

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE ANTHROPOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT IN GENERAL, FROM AN ESOTERIC POINT OF VIEW.

A lecture delivered to Anthroposophists in the UK on June 14 1942 by Dr Alfred Heidenreich

Dear Friends

During Dr. Steiner's lifetime it was a regular custom that descriptions of the aims and reports of the work of the Christian Community appeared from time to time in the "Goetheanum" and in the "Anthroposophical News Sheet". Rudolf Steiner himself contributed repeatedly to these articles on the Christian Community in these two representative Anthroposophical Journals. After Dr. Steiner's death this natural and helpful custom was allowed to lapse, as so many others. It may not be possible to revive it again. But I should like this lecture to be understood as belonging to those endeavours of mutual contact and information which Rudolf Steiner considered necessary, and which he himself inaugurated.

About 12 years ago I gave a lecture in similar circumstances which was then published in duplicated type-script with the title "The Origin of the Christian Community". In that lecture I described the origin and early history of the Christian Community from an exoteric point of view. Today I will speak on the significance of the Christian Community and its relationship to the Anthroposophical Movement in general from a definitely esoteric point of view.

The New Mysteries

In his lectures during the last war, and especially towards the end of the last war Rudolf Steiner spoke grave and earnest words about the influence of the Churches in Western Civilisation. Two sets of lectures which touch on this subject stand out: "The Karma of Materialism" and "Gesunder Blick fuer heute und wackere Hoffnung fuer morgen" (not translated). In them sentences like these in which Rudolf Steiner summarises his critical analysis can be found: "The Church has been more an institution for not understanding the Mystery of Golgotha than for understanding it"; - "If one wishes to understand the historic psychological origin of modern materialism, one must seek it in the Church". - In the cycle on the Karma of Materialism he states openly that in the 9th century a lodge was founded in Sicily which began to work towards turning the Church, to all intents and purposes into a Society for the Prevention of Christian Knowledge. But in these lectures

Rudolf Steiner held out also a definite hope. The time will come, he said, when the meaning of the old Mystery Religions will be understood; when the meaning of the time which has been something like an interregnum between the Ancient Mysteries and today will also be understood; and then the time will come when the New Mysteries can be founded.

Out of this tragic insight into the fall and decline of the traditional churches, and their perversion for other purposes, and out of the knowledge that the time for the New Mysteries is at hand, the Christian Community was born. It is rooted in the New Mysteries, and it is an essential part of their realisation. In fact, Rudolf Steiner's last farewell to the priests of the Christian Community in 1924 were the words: "Yours is the task to fulfill part of the New Mysteries".

If I endeavour, as I must, to cover the ground of my vast subject in a short time, and if I try, as I intend, to speak today not on the history and exoteric aims but on the esoteric significance of the Christian Community, I believe I cannot do better than to concentrate what I have to say round the central act of corporate expression of the message and work, and indeed the being of the Christian Community, The Act of Consecration of Man. I shall consider first its objective cosmic significance, apart from its direct relationship to the human being, and then in the second part its significance for Mankind.

The Objective Cosmic Significance of the Act of Consecration of Man

The objective significance of the Act of Consecration of Man lies in the fact that it keeps alive and revivifies the etheric body of the earth. Without it, Rudolf Steiner compared the etheric light which it creates with a sunrise. So much as the light of the sun is lighter than the darkness of night, he said, so much is the light that rises on the altar lighter than the light of the sun. Out of this light the foundations for the future Jupiter state of our earthly planet form themselves. The alchemistic process enacted in the Act of Consecration of Man produces Jupiter substance. In their objective significance the elements of bread and wine are alchemistically transmuted into what is known as the body and blood of Christ which is the seed and leaven of the future planetary evolution. In this respect the Act of Consecration of Man acts from the centre of Rosicrucian Christianity.

The institution of this Act of transubstantiation is derived from the Christ Himself. Rudolf Steiner explained that it does not go back directly to the Last Supper, but was inaugurated by the Risen Christ during the 40 days after Easter. Historically it was foreshadowed in the Samothracian and Mithraic Mysteries, and found its first fulfilment in the early Christian Mass. In the Act of Consecration of Man it has been renewed for our time, through the

instrumentality of Rudolf Steiner. The Act of Consecration of Man is the transmutation of this Mystery Act for our time, but in its essence – in Rudolf Steiner’s own words – it is “nothing that is only temporary which should once be replaced by something else. It is something eternal, as far as one can speak of something eternal on earth”.

