

'Unless you become as little children . . .'

by Rosemary Haughton

'Unless you become as little children you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.' It is possible that this is more literally true than we realize.

This article is an attempt to discover what kind of thing is going on in people who get into ecstatic states of one kind or another, whether they are a good thing or a bad thing, and whether they tell us anything about the more 'normal' requirements for spiritual 'conversion' and growth.

'Ecstatic states' covers a multitude of—let's say experiences. The phrase includes the L.S.D. 'trip', the 'speaking in tongues' of the charismatic movement, the deep trance of the shaman and the dark 'unknowing' of the mystic. Can one lump all those together? They don't seem to be a well-assorted party, especially if we include (and maybe we should) sexual 'ecstasy', and the experiences induced by voodoo rituals, or in 'covens' of latter-day witches, and possibly even the 'pink elephants' of the alcoholic. Imagine a T.V. programme in which the interviewer collected individuals each of whom had experienced one of those kinds of 'ecstasy'. It seems likely that the discussion would be inconclusive, to say the least, though the affair would probably have some lively moments.

Yet these are all, in some sense, 'ecstatic' states, and it is important to try to understand what actually happens to people in them, as opposed to what they *think* happens. I don't mean just that if a 'tripper' sees notes of music as beautiful flowers he is seeing something that, for most people, 'isn't there'. I mean that the personal and spiritual interpretation of such experiences given by the person it happens to doesn't necessarily tell us much about the event, because it depends on the kind of way in which he or she has been taught to understand it. This is a common experience. For instance, if my ear aches, I assume that there is something wrong with my ear. This *may* be true, but a doctor may actually discover that it is really caused by something wrong with my teeth, and is a 'referred' pain. On the other hand a different type of culture might conclude that the pain was caused by a spell put on me by the local witch, and the cure would involve getting her to take it off, rather than treating either the ear or the teeth.

The study of 'ecstatic' states might have been regarded a few years ago as an interesting side-line for anthropologists or alienists or hagiographers. Now, there is the drug-culture among young people on the one hand, and the growth of the charismatic movement in the Churches on the other, together with a smaller but influential

following for many forms of meditation and transcendental experience by mental disciplines of various kinds. So this is no longer an academic question. It concerns all of us, young ones and old ones, the ones who want to experiment and the ones who are scared of the whole thing.

It's a huge and baffling subject, and one that rouses violent emotions. My reason for returning into this dangerous and ambiguous territory is that some recent researches of my own involved the study of the system known as 'transactional analysis'. In the course of this I found myself almost literally stumbling over some possible answers to these questions. That is, I caught my mental feet in them, when I was looking for something else, and then turned round and realized I was on to something!

So it seems worth while to pass on the information, with the clear statement that they are the guesses of an unqualified enquirer, and sincere apologies to those who really are qualified. It is necessary to give, first, a brief and I hope not too inaccurate account of the method itself.

The basis of the psychotherapy of 'transactional analysis' (for those who haven't heard of it) is the realization that there are, as it were, three 'characters' in all of us, and their interchanges make up the way we live and relate to others. First there are two known as the 'Parent' and the 'Child', and their presence is directly observable because of 'recordings' in the brain which can 'replay' at any time, if the appropriate stimulus is applied. Both 'characters' are more or less 'set' by the age of about five, though they can be modified or reinforced later. Both actually record *all* conscious impressions, like a continuous tape-recording, though we usually only 'remember' quite a small amount, consciously. The 'Child' recording contains the impressions of the original 'small person', and it is, of course, mainly emotional, much of it naturally 'pre-verbal' or even 'pre-birth'. It is very strong, because a baby's reactions and feelings *are* very strong and intense. (Grown-ups often feel that because a baby is small, his feelings are too. The reverse is the case. Being small and helpless, he has no defences or control, and his emotions are overwhelming.) Much of this Child recording is, naturally, of *reactions* to grown-up behaviour and words, but the record of what the big people *did* and *said* is the 'Parent' recording. At that age, the sayings of parents and parent-figures come through as all-powerful, absolute and unchangeable curses or blessings of magical force. What the Parent says creates the life-pattern or 'script' which often determines the way a whole life is lived. Later, one can detect shifts in the person from 'Parent' to 'Child' behaviour by noticing expressions, mannerisms, tones of voice. An ego-shift to the Parent is often shown by a deeper voice, by frowning, or commanding tones. The Child may be whiny, 'shy', coy, seductive, cheeky, etc., according to the kind of treatment that person had, and the kind of behaviour that

was found to 'work' with the particular grown-ups. But the Child is also the one who is creative, sensual, adventurous—if these are not prevented by the Parent.

