stops, discussion begins. I would propose a similar principle about history: people only write down history when they no longer have the ability to remember it. This principle reveals the folly of the reductionistic presupposition that all prehistoric humans were too dumb to write.

**[page 22] So complete were the memories of ancient times that there was no need to write anything down. Only as this capacity faded did the necessity for writing arise around 3,000 B. C. But as the human etheric body drew ever more within the physical, thus losing memory and perception within the spiritual world, the intellect correspondingly grew, albeit still in a most primitive state. All the time, hardening was proceeding as the material world came more and more into the human being's focus and interest in the spiritual faded away.**

With all this discussion about the meaning of the Gospels, we are constantly encountering people who would like to make the life and deeds of Christ Jesus easy to understand. Contrast that philosophy with that of Steiner as the author recalls it:

**[page 29] Etched deeply in my mind are the words of Steiner, beyond my present retrieval, to the effect, "If we are to understand the most magnificent event in all creation, how can we expect it to be simple or demand less than the greatest effort that we can put forth."**

One of the most difficult stories in the Bible to comprehend is the Christmas story, rather the *two* Christmas stories in the two Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Why are there two different genealogies given

for Jesus? Why in one did the father Joseph receive the message from a dream and in the other Mary receive a message from an Angel? What does the author do with these two accounts? In *The Nativity* he uses the insights of Steiner to meld them into one comprehensive story that is consistent with both Gospel stories. [See my review of the separate book Smith wrote about this subject in [The Incredible Births of Jesus](#).]

**[page 33] For the first time humanity can witness the holy wedding between the masculine Matthew and the feminine Luke accounts, long recognized not to be the same, but only now seen in their foreordained sacred union. Gone are the conflicts, the seeming inconsistencies . . . The two interdependent and "non-synoptic" versions of the Incarnation, and indeed of all the Biblical account, are shown to have a deep integrity.**

The first mention of the Christ Being I encountered in my reading of Steiner was when I was reading about the evolution of our solar system, how the Sun sphere split up into the Moon sphere and eventually the Earth separation within these spheres. During the first separation the higher spirits remained behind on the Sun and after the Moon separated out from Earth, one of the Elohim, Jahweh, took up residence in the Moon and became the moon god of Moses. The other Elohim, the Christ, remained in the Sun, living there as we live on the Earth. As a physicist, accustomed to thinking of the thermonuclear furnace of the Sun's interior as inhospitable to life, this was a big stretch for my credulity. Then the thought occurred to me that when one looks at a sundial to tell the time, the line drawn from the face of the sundial across the tip of the gnomon extends directly to the Sun, to the Christ. As our watches are simply a more convenient form of sundial that can be used indoors, etc, whenever we check the time, we are checking the position of Christ at that moment in our world. Thus even the most atheistic clock watchers check the position of Christ in their lives whenever they look at a clock(2).

**[page 87] Any suggestion that Steiner's works can be segregated into those that pertain to the Bible and those that do not is unthinkable. Christ stood as the beacon light for every aspect of his life, and, when understood in the light of anthroposophy, this can be seen in all his works. One might say therefore that the Bible and Steiner both had the same lodestar - Christ.**

In my review of Steiner's [The Principle of Spiritual Economy](#) I mentioned that Moses was left afloat in the basket of bulrushes which enabled the etheric clairvoyance of Zarathustra to come to light. Smith points out how the two clairvoyances work, one of the astral body and one of the etheric body, that were transmitted respectively to Hermes and Moses:

**[page 92] To the first [Hermes], Zarathustra transmitted the wisdom of "clairvoyance in the astral body, as well as the ability to perceive in one's present time frame simultaneously everything that is happening and all the mysteries spread out in both physical and spiritual space." To the second [Moses], Zarathustra transmitted "the power to read the Akashic Chronicle, and this is nothing less than the clairvoyant power of the etheric body, enabling the human being to perceive the successive phases of evolution in time.**

How can someone live a corrupt life and yet proclaim that they are saved as if there would never be any repercussions from their immorality? When we ask religious leaders to explain how this could be so, they tell us to have faith in God's judgment, which is "beyond the limits of human knowledge."