Previous to the Spiritual Act in which the Act of Consecration of Man was instituted, Rudolf Steiner made, over a period of years, certain definite observations in attending the traditional forms of the Eucharistic Service in different countries of Europe. I cannot help comparing these journeys in my mind with the wanderings of Jesus before the Baptism in the Jordan, of which Rudolf Steiner speaks in the 5th Gospel. Jesus then visited the Mystery Temples of Asia Minor, but instead of a Divine Presence he found a Demonic Presence at the altars. Rudolf Steiner found that only in rare cases did the aura which manifests the reality of the Divine Presence still appear on Christian altars. (In certain churches in Italy he could still find it, he said.)

Therefore he had – to use again his own words – “To take the courage”, according to the will of the Divine Spiritual World, to renew the Central Act of the Christian Mysteries. The first celebration of the Act of Consecration of Man in September 1922 in the South Transept of the First Goetheanum – carried out by Dr. Friedrich Rittelmeyer under Dr. Steiner’s guidance – was an Act of Universal Cosmic Significance. It is only comparable with those acts which are described in “Occult Science” as initiating a new period within one of the former planetary evolutions of the earth. Any initiate who will once on Jupiter look back and describe the earth evolution, will mark it as one of the vital events since the Mystery of Golgotha.

No wonder that the fire which so tragically destroyed the first Goetheanum was laid in the very room where the first celebration had taken place. The inauguration of this part of the New Christian Mysteries touched the Adversary to the quick. It is also understandable that in view of the tremendous reality of the Present of the Spirit in those sacred rites Rudolf Steiner could speak the following grave words:

“I know, my dear friends, how much there is in the heart of modern men which speaks against the sacramental. But whoever has experience in these things may also say something different. It might be thought that what may be called the emotional antagonism (Erbostsein) to ceremonial which so easily arises in modern people, reveals something in them that might be the outcome of Christian, evangelical consciousness. But I must confess to you that I have never really yet seen anyone in whom emotional antagonism to the sacrament has arisen out of love or goodness, but always out of the secret wickedness in human nature. This is a personal, but actual observation. It is certainly a manifold process which we see emerging

today, but that which is first irritated is really the Opposing Tendencies in human nature, which work against salvation. It is a goading on by the same forces which say in the Gospel: "We know you", and which then begin to fight against Christ, because they "recognise" Him."

Since the inauguration of the Act of Consecration of Man on September 16th 1922, the celebrations have been carried on in a continuous stream every day. They form an integral part in the process which – in the words taken from the liturgy of the Act of Consecration of Man – "is transfiguring earthly with heavenly being". They are an indispensable element in the etheric life of the earth planet. Through them – to use a sentence from the creed of the Act of Consecration of Man – Christ effects "the re-enlivening of the dying earth-existence". It is therefore a task of the highest responsibility to see to it that the succession of daily celebrations is never interrupted. If the Christian Community had no other aims, this in itself would fill it with a tremendous content.

In the act of performing the Act of Consecration of Man the celebrating priest and the congregation co-operate. The servers, representing the congregation, exchange responses with the celebrant which confirm this co-operation repeatedly, while the Act of Consecration of Man proceeds. The co-operation is one of inward activity. The congregation is not merely addressed, nor are meditations simply read to them. Neither are there external forms of movement or expressions, such as kneeling down and standing up in frequent succession. The co-operation is one of pure spiritual activity. For this (at any rate within the sphere of western civilisation) the sitting posture is most adequate. In this respect the Act of Consecration of Man is reminiscent of the quiet intensity of a good Quaker Meeting. But instead of waiting for an individual to give a personal message, the meeting unites in the Corporate Act through which the substance of the wheat and the juice of the grape (prepared for this use from times immemorial through the ancient Mysteries) receive the aura of the Christ. In this, the congregation is truly a fellowship of those who with Christ work for the transmutation of the earth, or in biblical language, of those who actually and actively are engaged here and now in the building of the New Jerusalem.