Fortunately for the human race there is a third in this drama. This begins to develop at about ten months, and is called the 'Adult' because it is the one who can make real, *personal*, observations of events, words, feeling (even one's own) and draw conclusions and make decisions. Later, it can contradict the Parent, on the basis of observed fact, and change direction in consequence. It can tell the Child, for instance, that dentists are *not* malevolent ogres, and therefore the sickening fear and evasions are inappropriate, and should (and can) be controlled or at least ignored. So obviously the Adult is vital to sane, flexible development, and is where 'free-will' comes into the picture. But often the Parent is too strong for it (the Parent commands, after all, were impressed very firmly and powerfully and often come through as 'conscience'). Or the Child may be too timid to obey the Adult. So we get people who know perfectly well what is the right and sensible and good thing to do—but somehow never do it.

It is important for the subject in hand to remember that the Child is the 'original' member of the cast. He is potentially—though never actually, because Parent influences get to work at once, even before birth—'innocent' and *whole* and 'sinless'. And there is reason to believe (if Jung is right) that the Child has 'layers' of awareness which link up with a *racial* 'Child', with the myths and symbols of archaic (that is, original, not 'primitive') man. At the level of original *personal* consciousness, also, the Child's type of awareness is *undifferentiated* between the senses. He hasn't yet learned—which he has to do to survive—to distinguish touch from sight and smell from hearing. He doesn't distinguish a sensation from its cause, either.

When life is going reasonably well, when a whole culture is pleased with itself, on the whole (as ours was until recently), then the Parent recording will tend to provide an optimistic and positive view of life, varying according to social status, and so on, of course. The Adult will observe that, by and large, the Parent sayings ('Work hard and you'll get on', 'Be respectable', 'Fold your clothes', 'Say "thank you"', 'The government will do something about it') are sensible, though uninspiring. The Child's efforts at rebellion, in the 'teen years, will be tolerated by the self-confident Parent and, sure enough, Johnny settles down to a decent job in his twenties.

But when a culture is coming unstuck, as ours is, the Parent wisdom can look fairly silly. What is more, the Adult will often find the whole situation too confusing and complex to work on effectively. With the Adult comparatively impotent, and the Parent guidance visibly irrelevant, the tendency of the Child to rebel is much stronger, and more likely to last. This happened at the break-up of the Roman Empire, it happened at the end of the Middle Ages

when the Church was 'losing credibility', it happened when the eighteenth-century 'enlightenment' left out too many areas of human experience, and the Child went on the rampage in Evangelical or Romantic trappings. It often happens among oppressed minorities who have lost not only their political but also their spiritual self-confidence, such as the West Indian Negroes and some South American Indians. It is happening now to the whole of Western culture.

In this kind of situation, the child in individuals and in a whole culture is disinclined to give in to the Parent's traditional wisdom. The Adult rejects the Parent, but can't provide much alternative. It therefore offers little opposition to the efforts of the Child to look for happiness wherever available. It will even produce arguments in support. In this kind of climate, the search for ecstatic experience prospers. The search is not confined to such periods, of course. At any time and place there are specially gifted people (or, rather, people *less deprived* of original gifts than most of us) who can, somehow, return to, or recapture, the very deep Child type of awareness. Such people are mediums, mystics and seers. They can often be aware of the minds of others, or control the behaviour of animals or insects. They 'see visions and dream dreams'. What they *do* with these experiences is another matter, and we shall come back to that. They may foretell the future, lay curses, heal sickness, and in other ways transcend the usual 'laws' of time and matter. They may feel they have known the presence of God himself. But these people are exceptional. It would be fascinating to make a study of the combinations of circumstances which produce people like this, though at present it is mostly guesswork. But it seems extremely possible that, with all the differences, such people are able to be, at times, the 'original' Child, with an undifferentiated experience, somehow still 'in touch with' other creatures and even other times and places. They can be said to recover the awareness, and the powers, of the self which is somehow one with the Self of God—perhaps at the 'moment' or 'experience' of *coming into being*, as an individual, yet still not cut off from the source of all being.