**[page 100] On this, they collide with one of Steiner's seminal and most potent assertions, namely, that it is inappropriate to speak of any limitation on human knowledge. . . . That humanity reverts to this shelter is based upon the spiritual darkness in which it dwells.**

Some of the repercussions of immorality or sin are personal, and some affect the entire world and its evolution. The former fall in the category of *subjective karma* and the latter in the category of *objective*

*karma*. It is worth while to spend time in the chapter *Forgiven Sins* to clarify the distinction between subjective and objective karma as this review cannot but offer brief excerpts.

**[page 106] Subjective karma is personal to an individual and must be erased by some form of offsetting or retributive act in a future life. Sins that would otherwise create negative karma can be made good within the same lifetime ("Make friends quickly with your accuser, while you are going with him to court," Mt 5,25) by appropriate compensatory events. . . . Forgiveness by Christ does not erase subjective karma, for debts incurred by an individual cannot be personally escaped "till you have paid the last penny" (Mt 5, 26).**

**[page 107] The other type of consequence is to the world - a broader form of karma, which becomes a burden upon all humanity and creation. Every sin, however slight, actually generates evil spiritual beings (e.g., demons) or food for such evil beings, and generates a karmic burden upon humankind. It is beyond the capacity of the sinner to erase this burden, once launched, even when restitution has been made. . . . Hence, once a person has sinned, overcoming the consequences to the world is beyond that person and rests upon a different agency, either humanity as a whole or Christ. These are *objective sins*. [i. e., objective karma]**

How is our subjective karma to be taken care of? The planning for that comes during the period between death and a new birth, and the execution of the balancing proceeds during the next lifetime. We choose a life situation for ourselves in propinquity with those with whom we have karmic debts left over from our previous lifetime in order to make the balancing possible(3). . It should be pointed out that the decision to actually perform the balancing remains a matter of free will in the new lifetime - always we may act to balance out a karmic debt from the past or to create a new one for the future. The only form of determination that works in one's life is the one that is made out of a free choice by the individual human being. Here is a summary of the journey we make to balance our karma:

**[page 115] A primary purpose of the journey is to reveal to the soul the purpose of its last life in the light of the soul's accumulated karma, the extent to which it succeeded or failed, and then, compelled by necessity, the urge to return to Earth to work in a new personality toward the overcoming of remaining karma. . . . We may aptly analogize the complete cycle by saying that the Earth is the soul's workshop, and the period between lives is spent in the planning or drawing room. . . . In order to become the "first born" or "first fruit" of humanity, humanity's pattern, the very Son of God, the Christ Spirit, had to go into the workshop. . . . The Bible becomes especially radiant when read in this light . . .**

Those who indulge in the pleasures of the senses to the exclusion of all else while they are in school, usually end up flunking out or repeating courses. Even many who successfully complete their schooling say that they can't wait to start having fun once they are finished with learning. What many have yet to learn is that humans are distinguished by their ability to rise above animalistic pleasures and passions and to be truly human is to spend one's life doing exactly that. To do otherwise is fall back from the evolution of humanity, to retain an animalistic nature while the rest of humanity moves forward to a future graduation from physicality. Those who fall back return quickly to their next lifetimes so as to increase their chances of making the graduation.

**[page 122, fn 9, quoted from Steiner's ORL, see title on p. 696] A person who indulges in sensual pleasures and passions, who lives strongly in what we might call his animal nature, will spend but a short time between incarnations. This is due to the fact that such a person will fall comparatively rapidly into a condition of unconsciousness, of sleep.**

When we return to our next life on Earth, the memory of our karma that was restored into us before being placed into this lifetime is activated like a compact disk being placed into a CD player and played for us - it begins to affect us strongly.

**[page 124, quoted from Steiner's PSI, see title on p. 713] . . . What until now was but the "memory" of our own Karmic entity [our CD], we now take in as real effective forces, right into our ether-body [our CD player]. Therefore we afterwards appear on the Earth in such a way that we of ourselves bring about the unfoldment of our destiny, our Karma [we listen to the playing of the CD].**

Thus we progress from lifetime to lifetime and humanity progresses with us. But a further step will be required in which we will have to not only, in the words of the song writer, "walk a mile in another's shoes," but live a lifetime in another's body.