For the right fulfilment of the Act it is not necessary that everyone present is able to co-operate in the same degree. It allows for all shades and degrees of participation. In Rudolf Steiner's own words, the highest initiate can unite in it with the humblest soul. This comprehensiveness is an essential part of the character of the Act of Consecration of Man. The Act of Consecration of Man can also be enacted by the celebrating priest without a visible congregation. In reality, so Rudolf Steiner pointed out, the Act of Consecration of Man is never without a congregation. There are always present the dead who co-operate. According to those who have experience in these matters the dead

present are by no means confined to the deceased members of the Community.

The Spiritual-Educational (Religious) Significance of the Act of Consecration of Man

Passing from the objective cosmic significance of the Act of Consecration of Man to its immediate significance for the human being, I will first speak of its spiritual-educational qualities, and secondly of its spiritual-medical qualities. The spiritual-educational qualities can be summed up in one word. The Act of Consecration of Man is a great training in devotion. But devotion must not be understood here simply as outpouring piety, but as the unselfseeking application of the human soul to a spiritual reality, and a definite spiritual content. Describing the nature of meditation Rudolf Steiner said: "Meditation ist ins Unermessliche gesteigerte Hingabe": - "Meditation is devotion intensified to an immeasurable degree". The follower of the Act of Consecration of Man over a number of years knows what meditative application really means. Life in the Act of Consecration of Man can supply in a high degree the groundwork for a spiritual development as described in "Knowledge of Higher Worlds", where Rudolf Steiner emphasises devotion to truth and knowledge as one of the basic qualities for spiritual development. Truth and knowledge to which devotional application should be directed is focussed in the Act of Consecration of Man on the Cosmic Christ Who, at a certain point of the service, Himself presides at the altar. In this way the Act of Consecration of Man fulfils what Rudolf Steiner describes in the lectures on Cosmic and Human Metamorphosis when he says that "religion in its living form and living practice enkindles the spirit consciousness of the human community". The specific devotional character serves the development of the consciousness soul. In his great lecture on "The Mission of Religious Devotion" (Die Mission der Andacht) Rudolf Steiner sums up the mission of devotion in these words: "Andacht ist die Erzieherin der Bewusstseinsseele" - "Devotion is the Tutor of the Consciousness soul". The truth of this statement cannot fail to strike home to anyone who observes the spiritual and intellectual life of today. Humanity, on the threshold of the age of the consciousness soul is yet continually falling back into a purely intellectual conception of the world; and knowledge still remains an encyclopaedic accumulation of facts to which, perhaps, occult and esoteric facts are added as an additional category but without a difference. The forces are very strong which would reduce even the living being of Anthroposophy to "Dr. Steiner's system". Rudolf Steiner himself points to the practice and exercise of the devotional powers of the soul as the remedy. And I believe it can be truly said that among the spiritual qualities which are actively trained in the Act of Consecration of Man devotion is one of the greatest.

I cannot elucidate this point better than by quoting once more from the lecture on *The Mission of Religious Devotion**, and giving in full the passage in which Rudolf Steiner sums up the essential significance of devotion for human development. He says:

“Hands which would fain bless and comfort without having been folded in reverence and devotion, cannot bestow much love and blessing – apart from their own nonentity. Hands, however, which have learnt to be folded in devotion are permeated with a new force and become powerfully alive with the Ego. For the path taken by that force which is poured into the folded hands, leads first through the heart where it kindles love. Thus the devotion of the folded hands, having passed through the heart, becomes blessing.

“The head may turn its eyes and strain its ears to survey the world in all directions, yet it presents everywhere no more than its own emptiness. The head, however, which has been bowed in devotion, gains a new force; it will present to the world the feelings it gained in devotion and not its own emptiness.

“Thus we see, the Ego is not weakened by religious devotion but rendered stronger and more powerful. Furthermore this self-education raises to the surface mankind’s obscure emotions and instincts, his sympathies and antipathies – in short, all the feelings which enter the soul unconsciously or subconsciously, unchallenged by the light of judgement. Precisely those feelings are raised and purified through self-education by religious devotion and the progress of the Ego to a higher level. The dark forces of sympathy and antipathy which are prone to error become illuminated by the light of the soul and are transformed into judgment, aesthetic taste, and rightly disposed moral sentiment. In fact, the moral ideals of life depend upon the purification of obscure instincts, desires and passions; and, to this effect, religious devotion becomes an educator of the soul. It is in the nature of a seed implanted in the soul, which germinates and bears fruit.”