But it is not necessary to be specially gifted to have such experiences, as tribes which use hallucinogens ritually have known for centuries. Drugs occurring in certain plants, or manufactured synthetically, can produce similar experiences, as more and more young people discover. One characteristic which recurs in L.S.D. experiences is a loss of differentiation in sense experience, so that music is 'seen' and touch sensations 'heard'. Also there is often a sense of independence of the body, of control over matter and even of movement from one place to another, though the body remains motionless. Above all, everything seen, heard and felt, and all emotions, reach an extraordinary pitch of intensity, whether they are pleasant (in which case the person feels he is 'like god') or unpleasant,

in which case there may be such terror and horror that the person becomes ill, at least for a time.

The connection, here, with the feelings of the Child is clear. The drug knocks out the Adult altogether, so that the usual way the brain adjusts impressions to verifiable effects and 'objective' data does not interfere. The Parent may make an appearance, since Parent recordings start at birth, but it will be in a very strange form, like the magical appearance of witches and ogres in fairy-tales. (This is because that is how the grown-up voices and deeds appear to the very small child—inexplicable, huge, strange and often frightening.) External objects, too, appear distorted or unfamiliar, because there is no Adult to 'tame' them, and the borderline between self and non-self is shadowy or non-existent.

When the 'trip' is over, consciousness returns to normal (unless the 'bad trip' produces mental illness) but there is a memory of the experience, so that often the person's way of looking at things is changed and made more vivid. (Some artists seem to have something like L.S.D. vision all the time, alongside perfectly normal awareness.) But the sense of liberation, the awareness of having transcended normal limitations, has important effects, for the 'trip' consciousness is so much stronger and more delightful (if it is delightful) than anything else in life that it naturally makes the rest seem dull, narrow and futile. When the Adult comes back into action, it has this very strong impression to add to the normal 'data' of consciousness, so it is not surprising if the experience easily changes people's lives. They have found a new world, and the rest can go hang. It probably will, according to some advocates of the drug-culture, and confident prophecies about the imminent collapse of the existing economy and culture, while everyone 'drops out and turns on', seem reasonable enough from that point of view.

The long-term results depend entirely on the 'setting' of the experience. Solitary experiment can be terrifying and disastrous, and all those who advocate L.S.D. insist that a 'guide' is necessary. But if the 'guide' is young and inexperienced, or older and out to be a 'Messiah', or if the whole group is disoriented and without a strong 'Adult', then the guidance can easily lead to further 'alienation' and rejection. Where the guidance is part of a religion (old or new), it can make people's lives much happier—naturally, because the oppressive Parent is switched off and its place taken by the guides or wise-men of the new community. But these sects are always of the 'world-rejecting' variety. They are there to cultivate the inner world, not to improve the outer, which is unimportant and unreal to them. Some explicitly deride the notion of 'doing good' as a betrayal of the inner vision. Contact with the 'outside' world is intended to bring others 'in'. The philosophy is characteristically unrealistic about political and economic possibilities, yet it can, and does, make people happy. This is because the Child is returned to the original

'Paradise', and guarded there by the community from ogres and dragons who might destroy it. It is a real experience of the 'original Child', and is therefore good. In rare cases it can lead on to a more complete development, no longer needing drugs, as if the person had been given a fresh start, a *new birth*. This is what is desired and often claimed, but on the whole, if it is a new birth, it doesn't seem to lead to a new life, but to a periodically renewed, though blissful, 'Childhood'.