**[page 126] And we shall then be enabled to bring about a change in our decision, -- namely to give to the other man the body we have been preparing, while we ourselves take on the body he prepared, whom we have injured.**

**[page 127] A future [must] come for the planet Earth when one human being will not want to enjoy happiness at the expense of the whole, but man will feel a member of mankind. And it will be the true spiritual counterpart of this when we shall learn to prepare the physical body even for one another.**

No passage from scripture is more devastating to the Christian's true understanding of karma and reincarnation than this one from Heb 9,28: "And just as it is appointed to die once, and after that comes the judgment." The passage lacks any indication that the dying once is what happens to the personality, while the Individuality, the "burning bush" or immortal "I", is not consumed, but survives between deaths. (paraphrase from page 129, 130) Why didn't the Bible give us a direct indication of the truths of karma and reincarnation instead of hiding the truth from us? And if it was hidden for so long, what gives Steiner leave to suddenly reveal these hidden truths to us? The reason for this delay was hinted at in Jn 16,12 in Christ's words, "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now." There are things that we don't tell our children until they are ready to bear them, and Christ was saying that to us in the childhood of humanity. Steiner's point is that about 2,000 years were to pass before the average Christian would be ready to come to terms with the reality of reincarnation and karma. Yes, the peoples of the East have understood a primitive form of reincarnation and karma for many thousand years, but their understanding was pre-Christian and, being circular or repetitive instead of linear or progressive, tended to minimize the value of a single lifetime. So Christ did not deem it appropriate for us to know full truth about reincarnation and karma for two millennia after His Deed on Golgotha.

**[page 133] Steiner developed the point that "reincarnation was not yet to be taught in exoteric Christianity" over the course of numerous lectures. It is based on Jesus' statement in Jn 16, 12 just cited and on the necessity to stress the critical importance of each life until humanity had matured to the Consciousness (Spiritual) Soul state.**

Any gardener knows that before a blossom appears on a new plant, the leaves must first grow. The stem of the first leaf becomes the stem of the plant which is required to hold future leaves and the eventual blossoms and fruit. But first of all the leaves must grow before any blossoms or fruit may appear. Using this telling metaphor Steiner explains to us why the teaching of reincarnation and karma had to wait two thousand years to blossom — the leaves had to grow first. Smith tells us that two thousand years is "the period required for human consciousness to evolve from one significant age to another."

**[page 135] Said Steiner, in *The Gospel of St. Luke* (GSL), Lect 10, "Had this teaching been proclaimed in the early centuries of Christendom in the form in which it is proclaimed today, this would have meant demanding of human evolution the equivalent of demanding a plant to produce the blossom before the green leaves."**

The Consciousness Soul Age began about 1414 A. D. immediately following the Intellectual Soul Age which came after the Sentient Soul Age that preceded it. We are almost in the middle of the Consciousness Soul Age but many humans have not made the transition to the new paradigm or process of thinking associated with the new age. In any paradigm switch, we must continue to use the words of the old paradigm to describe or talk about even those things we understand with the new paradigm. There is a hysteresis or semantic lag of meaning between the arrival of the new paradigm and our ability to be able to talk about things in the terms of the new paradigm. Time must pass for the terms of the new paradigm to be developed before we are able to talk about the new paradigm in terms of the new paradigm. For example, that is why people are often confused by the way physicists have talked about quantum realities using the terms of pre-quantum physics. Bohr's principle of complementarity is one such example. Thus it is that Smith can make the statement that "traditional Christian thinking . . . has not moved appreciably beyond the heritage of the Intellectual (Mind) Soul Era." Rightly understood, those who today call themselves "fundamentalist Christians" are applying forcefully to their lives the processes of the Intellectual Soul Age in the middle of the Consciousness Soul Age. They are in effect putting forth green leaves when the time is ready for them to be putting forth blossoms.

To sum up the chapter on Karma and Reincarnation Smith gives us a series of comments which I will excerpt below. About Comment 6. below: it tells us in effect that the horse of heredity may *lead* the cart of talents and characteristics, but it is the driver that *leads* the horse.

**[page 159] 1. "A person is not born in a new physical body in a later millennium in order to repeat experiences already undergone, but to experience in what respects humanity has advanced in the intervening time." (GSMt, Lect 9)**

**[page 159] 2. Neither animals nor any of the lower kingdoms reincarnate, for the Egos of the lower kingdoms are never on the Earth (see I-11). Human beings reincarnate only as human beings, never as creatures of a lower kingdom.**

**[page 159] 3. In general, Individualities tend to reincarnate together, both individually and as groups, because of the karmic relationships between them (see Ezek 16,61). [*Then you will remember your ways, and be ashamed when I take your sisters, both your elder and your younger and give them to you as daughters, but not on account of the covenant with you.*]**

