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A vision that filled Brother Klaus with terror...

IT MUST have been after some years of leading a very austere life of prayer and penance down in the gorge of the Melchaa, called Ranft, that a most extraordinary "vision" hit or overcame Klaus. It left him stunned and terrified for days.

The oldest source, Wölflin's biography, narrates: "All who came to him were filled with terror at the first glance. As to the cause of this, he himself used to say that he had seen a piercing light resembling a human face. At the sight of it he feared that his heart would burst into little pieces. Overcome with terror, he instantly turned his face away and fell to the ground. And this was the reason why his face was now terrible to others".

This is in its simple language a very genuine account of what he experienced and reminds me of a similar event recorded by Gopi Krishna and by other biographies of eastern mystics, an experience of the "mysterium tremendum".

It must have been a vision of a terrifying violence, to be compared with a heavy stone breaking the smooth surface of a silent pond, a splash followed by wave after wave of concentric circles.

It must have given him a very deep shock, so that it took him days and weeks to recover, to

**By Father
Paul Bossard**

assimilate it and regain his balance, to render it intelligible to the mind and to formulate it into language.

The picture of the wheel and its constant meditation was of great help. His faith and the teaching of his church gave him the proper language.

This is confirmed by another contemporary source, the "Pilgrim's Tract": "And he (Brother Klaus) began to speak again and said to me: 'If it does not trouble you, I would like to show you my book, in which I am learning and seeking the art of this doctrine', and he brought me

a figure, drawn like a wheel with six spokes."

That Brother Klaus was involved in deep studies must have occurred to Gundolfingen when he wrote: "Did he not likewise learn in the High School of the Holy Spirit the representation of the wheel, which he caused to be painted in his chapel, and through which, as in a clear mirror, was reflected the entire essence of the Godhead?"

He certainly was not a romantic hermit, but a remarkable man of science and study who learnt the hard way of "Following Christ", which gave him insight, coupled with a kind and warm heart.

Can we wonder that curious theologians constantly tried to set him trap after trap and denounce him before the Inquisition as a heretic, because he had experienced a terrifying vision of the Holy Trinity?

C.G. Jung writes: "God is a primordial experience of man, and from the remotest times humanity has taken inconceivable pains either to portray this baffling experience, to assimilate it by means of interpretation, speculation and dogma, or else to deny it.

"And again and again it has happened, and still happens, that one hears too much about the 'good' God and knows him too well, so that one confuses him with one's own ideas and regards them as sacred, because they can be traced back a couple of thousand years.

"This is a superstition and an idolatry every bit as bad as the Bolshevik delusion that 'God' can be educated out of existence. Even a modern theologian like Gogarten is quite sure that God can only be good.

"A good man does not terrify me - what then would Gogarten have made of the Blessed Brother Klaus? Presumably he would have had to explain to him that he had seen the devil in person".

Thanks to God he had Heimo am Grund, who had some knowledge and experience of

Christian mystics and a solid knowledge of theology, who helped him to give us, after 400 years, such a modern piece of sound Christian insight into the

mystery of God and the human person.

I hope he will be not only my brother Klaus, but yours too!

To be continued



An illustration in the *Chronicle of Lucerne* by Diepold Shilling: Heimo am Grund and a witness with Brother Klaus at the Diet of Stans.



His return to the Diet and the peace formula.

ERRATA: "The Hermit in the Ranft: A great Power for Peace" (August issue). On Page four the last paragraph should read: "Nikolaus was the first son of Henry von Flüe, a rich landowner of Sachseln and of Hemma Roberta of Wolfenschiessen in the Canton Unterwalden."