The ecstasies produced by ritual initiations in some sects are different. There are so many versions that it is unwise to generalize, but in most cases it seems that, again, the person is returned to the state of the original Child, but this time in order to be, in a sense, 're-Parented' and made into a different person—perhaps a god, or a representative of the god. (In some cases the 'Shaman' or mystic initiate has gone through a crisis having the character of mental illness. This may well be because the 'Parent' violently resists the attempt to wipe him out.) Afterwards the chosen person has special power of divination, or healing, and so on, and is 'in touch' with the spirit world. This is common nowadays among oppressed minorities, who thus escape from the 'slave' personality imposed by their Parent recording of humiliation and hopeless subservience. Some, at least, can receive this new birth, and thus give meaning and power to the lives of the whole group.

It is hard to say with certainty how the ritual does this, but it seems that the ritual experiences—rhythm of hypnotic intensity, incense, darkness, sometimes sexual activity, or in some cases pain—can 'knock out' the Adult, by disorganizing the sense-impressions and powers of observation on which it depends. In the absence of Adult control, the powerful influence of the ritual words and symbols can make new impressions in the Child, strong enough to 'wipe off' or at least drown out the original Parent ones. Whether the L.S.D. experience could be used in the same way, I don't know, but the trance of the initiate in an ecstatic sect appears to be much deeper than, and of a different kind from, a hallucinogenic 'trip', in fact the person appears to be unconscious of the outer world, whereas the 'tripper' has rather a heightened and altered consciousness of it. The similarity lies in the way in which the Adult is knocked out, and some aspect of the original Child is released and reaches consciousness. A similar thing happens, quite normally, in successful sex experience. The ecstasy of sexual pleasure equally knocks out the Parent (which is why it is useful as a means of 'teenage rebellion!') and also the Adult, who has nothing to say about this. The Child is the sensuous, creative, emotional member of the 'cast' and sex is a Child experience with the same advantages and the same limitations and the same need for 'guidance' as the other kinds of ecstasy. It is often included in the drug 'scene' as well as in some ecstatic rituals, for the same kinds of reasons.

The highly emotional conversions of revivalist or evangelical religion have been criticized because the reactions are not 'rational', and indeed when the experience wears off there is often a rapid loss of 'faith'. But the whole point of such an experience is to cause the person to 'repent', that is, reject and get free of, older patterns of behaviour, which have so far ruled one's life—in other words, the Parent 'script', or order-for-life, including feelings of guilt for Parent-forbidden behaviour. The heightened emotions of the revival meeting, working on existing discontents which are the Child's underground efforts to find freedom, once more leave the Adult with nothing much to work on, and the greater authority of the voice of new preacher thus knocks out the old Parent without much difficulty. The Child responds to the offer of freedom and new life, with an ecstasy of joy. The Adult is not entirely knocked out, this isn't strictly an ecstatic state except perhaps very briefly, but it has the same character in that the essential ingredient is the release of the Child from the Parent (the old Adam!).

The experiences of people in the Jesus movement show how great is the underground pressure of the bewildered and unsatisfied Child in our culture. Young people of this generation are, in fact, more than usually susceptible to 're-Parenting' of some kind, because the original Parent script is often indecisive and lacking in confidence, since the grown-ups themselves lack confidence in directing their children. The 're-Parenting' is like an 'over-recording' on the tape, blotting out the first one. It may wipe out the first entirely, as far as we can tell, but sometimes the two play together at times, which is very confusing! And sometimes the 'second' Parent, though immediately effective, is not as strong as the original one, which was only temporarily disabled. What happens after re-Parenting of the 'conversion' type depends, again, on the kind of guidance available. If there is none, or the original Parent is powerful, he will make a come-back and the person will look back to the conversion experience merely with vague nostalgia, or even with scorn, as to a moment of aberration.

If the Adult is strong, any outside guide may be less necessary, for the Adult can act on the new knowledge and viewpoint, decisively. But in most cases the continuing support of a like-minded community with a good and consistent 'life-style' is vital to perseverance. This can be seen very clearly in the case histories of converted junkies, in the popular books of David Wilkerson. The obvious difference between this experience and the other ecstatic ones already discussed is that it is, in a sense, 'once for all'. The new birth is intended to lead to a new growth and does not depend on the recurrence of the ecstatic state. It is explicitly intended to take effect in changing behaviour and relationships, in a new community. The emphasis is more 'outward', at least among the community. Though some 'Jesus groups' are, in fact, very secretive and 'world

rejecting', they are not ecstatic sects, nor are members expected to have trances or be guided by perceptible voices or visions. The 'Spirit' is 'felt' in daily life, not in ecstasy.