**[page 159] 4. All of the suffering and disease that exist on Earth are due to the karma of human beings and to the evil spiritual beings that are created or nourished thereby.**

**[page 160] 5. The principle of Karma and Reincarnation is a manifestation of the grace of God, applied over evolutionary periods of time.**

**[page 160] 6. Heredity has little to do with a personality's talents or characteristics in that the reincarnating Individuality, along with the higher powers, choose the parents for the personality.**

**[page 160] 7. All of a person's circumstances in life are attributable to past karma, save only as one is able to modify those circumstances. The manner in which one handles those circumstances is the test for which the incarnation occurred.**

In this next passage (*From Jesus to Christ*, Lect 7), Steiner talks about Christ as the Lord of Karma for human evolution, who returns to Earth on the etheric plane for his Second Coming in the first part of the 20th Century just past. Obviously this event didn't make the evening news. How can we understand what has happened in our world as a result of this Second Coming of Christ in the etheric plane? Has He perhaps come like the thief in the night? He did say, "you will not know at what hour I will come upon you." (see page 206)

**[page 163] This event works into the physical world, on the physical plane, in such a way that men will develop towards it the feeling that by all their actions they will be causing something for which they will be accountable to the judgment of Christ. This feeling, now appearing quite naturally in the course of human development, will be transformed so that it permeates the soul with *a light which little by little will shine out from the individual himself*, and will illuminate the form of Christ in the etheric world. And the more this feeling is developed . . . the more will the etheric Form of Christ be visible in the coming centuries. [italics mine]**

Smith asks how do we reconcile the statements that God is the judge with those that say equally that Christ is to be the judge of our actions, then sums up the answer in this brief passage:

**[page 169] . . . the judgment that comes from God is the perfect justice of the eternal law, the law of karma, whereas the justice that comes from Christ is what emanates from the taking *vel non* [or not] of Christ into one's own being whereby one's objective karma is transferred to him and only the subjective karma remains.**

In the chapter titled *Second Coming* Smith takes issue with "the fundamentalists who maddeningly insist on the reconstitution, atom by atom, of the mineral-physical body not only of Christ but also of his followers on the last day." Such forceful claims form an iron curtain that separates Steiner's spiritual science from these strongly traditional Christians, some of whom, in my own family, have reacted very adversely to my even reading Steiner's works claiming that I should instead be studying the Bible! In this passage I envision Edward Smith as a 21st Century Ronald Reagan proclaiming, "Tear down this wall!"

**[page 216] . . . my immediate mission is to dismantle that wall heretofore separating anthroposophists and more traditional Christians.**

In the chapter entitled *I Am* Smith tells us, "This passage, 'I AM *THE* I AM,' can be understood only when it is seen that Moses stood at the critical point in human evolution when the Ego was making its transition from *group* or *tribal* soul to *individual* soul." He points out that there is a higher and lower "I am."

**[page 247] Inasmuch as all humanity is infected by the Fall (Gen 3), the lower "I Am" is unable by itself to raise its three bodies to a state of purity equivalent to that of their pre-Fall status. . . . It is the task of the young Ego (Job 32, 4-6) to overcome this Luciferic infection, but due to its immaturity that young Ego is not equal to the task of overcoming the deeply ingrained consequences of the infection in the older and denser bodies.**

Paul says in Romans 7, 22: "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." Smith, after Steiner, explains the meaning of this passage as it relates the lower human "I Am" or Ego to the higher Christ "I Am".

**[page 247] In Rom 7,22, Paul says that his "inmost self" delights "in the law of God" but is unable by itself to effect the cure of his other "members." But this "inmost self," or "Ego," which he correctly identifies as his "mind" . . . has a primeval relationship to that from which it sprang, namely, the Christ. . . . By coming to a recognition and acceptance of that Christ, the pure "I Am," the human being's own Ego joins unto itself the power that higher primeval Ego [higher "I Am"] and thereby is enabled to heal the ages of infection of its lower three bodies or "members."**

On page 252, Smith points us to Rev 2,17: ". . . To him who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone which no one knows except him who receives it." What is this new name and the white stone upon which it is written? Keep in

mind that in those days, few people ever saw the brains of a live person which is a vibrant pink, but only the dead, white brain of corpses.