The spiritual-educational influence of the Christian Community, in particular as centred in the Act of Consecration of Man, does, then, not primarily consist in the imparting of facts either of general knowledge or occult knowledge, but in the training of a certain quality of soul and a mode of life. It aims in the first place not at increasing a person’s knowledge but at making him or her more fully a human being. This should show itself also in practical results in everyday life. I believe that members of the Christian Community who have taken an active share in its life over a number of years develop certain qualities which indeed are not their monopoly but which in all modesty I believe to be characteristic, and which they can bring as a valuable gift into

* Published in “Metamorphoses of the Soul”.

any Society in which they may move. One of them is, perhaps, a definite habit to enter into and appreciate another person's point of view, and an endeavour to keep a sense of proportion.

Expressed from another aspect, one might say that the Christian Community aims at those moral qualities which the esoteric disciple is told to practise for his or her development, on the first 50 pages of "Knowledge of the Higher Worlds"; in the part described as preparation or purification. A life lived along these lines may lead one day, as a matter of natural growth, to a first step of what is described at Illumination. But this is as far as the Christian Community goes. Those who desire to enter into the technical training of the occult path which leads to Initiation and independent Spiritual Research must pass on to the competent esoteric teachers which it is the duty and the privilege of the Anthroposophical Society to provide.

Illumination or Enlightenment in the sense in which I have referred to it, is related in the Christian Community to One Supreme Act: to perceive the aura of the Cosmic Christ gathering round the sacramental substances. This will have the most far-reaching social consequences in the future. Rudolf Steiner explained that the spiritual foundations of Western civilisation were safeguarded in the earlier Christian centuries by the fact that there was always a sufficient number of people who could see the aura in the Mass. However, in the 9th century certain intimate alterations were made in the celebration of the Mass through which the Mass was deprived of its power to awaken souls. What Rudolf Steiner said about this is difficult to trace in external history, but there is circumstantial evidence in the fact that at this time the first discussions about the nature of the so-called transubstantiation began to arise. The Church then attempted to suppress these discussions by making blind faith in transubstantiation a dogma, in 1215. But dogmas can never arrest the forces of evolution. With the disappearance of the actual spiritual perception of Christ's aura in the elements, the alchemistic wisdom concerning matter was lost and the materialistic conception of matter began to make its triumphant entry, until in our own days it has reached supreme and universal dominion over men's minds and souls. No moral forces alone will ever conquer this materialism. But a Spiritual Act can and will do it which gradually gives back to a slow but steadily growing number of people a first-hand experience of the spiritual properties of matter.

I cannot leave this aspect without adding one sentence about the significance which the communal training in devotional concentration has for the individual meditative life. Apart from many individual forms of sharing in the Act of Consecration of Man which in themselves would vary, a great contribution of the Act of Consecration of Man to the individual meditative life is the fact that the Act of Consecration of Man sets a standard. Anybody with experience in these matters will agree how easily we deceive ourselves about the intensity of a meditation. But in checking up the intensity of

personal meditation against the intensity of the Act of Consecration of Man, provides a guide which nearly always convicts one of lack of power and application.

The Spiritual-Medical (Sacramental) Significance of the Act of Consecration of Man

Side by side with the spiritual-educational work in the Act of Consecration of Man goes the spiritual-medical side. In a nutshell, its importance is reflected in the fact that in the liturgy of the Act of Consecration of Man the “holy” spirit is generally called the “healing” spirit. In a conversation with Dr. Rittelmeyer Dr. Steiner allowed it to be understood that for the conception of the rituals he had to go to a place “wo die deutsche Sprache mantrisch gelehrt wird” – “where the German language is taught in a mantric way”. (“But”, he added, “this must not be understood to be a place to which you can send a parcel by parcel post”.) He meant to indicate that every single word in the text of the ritual was coined by the power of the Logos. Therefore, far from being accidental, the change from “holy” to “healing” gives a clear lead. It does not suggest that the Christian Community is to meddle with the sphere of the doctor, but it does suggest that the spiritual presence in the sacrament penetrates into those depths of the human being where the pattern of karma is woven and where health and illness have their root.