The same thing applies to some kinds of meditation technique, but these don't normally start with a bang. They aim at gradually 'disconnecting' the conscious mind from its environment, and withdrawing into a 'region' where outward forms and ideas do not penetrate at all. This means that both the Parent (rules, opinions) and Adult (observation, reason, decision) are left outside, but there is generally no great climax of emotion. Because the journey is slow and gradual, it seems to lack the violent emotional joy of the suddenly liberated Child. On the contrary, although there may be accompanying emotions of joy and peace and sorrow for sin, etc., the main thing is the gradual discovery of a world beyond joy or sorrow, or rather of a world where joy is so complete that it has no emotional repercussions. Some kinds of meditation seem to be no more than a way to achieve a peaceful and 'whole' personality (no small thing, anyway) but others desire something greater. The real 'mystical breakthrough' happens beyond the point where discipline and detachment have eliminated distractions. Is it still the recovery of the original Child? Possibly it goes 'further back' or, if you like, 'further in' than that, to the 'point of insertion' where the individual is 'attached' to God, at what some mystics called the 'fine point of the soul'. Although it is not essential or inevitable, in most cases and at some stages this process is accompanied by ecstatic experiences, at least once or twice, or by visions, and so on. This seems to show that what is going on is linked to those ecstasies where the Child is obviously dominant. And here, too, the 'setting' matters. It matters whether these experiences are regarded as ways to personal perfection and freedom, or ways to come to the knowledge of God for his own sake, or for the sake of others who have still to be 'saved'. The Buddha turned back from the final freedom in order to show others the Way, and many of the greatest mystics have explicitly said that they were 'sent back' to help the rest. Evelyn Underhill, one of the greatest students of mysticism, felt that this willingness to return to 'the world' after reaching the heights was, in fact, the perfection of the mystic vocation. Those who remained on the heights were, in her view, certainly great but less than perfect.

This element of communication of the divine has always seemed important in Christian mysticism, and to some Eastern types also. It is, however, one reason why some Christians are extremely suspicious of another kind of ecstatic state, that associated with the 'gift of tongues', prophecy, and so on. This is described in the New Testament, and most Churches are content to leave it there, feeling it was a special and peculiar gift, suited to the early days of Christianity. However, it has recurred in small sects at various times as well as in the lives of individual holy people, in revivalist move-

ments and in the last century in the 'classical' Pentecostal sects of Evangelical Protestantism. More recently this 'charismatic' type of experience has spread rapidly in the older and larger Christian Church, with astonishing results. The 'gift of tongues' means that, after a person has been prayed over by the group, he or she feels a real urge to praise God out loud, and does so, not in the formal language but in 'other tongues'. This *may* be some unknown language, but is more often in 'babbling' syllables, meaningless to the person using them, and to those hearing them, but carrying a great sense of joyful openness to God, an ability to praise with complete freedom. The lack of inhibition, the sense of relaxed and bubbling joy, the overflowing of love to God and to all those who are present, so that all are 'caught up' in the Spirit—all this seems to show that here, also, we have an example of the release of the Child. The babbling speech may well be related to the pre-verbal sounds of a baby, who 'communicates' only joy, not sense. The feeling of being 'one with' the others present, and indeed with all whom one meets, is also typical of the original Child. The Parent, however religious, is set aside as irrelevant to this new and overwhelming experience, but the Adult is not 'knocked out', for the person can *control* the gift. The 'speaking' in tongues (also singing) is not an uncontrollable force, like the spirit-voices of the Shaman or medium who is 'possessed' by some other powerful 're-Parenting'. It can be begun, and stopped, at will, at least after a little practice, and the person is entirely conscious and rational throughout, though filled with a joy beyond any normal pleasure.

