

[This is an excerpt from Views From The Real World.]

PRIEURÉ, FEBRUARY 28, 1923
Separation of oneself from oneself

As long as a man does not separate himself from himself he can achieve nothing, and no one can help him.

To govern oneself is a very difficult thing—it is a problem for the future; it requires much power and demands much work. But this first thing, to separate oneself from oneself, does not require much strength, it only needs desire, serious desire, the desire of a grown-up man. If a man cannot do it, it shows that he lacks the desire of a grown-up man. Consequently it proves that there is nothing for him here. What we do here can only be a doing suitable for grown-up men.

Our mind, our thinking, has nothing in common with us, with our essence—no connection, no dependence. Our mind lives by itself and our essence lives by itself. When we say "to separate oneself from oneself" it means that the mind should stand apart from the essence. Our weak essence can change at any moment, for it is dependent on many influences: on food, on our surroundings, on time, on the weather, and on a multitude of other causes. But the mind depends on very few influences and so, with a little effort, it can be kept in the desired direction. Every weak man can give the desired direction to his mind. But he has no power over his essence; great power is required to give direction to essence and keep essence to it. (Body and essence are the same devil.) Man's essence does not depend on him: it can be good-tempered or bad-tempered, irritable, cheerful or sad, excitable or placid. All these reactions may happen independently of him. A man may be cross because he has eaten something which has produced this effect.

If a man has no special attainments, nothing can be demanded of him. Therefore one cannot expect of him more than he has. From a purely practical point of view, a man is certainly not responsible in this respect; it is not his fault that he is what he is. So I take this fact into consideration, for I know that you cannot expect from a weak man something that requires strength. One can make demands of a man only in accordance with the strength he has to fulfill them.

Naturally the majority of people present are here because they lack this strength and have come here to acquire it. This means that they wish to be strong, and so strength is not expected of them.

But I am speaking now of another part of us, the mind. Speaking of the mind I know that each of you has enough strength, each of you can have the power and capacity to act not as he now acts.

The mind is capable of functioning independently,, but it also has the capacity of becoming identified with the essence, of becoming a function of the essence. In the majority of those present, the mind does not try to be independent but is merely a function.

I repeat, every grown-up man can achieve this; everyone who has a serious desire can do it. But no one tries.

And so, in spite of the fact that they have been here so long, in spite even of the desire they had for so long before coming here—they still stand on a level below that of a householder, that is, the level of a man who never intended to do anything.

I repeat again: at present we are not capable of controlling our states, and so it cannot be demanded of us. But when we acquire this capacity, corresponding demands will be made.

In order to understand better what I mean, I shall give you an example: now, in a calm state, not reacting to anything or anyone, I decide to set myself the task of establishing a good relationship with Mr. B., because I need him for business purposes and can do what I wish only with his help. But I dislike Mr. B. for he is a very disagreeable man. He understands nothing. He is a blockhead. He is vile, anything you like. I am so made that these traits affect me. Even if he merely looks at me, I become irritated. If he talks nonsense, I am beside myself. I am only a man, so I am weak and cannot persuade myself that I need not be annoyed—I shall go on being annoyed.

Yet *I* can control myself, depending on how serious my desire is to gain the end I wish to gain through him. If I keep to this purpose, to this desire, I shall be able to do so. No matter how annoyed I may be, this state of wishing will be in my mind. No matter how furious, how beside myself I am, in a corner of my mind I shall still remember the task I set myself. My mind is unable to restrain me from anything, unable to make me feel this or that toward him, but it is able to remember. I say to myself: "You need him, so don't be cross or rude to him." It could even happen that I would curse him, or hit him, but my mind would continue to pluck at me, reminding me that I should not do so. But the mind is powerless to do anything.

This is precisely what anyone who has a serious desire not to identify himself with his essence can do. This is what is meant by "separating the mind from the essence."

And what happens when the mind becomes merely a function? If I am annoyed, if I lose my temper, I shall think, or rather "it" will think, in accordance with this annoyance, and I shall see everything in the light of the annoyance. To hell with it!

And so I say that with a serious man—a simple, ordinary man without any extraordinary powers, but a grown-up man —whatever he decides, whatever problem he has set himself, that problem will always remain in his head. Even if he cannot achieve it in practice, he will always keep it in his mind. Even if he is influenced by other considerations, his mind will not forget the problem he has set himself. He has

a duty to perform and, if he is honest, he will strive to perform it, because he is a grown-up man.

No one can help him in this remembering, in this separation of oneself from oneself. A man must do it for himself. Only then, from the moment a man has this separation, can another man help him. Consequently, only from that moment can the Institute be of any use to him, if he came to the Institute seeking this help.