**[page 253] The "white stone" (2,17) . . . referred to the nature of the human brain, which was developing, i.e., hardening, "rocklike," as the natural result of the process of ever-increasing densification brought about by the Fall (Gen 3).**

What was this curious name that can only be known by the person who receives it? The name "I" — a name that if anyone uses it in your presence can never be taken to refer to you. Only you know the name "I" refers to you when you use it. The name "I" or the phrase "I Am" can be used interchangeably in reading the older verses of the Bible, as one can discern by attempting the process, e. g., in Isaiah 42, 8: "I am the Lord, that is my name, my glory I give to no other." I note that the word for "I am" in English, "I," takes a plural verb, which seems strange because it seems to refer to a singular person. Also, dear Reader, the second person singular noun, "you," takes a plural verb as in the sentence when you say to one person, "You are aware." This is not surprising because "I" and "you" are reflections of each other. If we consider the dual nature of the lower "I am" and the higher "I Am," both of which have the possibility to be within each one of us, that gives credence to the plural nature of these two otherwise singular nouns(4). .

More revelations come when we consider the passage Is 40,3 "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." If we recognize that the sense of "the wilderness" is that of "the desolation of the soul" we can personalize it thus: "In the desolation of your soul prepare the way of your Ego, your 'I am,' that makes straight in the desolation of your soul a highway for God." (inspired by pages 270 to 271) In other words, once the "I am" arrives on the scene, it becomes our burning bush in which the fire of God burns, it opens the channel of the Spirit of God to fill the otherwise isolated and desolated three bodies.

Smith points out that *Kyrios* from the Greek cannot simply be translated as "the Lord" because it referred to man's soul life and its mysteries, i. e., his "I." If we apply this insight as Smith suggests to Mk 1,3: "the voice crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight — " we get "the voice crying in the desolation of the soul: Prepare the way for the powerful 'I' within you, clear the way for it to manifest itself within you." And when that way is opened, one reaches the soul of man liberated from all the group-soulness. (page 278) Those who do not heed the message to prepare the way will have no "I" and become what T. S. Eliot called the "[hollow men](#)."

**[page 278] With the others, in that place where the I-being is, which remains there — which is now there in the body, and which remains after death — there is a hollow space, a nothingness.**

Note how beautifully this idea of a hollow place in men who, "I-less," must lean together in a group soul, is expressed by Eliot in the first stanza of his 1925 poem written the year Rudolf Steiner died:

**We are the hollow men  
We are the stuffed men  
Leaning together  
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!  
Our dried voices, when  
We whisper together  
Are quiet and meaningless  
As wind in dry grass  
Or rats' feet over broken glass  
In our dry cellar**

But there is more. This is not only an important process, the developing of our individual "I," but one that becomes more and more important as we progress through life compared to all the other ideas we encounter in life which decrease in significance over time. Why is this so important to us?

**[page 278, Steiner in EGO, Lect. 1] The central point of man's being is grasped through what we take up as anthroposophical thoughts. That crystallizes a spiritual substance in man; he takes that with him after death, and with that he perceives in the spiritual world. He sees and hears with it in the spiritual world, with it he penetrates that darkness which otherwise exists for man in the spiritual world. . . . Then he is born with this now *developed* "I," and he *remembers* himself in this developed "I."**

If you wonder how it is that you do not remember your previous incarnations, Steiner says in one of his lectures that your previous incarnation was likely about 1,000 years ago, a time when few if any humans had a developed "I". If you don't achieve it now, when? And what might we expect to happen to those who, for whatever reason, do not develop an individual "I"? They will fall back into the group soul.

**[page 279, Steiner in EGO, Lect. 1] These people will then experience that as their FALL, as a new Fall of mankind, as a falling back into conscious connection with the group-soul. That will be something terrible for the sixth period of time; to be unable to look back to oneself as an individuality, to be hemmed in by not being able to transcend the group-soulness. If one will express it strongly, one could say: The whole earth with all it produces (this holds at least as an image) will belong to those who now cultivate their individuality; those, however, who do not develop their individual "I," will be obliged to join on to a certain group, from which they will be directed as to how they should think, feel, will, and act. That will be felt as a fall, a falling back, in the future humanity.**

And, in one final passage from the same lecture Steiner speaks of one's individuality being inscribed on one's forehead — a feature that distinguishes the countenance of the popular fictional character at the turn of the 21st Century, Harry Potter, from all his school mates. Harry is nothing if not an individual, and the lightning bolt scar on his forehead marks his individuality.