Because this type of release of the Child is done with the co-operation and approval of the Adult, there is no 'come down'. The first, overwhelming joy gradually changes to a more habitual sense of God's presence, and the person is aware of a new sensitivity to spiritual things, also a vulnerability which can, and usually does, bring great suffering. This, as all the mystics agree, is the price of *continued* growth in the Spirit. The re-born person goes on growing, and does not need to repeat the 'receiving of the Spirit', though the gift of tongues continues as a 'gift of prayer', keeping the person open to God and men. This is not mysticism, in the proper sense, and the person who thus 'receives the Spirit' may be very far from saintly, but it is a 're-birth' from which new growth can begin, and mystical gifts may develop, in some cases.

The development, again, depends a great deal on the doctrine of the group. In 'classical' Pentecostal Churches the gifts of the Spirit have a central place, and are needed to assure the person (and the Church) that he or she really has turned to God and become fully a Christian. For Catholics and other 'traditional' Christians, the charismatic gifts are graces given 'for the sake of the Church', they are needed and they are valued, but they are not a required proof of salvation. The danger with such ecstatic experience is that the

experience itself will absorb the person's spiritual energy, and lead to a world-rejecting, narcissistic spirituality—as, indeed, some types of meditation philosophy also do. There is great need, therefore, for explicit teaching, in groups who expect and receive these gifts, that shows them (as St Paul taught) as intended for the good of all, so that the Gospel may be preached more effectively, and the love of God poured out on his world without the hindrance of those doubts and inhibitions which are so common among modern Christians.

Regarded as a means of total spiritual growth, it is clear that the charismatic gifts and mysticism proper are in a different class from other kinds of ecstasy. Even though the psychological basis is the same, in that all depends on the liberation of the Child from the original Parent 'scripting', these others often seem to consist of a *repetition* of some Child experience, or re-entry into the original 'Paradise', which does not necessarily lead to any change in the other areas of life. It may even discourage change, by making 'normal' life seem empty and quite unimportant. This is not always so; as we saw, the right kind of guide can sometimes use a 'trip' to initiate real growth, as Huxley and other older 'initiates' did. (Huxley apparently 'recanted' before his death, but whether it was the 'drug-culture' he repented of, or some results of it, I cannot learn.) This is less likely in the case of ecstatic sects using deep trance to contact the spirit world, because their doctrine stresses the unreality of 'this time', and the ecstasy is the entry into 'original time' or Paradise, where the only true reality lies. The whole point of life, therefore, is to penetrate and inhabit this reality. There is also a danger, in such ecstatic states, where the Adult is wholly (or very nearly) 'de-commissioned', that the re-Parenting produces a virtually passive character, in which the person will do whatever is suggested. This happens in 'murder sects' such as the Mau Mau of Kenya. It can happen with immature personalities in 'charismatic' sects, which is a reason for the suspicions of some Christians in regard to this type of experience.

But the charismatic experience is in some sense a 're-birth', therefore the beginning of a whole life. And afterwards the gradual and disciplined and extremely arduous development of mystical prayer is (sometimes, but not necessarily) the way spiritual growth takes place. One of the encouraging signs connected with the charismatic movement is that people who become involved in it often begin to *want* to develop personal and private prayer. This links up the 'new'-old gifts of the Spirit with the traditional development of contemplative prayer. This is not normally a sudden gift, though there have been cases where people seem to have 'always' had it, but it seems likely that the release of the Child from Parent domination (however it happens) is necessary for contemplative prayer. What used to be known as 'discursive meditation', on the other hand, is at first clearly a 'Parent' activity, reinforcing the patterns of Parent

scripting. Traditionally, this has to stop entirely before 'contemplation' can be experienced, and this probably happens because the increasing self-giving of the person (by humility, self-discipline, and strong desire for God) gradually weakens the Parent script, or at any rate the obstructive bits of it, and at the same time the Adult (reason, observation, decision) is used in this type of prayer, and is likely to expose aspects of Parent scripting which are not relevant or are a hindrance to the Gospel view of human life. The aspiring Child is encouraged, and often 'consolations' and near-ecstatic joy show fairly clearly what is happening. Finally, the person *cannot* 'meditate'. (This kind of 'meditation' has nothing to do with the technique of mental *detachment* from reason and the senses, referred to above, which *can* lead more directly to contemplative prayer. Again, this is not necessarily so. It would take too long to explain why.) At this point, as I suggested, the person has reached 'further in' than the usual 'original Child' experience, and there is little that any psychological jargon can say about what goes on.