You have probably heard things said at lectures on the subject of what a man wishes. I can say about the majority of those who are here now that they do not know what they wish, they do not know why they are here. They have no basic desire. At every moment each one wishes something, but in him "it" wishes.

I have just given as an example that I wish to borrow money from Mr. B. I can get what I wish only by making this desire primary, the chief thing I want. And so, if each of you wishes something and the Institute knows what he wishes, the Institute will be able to help. But if a man has a million' desires, and no predominant one, then not a single desire can be satisfied, for years are needed to give one thing, and to give a million things. ... It is true that it is not easy to wish; but the mind must always remember what it wishes.

The only difference between a child and a grown-up man is in the mind. All the weaknesses are there, beginning with hunger, with sensitivity, with naivete; there is no difference. The same things are in a child and in a grown-up man: love, hate, everything. Functions are the same, receptivity is the same, equally they react, equally they are given to imaginary fears. In short there is no difference. The only difference is in the mind: we have more material, more logic than a child.

Now again as an example: A. looked at me and called me a fool. I lost my temper and went for him. A child does the same. But a grown-up man, who will be just as angry, will not hit him; he will restrain himself. For if he does hit him, the police will come and he is afraid of what other people will think; they will say: "What an uncontrolled man!" Or I refrain for fear he will run away from me tomorrow, and I need him for my work. In short, there are thousands of thoughts that may stop me or fail to stop me. But still these thoughts will be there.

A child has no logic, no material, and because of that his mind is only function. His mind will not stop to think—with him it will be "it thinks," but this "it thinks" will be colored with hate, which means identification.

There are no definite degrees between children and adults. Length of life does not mean maturity. A man may live to a hundred and yet remain a child; he may grow tall and be a child all the same, if we mean by a "child" one who has no independent logic in his mind. A man can be called "grown-up" only from the moment his mind has acquired this quality. So, from this point of view, it can be said that the Institute is only for grown-up people. Only a grown-up person can derive any profit from it. A boy or a girl of eight can be grown-up, and a man of sixty can be a child. The Institute

cannot make people grown-up; they have to be grown-up before they come to the Institute. Those who are in the Institute must be grown-up, and by this I mean grown-up not in their essence but in their mind.

Before going any further it is necessary to make clear what each person wishes, and what he or she can give to the Institute.

The Institute can give very little. The program of the Institute, the power of the Institute, the aim of the Institute, the possibilities of the Institute can be expressed in few words: the Institute can help one to be able to be a Christian. Simple! That is all! It can do so only if a man has this desire, and a man will have this desire only if he has a place where constant desire is present. Before being able, one must wish.

Thus there are three periods: to wish, to be able, and to be.

The Institute is the means. Outside the Institute it is possible to wish and to be; but here, to be able.

The majority of those present here call themselves Christians. Practically all are Christians in quotation marks. Let us examine this question like grown-up men.

—Dr. X., are you a Christian? What do you think, should one love one's neighbor or hate him? Who can love like a Christian? It follows that to be a Christian is impossible. Christianity includes many things; we have taken only one of them, to serve as an example. Can you love or hate someone to order?

Yet Christianity says precisely this, to love all men. But this is impossible. At the same time it is quite true that it is necessary to love. First one must be able, only then can one love. Unfortunately, with time, modern Christians have adopted the second half, to love, and lost view of the first, the religion which should have preceded it.

It would be very silly for God to demand from man what he cannot give.

Half of the world is Christian, the other half has other religions. For me, a sensible man, this makes no difference; they are the same as the Christian. Therefore it is possible to say that the whole world is Christian, the difference is only in name. And it has been Christian not only for one year but for thousands of years. There were Christians long before the advent of Christianity. So common sense says to me: "For so many years men have been Christians—how can they be so foolish as to demand the impossible?"

But it is not like that. Things have not always been as they are now. Only recently have people forgotten the first half, and because of that have lost the capacity for being able. And so it became indeed impossible.

Let every one ask himself, simply and openly, whether he can love all men. If he has had a cup of coffee, he loves; if not, he does not love. How can that be called Christianity?

In the past not all men were called Christians. Some members of the same family were called Christians, others pre-Christians, still others were called non-Christians.

So in one and the same family there could be the first, the second and the third. But now all call themselves Christians. It is naive, dishonest, unwise and despicable to wear this name without justification.

A Christian is a man who is able to fulfill the Commandments.

A man who is able to do all that is demanded of a Christian, both with his mind and his essence, is called a Christian with- out quotation marks. A man who, in his mind, wishes to do all that is demanded of a Christian, but can do so only with his mind and not with his essence, is called pre-Christian. And a man who can do nothing, even with his mind, is called a non- Christian.

Try to understand what I wish to convey by all this. Let your understanding be deeper and broader.