In the language of the ritual, the sacramental elements are also explicitly referred to as medicine. Their effect is two-fold. The alchemistic quality of the bread relates it to the sensory-nervous system and physiological basis of thought. The alchemistic quality of the wine relates it to the fire processes of the metabolic system and physiological basis of the will. They work like homeopathic medicines. They build up in man the “phantom” of the Resurrection Body of which Rudolf Steiner speaks in the cycle “From Jesus to Christ”. Bread and wine are the hereditary substance of the New Adam.

It is clear that such a powerful agent cannot but produce a crisis in the human being. It is a matter of definite experience that anyone who lives for some time with the Act of Consecration of Man must expect his or her health to undergo noticeable changes. Even as a block of ice is melted in the sun and reunited with the flowing water, so our condition which is often stagnant and rigid, particularly when we get older, is linked again with the stream of life. It does not follow that health necessarily “improves” in the superficial meaning of the word. In fact, it is quite possible that a definite illness occurs. But above all, development is taking place. Karma is allowed to work itself out.

In addition to the fact of the change, the process of the change itself is observable. With the help of appropriate studies and conversations, these

observations can lead to a fair knowledge of the more intimate functioning of the body, in particular the interaction of the various members of the human being. It makes real what the words of the Act of Consecration of Man describe as the fact that the Divine Ground of the World did fashion out of the members of His Being the being of mankind in the supersensible, and that He did transform what He did fashion." Therefore as a direct result of active life in the Act of Consecration of Man, one obtains a sound working knowledge of the physical, etheric, astral bodies and the ego, apart from the fact that these higher members of the human being are raised to visible consciousness in the vestments of the priest. (It is a very natural outcome of this that we desire to deepen this experience through such meetings as the recent weekend with Dr. Koenig on a sacramental physiology.)

In a similar way the impact of the sacramental life produces a result in karmic relations to other people. It is invariably so that life with the Act of Consecration of Man effects a crisis also in one's Karma. The threads are gathered up, as it were, and brought to consciousness. They ask for readjustment or lead to catastrophe. He who touches the sacrament touches live spirit. No one who desires a comfortable life should do it. For the sacrament has consequences which affect our ordinary human schemes. Again not only the effect but the whole process is observable. There is a great deal of give and take in the Christian Community on these matters which result for the individual in a sound working knowledge of the laws of karma. This working knowledge is not centred in an interest in one's own or other people's previous incarnations, but in the observation of the presence of karma in daily life, and in an endeavour to become an ever more conscious weaver of the individual pattern of destiny.

It is perhaps one of the deepest secrets of the sacrament to see how closely it is knit with the sphere of karma. Rudolf Steiner summed this up in one sentence: "The process of transubstantiation and the working of karma belong together; they follow the same laws." And he even indicated that the very celebration of the Act of Consecration of Man has an effect on the existence of karma and its defence against the ahrimanic and luciferic powers. It is a fact of the cosmic strategy of Ahriman and Lucifer, in particular of the ahrimanic powers, to intercept the working of karma and to bring it to a standstill. If they succeeded in their stratagem, mankind would start each life with a clean slate, but the consequences of his or her misdeeds would be welded in the hands of Ahriman into a terrible weapon with which he would dislocate the cosmic order. The preservation of karma is therefore one of the main objects of Christ and the heavenly hosts in His service. Rudolf Steiner explained that the sacrament is an instrument to this end. Those men and women who live in the sacrament can carry – so Rudolf Steiner gave to understand – through their own spiritual momentum and enthusiasm other men and women with them, so that the operation of karma from life to life is safeguarded in a

sufficient degree. Here again the work of the Christian Community is woven into the cosmic evolution as an integral part.

I am very conscious how little these few sketchy words can convey even a fraction of the Reality which has begun to work among us and of which the priests and members of the Christian Community feel themselves the humble servants. I have tried to describe it from the esoteric aspect, and had to confine myself on the whole more to matters of principle. But I would add that in actual practical reality, the work can only be carried out within the limits and limitations of human nature, and that they who do the work are by no means always living up to the duties before them.