**[page 281, Steiner in EGO, Lect. 1] In the future, that which speaks to the depths of man's soul will express itself more and more in the external nature of man; and that which man on the one side as a quite individual being has acquired . . . will express itself by working out even to the human countenance; so that the individuality of man . . . will be inscribed for him on his countenance.**

Later in the same lecture, Steiner says that "the individual will carry in itself an external sign, and . . . the group-soulness [will] carry in itself its external sign." All of which causes me to wonder if the prevalence of body piercing and body tatoos at the turn of the 21st Century somehow presages the external marks of group-soulness that will form automatically on the countenances of future humankind.

Earlier in this review I proposed a principle about history that goes like this: people only began to write down history when they were no longer able to remember it. The time came when the gradual mineralization of the Fall led to an increasing intellect, but was accompanied by a fading memory and loss of natural clairvoyance. (paraphrased from pages 334, 335) One can deduce from this that the advent of historical records marked the end of that original clairvoyance that was a birthright of every human being.

In the chapter called *Mysteries* we encounter the concept that "the Christ Event was the enactment, 'Once for All,' of the ancient Mysteries on the stage of the world."

**[page 337 Steiner in GSMt lecture] In the book *Christianity as Mystical Fact* I have explained the sense in which secrets of the ancient Mysteries come to light in the Gospels, and that the Gospels, fundamentally, are repetitions of the descriptions of Initiation in the Mysteries. Why, in relating events in the life of Christ, was it possible to describe the processes enacted in the Mysteries? It was possible because everything that took place in the Mysteries in the inner life of the soul, had become *historical fact*:**

**because the Christ-Jesus-Event was a re-portrayal of symbolic rites enacted during the process of the old Initiation, but fulfilled now at the higher level of full Ego-consciousness.**

In the chapter *Three Bodies* Smith relates many passages that have three bodies as a theme. Here are just two of them that I consider to be very powerful. They are mostly self-contained and require no additional explanation.

**[page 432, 433] Dan 3: This seems one of the clearer visions depicting the human being's fourfoldness. Three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, are thrown into the fiery furnace, which is so hot that it slew those who threw them into it. Yet the king then saw not three, but four, "walking in the midst of the fire, and . . . not hurt." Then it says, "and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods." In the period between lives, the three bodies do not survive except to the extent that they have been "Perfected," (transformed). In particular, in the astral world (cf. Purgatory) the unperfected portions of the astral body are burned away in the eternal fire. But the Ego, though it suffers, is not consumed there (see "Bush"). This vision would seem to portray a perfected Ego, which means that its related bodies have also been perfected and thus are not lost but preserved. "The appearance of the fourth" (the Ego) "like a son of the gods" bespeaks the level of spiritual development akin to that in Rev 1, 12-16, which carries the "burning bush" beyond reincarnation to the point of worthiness for the resurrection (see Lk 20, 34-38).**

**[page 443] Lev 16: . . . The two sons who died by reason of disobedience might be taken as the human physical and etheric bodies, which are infected to death (Gen 3, 19-20) by virtue of the infection of the astral body in the Fall. The bull may here be taken for the astral body, which represents the astral nature of feeling (see I-62). By sacrificing the bull "for himself," Aaron, now representing the astral body, is kept alive, and by the sacrifice of the one goat "for himself and for his house" and the release of the other, bearing their sins, into the "Wilderness," their atonement is accomplished. Now the goat is related to sheep (see WNWD, "goat") but in general has a more objectionable character; thus the relationship of Goat/Sheep is analogous to that of astral body/manas. The implications for the eventual "Lamb of God" thrust themselves irresistibly upon us. The goat, representing the astral nature, is two-fold, and one is sacrificed so that the other may go free into the "Wilderness." The merit of this concept is strengthened when one considers that the zodiacal realm of Capricorn (goat) equates to the astral body (see I-18). The only one of the three bodies over which a human being has direct control in the present Epoch is the astral body. To the extent that it is purified through the action of the "Lamb of God" it moves toward the manas state of the future Jupiter Condition of Consciousness, portrayed in Revelation as the Holy City. The Ego is thus thrust into the "Wilderness" to follow there the lead of the "Lamb of God," which takes the place of the scapegoat in bearing the sins of the human being.**

In reading the next passage one may find oneself asking the question, "What seeds am I sowing during my lifetime?"