All that has been said so far shows that there is a basic resemblance between the various kinds of ecstatic states, because they are all connected with the liberation of the 'original Child'. The links between the chemical changes which take place in the body (whether made deliberately as with L.S.D. or merely 'accidentally' as with fasting, rhythmic music, etc.) and the spiritual changes are obscure, and much more research is needed. Which is cause and which is effect? It seems that sometimes the chemical change leads to the spiritual experience, and sometimes the other way round, as in 'conversion' experiences. (There are many similar ambiguities of cause and effect, as in the case of asthmatics who can get an attack either from some emotional crisis or from something to which the person is allergic, such as pollen.)

The big differences in nature and value depend mainly on what people *do* about the experience. The great mystics have all regarded ecstatic phenomena with varying degrees of suspicion, because they often involve silencing the Adult, leaving the Child unprotected from the wrong kind of re-Parenting, or even from a come-back by the original Parent. It is necessary, for right and 'whole' growth, that the experience should occur as part of an expected and understood response to God, and one which has recognized ways in which to go on growing. In this respect the charismatic gifts are especially valuable at this time, because they liberate 'over-Parented' people, but do so in the context of a full Christian life, which provides plenty for the Adult to work one, as well as a new 'Parent' in the form of the ancient and tested tradition of a Church with a world-wide mission.

The limited purpose of this article has been simply to show what kind of thing is going on in 'ecstatic' states. We have seen that when Jesus said we had to turn and 'become like little children' he was, in fact, stating the literal truth. We can only know him fully with the

original Child in ourselves, who is, at the deepest point (or the 'highest', however you think of it), our 'Self'.

But children need to grow up—they must not be 'scandalized' by wrong guidance, as Jesus said. Strangely, the growth of the re-born Child guided by the Adult, drawing on and carefully interpreting the perennial 'Communal Parent' which is the Church, means that the Child does not lose its childlikeness—that is, its joy, creativity, longing and hope. Rather, it is gradually freed (by the will of Adult and Communal Parent) from whatever impedes its return, with Jesus, to the Father. It is interesting to remember that some of the earliest pictures of Jesus show him as a young boy—the 'Puer Aeternus' of mythology. He is the Child of God, and it is by this that we, also, are made Children of God.

Mythology and Marian Dogma

by Geoffrey Turner

On the 1st of November, 1950, Pope Pius XII announced in the Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*, as an indispensable part of Christian belief, revealed by God, that 'Mary, the immaculate and perpetually virgin Mother of God, after the completion of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into the glory of heaven'. It is difficult to know what sort of sense to give to this kind of dogmatic formulation, but it would seem that sense has to be made of it because it has been accepted by the general consensus of the Church and defined by the highest authority as being an integral part of Christian doctrine for all Roman Catholics. We have to make theological sense of it in order to be faithful to the transmission of the Marian traditions throughout the ages of the Church. This is not to suggest that we should relax our criticism of these traditions, but I take it that we cannot be faithful to Christian tradition and at the same time adopt the liberal attitude of dispensing as irrelevant with those dogmatic traditions which do not meet our taste. Marian dogma cannot be shrugged off by Roman Catholics as being a Catholic aberration of Christian tradition; after the Papal definitions of the immaculate conception of Mary in 1854 and of her bodily assumption in 1950 the dogmas have to be taken with the utmost seriousness, and if it is found to be difficult to reconcile an easy understanding of these dogmas with more fundamental aspects of Christian doctrine then we must adopt a more broad-ranging interpretation of these beliefs. What is required in this instance is an exercise in dogmatic hermeneutics.

The dogmatic formulation of the bodily assumption of Mary is usually accepted literally, in its simplest sense, but this literal understanding is clearly unsatisfactory and is why the dogma requires