Two Special Difficulties

However, I cannot conclude this brief outline of certain vital features of the Christian Community without referring to two difficulties which are a frequent source of misunderstanding in Anthroposophical circles. The first one is this: the Christian Community has not seldom been criticised by well-meaning Anthroposophical friends for its apparent lack of a simple appeal. The Christian Community is not popular enough, it is said. We are always genuinely grateful for criticism, and we do not deny that in a measure this criticism is justified. But we cannot help feeling that the friends who make this criticism usually have very little first-hand experience of the essential nature of the Christian Community.

From what I have said in this lecture I am sure you will appreciate that a great deal of work has to be done before the impulses of the Christian Community can be poured into a somewhat popular form. The simple presentation of a spiritual impulse can never be the first step; it is usually the last stage in its incarnation. If one desires to make a spiritual impulse popular prematurely and artificially, one makes it only cheap. It will probably take two or three generations until the tremendous impulses of the Christian Community can be gathered up in simple and popular terms. In these matters one must be able to take the long distance view.

There are even one or two difficulties with which the representative of Anthroposophy is not faced in an equal measure. Speaking on a Christian Community platform, it will be rarely possible to prove a statement simply by referring to Dr. Steiner. The famous formula "Dr. Steiner said . . ." is only occasionally admissible in a Christian Community lecture; in a sermon never. This means that a vast amount of personal experience and original research has to be accumulated, before one can present some vital matters in simple and convincing terms. It is possible to speak convincingly on the Virgin Birth and the Two Jesus Boys without merely falling back on Dr. Steiner's authority - although one will always take pains to point out that one should not have

thought along certain lines without his lead – but it requires long, long preparation. Speaking personally, I can now demonstrate on the basis of personal experience and from original research that the Walking on the Sea and the Feeding of the Five Thousand were not only ordinary historic occurrences, but also imaginative experiences of the disciples. But it has taken me years to get there.

The difficulty is all the greater as it is almost impossible to use traditional religious parlance. The “language of Zion” savours today so much of a wrong pathos, sentimentality and even insincerity, that one cannot but avoid it. In no other field is the task of a disciple of Dr. Steiner equally hard – to make do without the usual terms and yet to put the message into ordinary language. We have to perform all the time a veritable walking on a knife’s edge, between the quagmire of sentimental religiosity and the equally hopeless bogs of “esoteric” jargon.

With regard to research into the spiritual-medical aspect of the sacramental sphere we are, of course, depending on the co-operation of thoroughly trained and, in a sense, fairly advanced Anthroposophical doctors. You will realise that until recent years they were non-existent in this country. It is perhaps a redeeming feature in the tragic circumstances in Germany that some priests have been able to register as medical students since the suppression of the Christian Community. It can be hoped that this may lead to valuable results. I am glad to say that a few first steps have also been made towards some bio-chemical and agricultural research into the alchemistic properties of wheat, grape juice, and other substances used in the sacraments. But in all these matters we stand only at the beginning. I wonder whether our generation will live to see these deep secrets put into popular form.

It must be realised that the Spiritual World did not intend with the institution of the Christian Community to add another sect to the existing multitudes which often carry on what is called religion as a pastime for retired ladies and gentlemen, or which turn it into an economical or political programme. In the Christian Community the sacramental part of the Mystery Religions has been reinstated in a Christian form. And we cannot sell our birth-right for the sake of quick popularity.

The second difficulty concerns the working relationship of the Anthroposophical Society or Societies to the Christian Community. In spite of countless happy personal ties and many acts of individual kindness, it must not be overlooked that in the course of time a tragic barrier has grown up between the Anthroposophical Society or Societies and the Christian Community. Viewed from the aspect of the Christian Community, I can express the nature of this barrier in one sentence: Many members of the Christian Community who have joined the Anthroposophical Society and many members of the Anthroposophical Society who have joined the Christian Community feel that their loyalties to the great and mighty tasks of the Christian Community which I have outlined this afternoon, are not

welcomed in the Anthroposophical Society with the understanding and respect which these loyalties deserve and demand. I do not wish to enlarge on this matter here, but I feel bound to say that apart from a sense of deep personal disappointment which this state of affairs causes to many of us, it makes the necessary co-operation between the Christian Community and Anthroposophical Groups, on the basis of freedom and equality, an uneasy matter.