**[page 460] The two introductory paragraphs . . . quoted below . . . are included to demonstrate how a "Seed," once sown into the human soul, comes to fruition at a later time, or incarnation, as a part of the working of the wondrous "mysteries" of God (cf. Rom 11,33).**

Some thirty years ago, I was exposed to a concept in the Catholic Church called the "Inner Forum." I was newly divorced and re-married and my new wife wished to convert to Catholicism. I had assumed that going to Church, much less taking Holy Communion was out of the question for me. She asked the priest

who was giving her instructions on becoming a Catholic what he would advise and he told her of the Inner Forum. He said for us to go into our inner soul and if we determined that we had committed no sin by our actions we should both go to Church and receive Communion. In this book, I have for the first time found an explanation of what the priest referred to and this has greatly increased my respect for the spiritual underpinning that supports the Catholic Church and the truths that reside sometimes hidden beneath its everyday rules and regulations.

**[page 503 Steiner, GSJ, Lect 4, p. 74] The man who voluntarily places himself within the cosmic activities is an individual; he is not ruled by law. In the Christ Principle lies the victory over law. "For the law was given by Moses, but Grace through Christ" [quoting Jn 1,17]. According to the Christian acceptance of the word, the soul's capacity for doing right out of the inner self [RJM: ie, the Inner Forum] was called Grace. Grace and an inner recognition of truth came into being through the Christ.**

Through the Grace of Christ I received a blessing from that priest in California who gave my wife instructions in the faith. And I came to understand that there is a heart in the Catholic Church that must be sought if one is to find it. That heart is not in its rules, it resides under the Church's rules that, like traffic signals, prevent collisions on busy intersections, but cannot govern what a person is to do in individual circumstances. One would disregard a traffic signal to move ahead to save someone's life, wouldn't one? Rightly understood, rules are designed for the masses of people, and need not be blindly adhered to by individuals.

Finally, a big bonus came to me from the last section of I-10 in the *Charts and Tabulations* chapter that I glanced over. This note grabbed me right away.

**[page 560] What would seem to be memory in an animal is not memory in the sense that the human being has a memory, but is based upon a function of the astral body. The cause for what appears to be memory in an animal always comes from a presently existing circumstance giving rise to need based on this experience. Absent such a circumstance (such as its master's presence, hunger, etc.), the animal cannot call up from within the same conscious feeling as can a human being.**

In my role as researcher in the nascent science of doyletics I have wondered about the possible existence a Memory Transition Age (MTA) in animals. The MTA for humans is five years old today -- it is the age at which physical body states (doyles) cease to be stored and cognitive memories are stored instead. But what about animals? We say that you "can't teach an old dog new tricks" — is that some folk wisdom that points to a memory transition age in which old dogs can no longer store novel doyles? I pondered this for some time, and the only thing that seems to make sense is that animals have no memory transition age for the very reason that animals (with the exception of cetaceans) have no neocortex capable of holding what we normally call a memory, what in doyletics we call a *cognitive* or *conceptual* memory to distinguish it from *doylic* memory, i. e., an emotion, a feeling, or other physical body state.

Animals live a doylic existence. They have *circumstantial memory* as Smith calls it in the passage above, i.e., a memory that arises automatically, without any thought, due to the circumstances of the animal's life at the instant. They smell an odor, recognize it as indicating a food they've eaten before, and go towards it. They sense a change in their master's body and know to stop tapping their foot, which was how the famous horse, Kluge Hans, led scientists of a hundred years ago to think he possessed human intelligence by answering all kinds of questions -- until one day they began to ask him questions that no one in the room knew the answer to and the horse was stumped.

Humans live a doylic existence also — their emotional existence is doylic, and is based on a function of the astral body, no doubt. We feel happy or sad according to the circumstantial triggers in our environs and our selves. Doyles can trigger other doyles in linked sequence, so internal states in us can trigger other ones, resulting in a seemingly continuous sequence of internal feeling states that we variously call moods,

emotions, fear, anxiety, stress, depression, elation, joy, etc.

This is not to say that we are animals, because we do have a higher memory, a cognitive memory, orchestrated by our Ego, our "I" in concert with our neocortex. Before we developed a neocortex, however, we had only etheric memories, the ones orchestrated by the etheric body in concert with the limbic system of the brain. The etheric body holds a permanent linearized record of all memories from birth to death. The limbic system stores for later retrieval our bodily reactions to events or circumstances that occurred to us before five years old. We call these *doyles* and consider them to be stored in *doylic* memory. When portions of the full circumstance occur in our environs or in our body, the full doylic memory of the event stored during the original or novel circumstance before five is recapitulated in our body, and a doyle occurs — we feel something, our heart rate changes, our breathing is modified, we get angry, we get sad, we get depressed — something very real happens inside of us that has happened to us before.

