

# DIVINE NATURE

A Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Arthur M. Suggs  
Preached on Sunday, May 17, 2015

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

## A Modern Mystic in Consciousness

One of the great spiritual teachers of this generation — he's 87 now [Ed.: since deceased] — is a fellow by the name of David Hawkins, who wrote a rather famous book called *Power Versus Force* that has been very influential.<sup>1</sup> He's a psychiatrist, sort of a philosopher, and, more accurately I think, a spiritual researcher specializing in consciousness.

His path began this way:

"In 1939, I was a paperboy in rural Wisconsin and had a 17-mile route. One dark winter's night, I was caught miles from home in a blizzard. The temperature was 20 degrees below zero, and my bicycle toppled over on an icy, snow-covered field. A fierce wind ripped out the newspapers that I carried in my handlebar basket, strewing them across the terrain.

"I broke into tears of frustration and exhaustion; my clothes were frozen stiff, and I was far from home. To get out of the wind, I broke through the icy crust of a high snowbank and dug out a place to burrow into. The shivering stopped and was replaced by a delicious warmth — and then a state of peace beyond all description. This was accompanied by a suffusion of light and a Presence of infinite love, which had no beginning and no end, and which was indistinguishable from my own essence.

"I became oblivious of the physical body and surroundings as my awareness fused with this all-present illuminated state. The mind grew silent; all thought stopped. An infinite Presence was all that was or could be, and it was beyond time or description.

"After what seemed like eons, I was drawn back to an awareness of someone shaking my knee — my father's anxious face subsequently appeared. There was great reluctance to return to the body and all that it entailed — but I loved my father dearly, and because of his anguish, I chose to do so. In a detached way, I sympathized with his fear of my death, but at the same time, the concept of "death" seemed absurd."

## The Mystery of Incarnation

Mystics throughout the ages have known, at least intuitively, that there is really only one abiding spiritual insight, and everything else seems to follow from it:

"That this visible world is an active doorway to the invisible world. That the invisible world is much larger, greater, more expansive than the visible. And despite appearances, the seeming wrongness of this, the obvious wrongness of this is that the invisible is much more real than the visible."

We can call this "the mystery of incarnation." We can call it an essential union of the material and the spiritual worlds. We can call

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<sup>1</sup>This sermon is one of a series on Modern Mystics and Spiritual Masters.

it “Christ,” and awareness of this is called Christ-consciousness.

Our outer physical world and its inner spiritual significance must come together for there to be any wholeness, let alone holiness.

The result, though, is both deep joy and a resounding sense of coherent beauty. What was personified in the body of Jesus was a manifestation of this one universal truth: That matter is, and always has been, the hiding place for the spirit, forever offering itself to be discovered anew.

This is what Jesus meant when he said, “I am the gate” (John 10:7). The mystics throughout the centuries somehow knew that “the beyond” was not really beyond, but rather the depths of the here and now.

### **The Big Bang: Explosion of Love & Beauty**

John Duns Scotus, a 13<sup>th</sup> Century philosopher (1266-1308) — I’m sure you’ve been reading him lately — put this intuition into a philosophical form. For Scotus the Christ Mystery was the blueprint for all of reality from the very beginning. He said that “God’s first ‘idea’ was to pour out divine, infinite love into finite, visible form.”

The Big Bang is our scientific name for that first idea; Christ is our theological name for that idea. And in Big Bang style, all it really is is the exploding of love and beauty outward into all directions.

Sadly, many haven’t been taught Christ as an archetype or as a model for all of creation, despite scripture being rather clear about it (Ephesians 1:3-14; Colossians 1:15-20).

Instead we spend most of our time trying to prove that Jesus was “God.” Therefore, our religion is best in front of others, and this solidifies our own ranks. We resist some-

times letting Christ “hold all things together,” to use the phrase from Colossians (1:17).

We hold tightly to our bit of Jesus and remain blissfully ignorant of the cosmic Christ.

[Judy Giblin reads I Corinthians 15:20-28.]

“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ.

“But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

“The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For ‘God has put all things in subjection under his feet.’ But when it says, ‘All things are put in subjection,’ it is plain that this does not include the one who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the One who put all things in subjection under him, so that God may be all in all.”

### **Christ Is Eternal; Jesus Lives in Time**

Many Christians seem to think of “Christ” as Jesus’ last name. Like it’s Jesus Christ, one of the Christ brothers down the street. It’s a title. It’s a description of his cosmic role in history. The title itself is cosmic.

There has never been a single soul that has not been suffused with Christ, even those we judge as evil in the ages before the incarnation of Jesus.

Christ is eternal; Jesus was born in time. Jesus without Christ invariably becomes time- and culturally-bound, becoming exclu-

sive, proprietary, parochial. Christ without Jesus becomes abstract metaphysics, a mere ideology without personal engagement, let alone any passion.

Love always needs an object. Love in theory is meaningless and worthless. You need to love somebody if it's love at all. One of the blessings of our time is that a truly dynamic unity between human and divine, personified and cosmic, Jesus and Christ is slowly being recognized.

It says in the New Testament, "As in him, so also in us, and also in the whole universe." This is our conclusion! Now note the progression. As in him, so also in us, so also in the whole universe. Christ as the beginning, as a pioneer, and then along come the brothers and the sisters, you and me. And then the universe. The word behind it is *pleroma*, from which we get the word plural, and it's usually translated just simply as the all, the whole, the all in all, as that phrase from I Corinthians ended it.

What most religion treats as separate (matter and Spirit, humanity and divinity) actually isn't separate, never has been. Spirit is forever captured in matter, and matter is the place where Spirit shows itself. It is one sacred world.

### **Christ Was the First Idea In the Mind of God**

As John Duns Scotus taught, "Christ was the first idea in the mind of God." And then Pierre Teilhard de Chardin filled out the cosmic schema by calling Christ the final "Omega Point" in all of history! We live in and between this cosmic Alpha and Omega, with history moving forward with clear meaning and direction.

"Whenever the material and the spiritual coincide, there is the Christ." And it's coinciding all the time. Jesus accepted that identity and walked it into history. He was fully human and fully divine just like the confessions of old always said. And thus we could begin to imagine how the two could coexist when it seems as though they can't.

But now, beyond our imagining, we realize the material and the spiritual are one, that humanity and divinity are forever one, the physical plumbed to its depth finds transcendence! The hiding place of God is also the place of revelation — here and now and everywhere.

### **As in Him, so also in Us**

Let me end with a quote from David Hawkins on how we are increasingly aware of this:

"The evolution of consciousness requires a wide range of opportunities and a playing field that affords almost unlimited options for development. If human life represents a learning process, then society is the ideal school that affords an extremely wide range of opportunities for numerous levels of consciousness to develop, progress, define, identify, and grasp endless subtleties as well as learn the more gross lessons.

The ego is extremely tenacious and therefore often seems to require extreme conditions before it lets go of a positionality. It often takes the collective experience of millions of people over many centuries to learn what appears upon examination to be a simple and obvious truth, namely that peace is better than war or love is better than hate."

"As in him, so also in us, and also in the whole universe."

*Amen.*