I am aware of the fact that in December 1922, in a moment of severe crisis when leading Anthroposophists had given the direction that "the Anthroposophical Society had failed and that Dr. Steiner wished the Christian Community to take its place", Rudolf Steiner gave a grave warning to the effect that Anthroposophists should not get "submerged" in the cult of the Christian Community, and that the Christian Community should find its independent organisation and finance. But after having studied for years everything that Rudolf Steiner has said on the subject I can only state it as my sincere conviction that in the absence of a similar grave crisis as that of the winter 1922 Rudolf Steiner would regard it as a cause for rejoicing, if those members of the Christian Community who feel so disposed took an active share in the Anthroposophical Society, and equally those members of the Anthroposophical Society who feel so disposed took an active share in the life of the Christian Community. He would view such a development with deep satisfaction and not with uneasiness or even explicit criticism or discouragement. Perhaps I cannot do better than quote in conclusion a passage from a lecture by Dr. Steiner [Stuttgart, June 13th 1921, not available in English] in which he expressed the hope that a future co-operation with the Christian Community might even heal certain difficulties of the Anthroposophical Society. This lecture was given at the very outset of the meetings which led to the foundation of the Christian Community. He said:

"You see, in these matters (the forming of communities) we have naturally great difficulties with our Anthroposophical Movement. For by its very nature this Anthroposophical Movement cannot be anything else today but an entirely universal Movement. It must apply itself to all spheres of life; and we stand with the Anthroposophical Movement in an extraordinarily difficult situation that on the one hand a certain Anthroposophical teaching has to be communicated to the world today; this must get across to the world, for the world lacks the means of receiving a spiritual content. On the other hand, everywhere the aim arises to form communities, Anthroposophical congregations (Gemeinden) - as it were -, call them groups (Zweige), call them what you like; the aim arises to form Anthroposophical groups. And because the Anthroposophical Movement must still be so universal today, those Anthroposophical groups cannot quite attain to real life, for they oscillate to and fro between the religious element, and a spiritual element which is more directed to all branches of life. For this reason, naturally, they fail to develop a real fraternal life. They fail

altogether to grasp the social communities, of that which should then spread among humanity. They degenerate (arten aus) either into a mere passing on of the teaching, or they have human feeling of opposition against unity, and split into different factions of opinions, quarrel among themselves, and so forth.

But if one asks: Where does the fault lie? – then it does not lie within these groups, but in the fact that one does not find real contact with religious life today* if on the other hand one penetrates with knowledge into the spiritual world. With all the knowledge that exists today, Anthroposophists do not find religious life. Such Communities have first to come into existence. They cannot come into existence unless one realises in the most serious manner, all that can lead to the foundation of such Communities. These two things are always fighting against each other; external formation of groups (aeusserliche Zweigbildung) – active inward life (innerliche Wirksamkeit); there exists the most awful conflict. It would find, however, a healthy solution at the moment community-forming became really possible out of the religious spirit. The Anthroposophical Movement as such cannot found new religious communities, but the Religious Community must found itself somehow out of its own.” (Stuttgart June 13th 1921)

From these words it is obvious that Rudolf Steiner hoped that the existence and life of the Christian Community would be beneficial to the Anthroposophical Society. The Christian Community is the realisation and fulfilment of the Community which he postulates in this lecture, and of which he suggests that it could give adequate religious life to those Anthroposophists who seek it. They must not seek it, however, only for themselves alone, but in order to bring its fruits into the Anthroposophical Movement, - in Rudolf Steiner’s own words - as a healthy influence.

In this way the Christian Community is of importance not only for the world in general but also for the Anthroposophical Movement. This does not mean that every member of the Anthroposophical Society should join the Christian Community. Far from it. **This must remain a matter of free individual choice.** But it is necessary that a general consciousness of the significance of the Christian Community is present in the Anthroposophical Society. To say the least, it should be understood that a sufficient number of men and women must serve the Act of Consecration of Man so that others can afford to be without it.

* Before the foundation of the Christian Community, and referring of course, to traditional organised religion.