As Santayana said, "Man who does not understand history is destined to repeat it." And repeat it we do; in fact, it seems to me from personal experience to be a rule of life that the events we need to understand occur frequently to us until we understand them and hardly ever thereafter. That's a hypothesis of mine currently, with considerable personal evidence to support it, but none that could convince you, dear Reader. That will be up to you to determine on your own.

Understanding a doyle comes from doing a doyle trace, whether consciously and quickly using the speed trace I developed from Doyle's original work, or slowly and painfully over years or lifetimes using less direct methods such as psychoanalysis, drugs, Cognitive Therapy, etc.

Thanks to Smith's note on page 560 I've been able to develop a new way of talking about doylic memory as circumstantial memory — a memory that is triggered by one's environment. I hope it will help others to better understand the basics of doyletics and how it aligns with Steiner's teachings on memory.

This is an extraordinary book. Encyclopedic in its scope, while maintaining a readability that few encyclopedias ever achieve. One can ill afford to ignore this book if one is interested in understanding Christianity. The Bible alone is like a treasure map with key portions of the map cut out to prevent the casual observer of the map from locating the treasure. Edward Reaugh Smith has scoured Rudolf Steiner's works to locate the missing pieces of the map and has provided us with a completed map of Christianity and salvation, salvation in the microcosm of our individual selves, and salvation in the macrocosm for all of humanity.

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Notice: The entire text of "[The Burning Bush](http://www.bibleandanthroposophy.com/Smith/main/burning_bush/burning_bush.html)" is available on-line by clicking on the book title or the link at right: [http://www.bibleandanthroposophy.com/Smith/main/burning\\_bush/burning\\_bush.html](http://www.bibleandanthroposophy.com/Smith/main/burning_bush/burning_bush.html).

----- **footnotes** -----

1. While the author is thorough in the background material necessary to understand the Bible connections, there are areas of Steiner's work that he does not cover, such as education, recitation, eurhythmy, agriculture, medicine, sculpture, and architecture, among other things.  
[Return to text below footnote 1.](#)

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2. Steiner tells us that after Christ's Deed on Golgotha, the Initiates no longer looked to the Sun for the Christ, because the Christ Spirit had entered the Earth. To understand in a simple metaphor how this change came about, consider the townspeople of a small town located far outside the Big City. To buy things they had make a trip to the Big City to go shopping at MegaMart. As a result, whenever they thought of going shopping, they looked toward the Big City. Then one day, a MegaMart was built in their

little town. No longer did they have to look toward the Big City when they thought of shopping. The MegaMart headquarters in the Big City wasn't dismantled or left empty when the local MegaMart was built, but the local townspeople no longer looked to the Big City when they thought to go shopping.

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3. In a personal communication from Edward Smith, he brought up an excellent point, one that is easily glossed over in the attention given to karmic balancing. He said, "We certainly do that, of course. But there is a wholesome and attractive side also that might not always fit that category. We may be working with another soul with whom there is no related debt from one to the other. There are karmic affinities and I think we reincarnate often with those where such a debt-free affinity exists, but for a karmic purpose of some type related to karmic needs of someone (or group) somewhere. I don't know if you want to bring this in, but it has a bit of a negative aspect that might be attractively balanced by this thought. I judge that Steiner was indicating this type of thing with those drawn into his orbit during his life."

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4. Some clarification on the singular/plural agreement of nouns and verbs may be in order. A singular noun normally takes a singular verb: *He does*. Plural noun, a plural verb: *They do*. There are two prominent exceptions: *You do* [singular noun, plural verb] and *I do* [singular noun, plural verb]. My English teacher told me there was an escape clause for "you" because it can refer to one person [singular] or several people [plural]. But what about "I"? It's *always* singular, but is treated as if it *were* plural. No explanation came from my English teacher for that. I personally found that situation most unsatisfying all these years. As I was studying *The Burning Bush*, I found a plausible reason for the first time: the two levels of "I" - the little "I am" of the Individuality and the higher "I AM" of the Christ (that lives in every human waiting to be recognized). Thus, when we use a plural verb with the seemingly singular pronoun "I" [which is really a name, not a pronoun], then we are recognizing the Christ in us!

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