

# “THE STEPHEN (Multidimensional<sup>1</sup>) EXPERIENCE”

## *ONE: The Author's Introduction*

You are holding in your hands an apparent impossibility. Teaching delivered two thousand years after his own death by stoning in ancient Judaea, teaching delivered by the first Christian martyr, St. Stephen.

Speaking as a friend and brother, he interprets Christianity in the light of the direct experience of Spirit to which great mystics of all ages have borne witness. He spoke to myself and others over a period of several years, through a channel, Thomas Ashman.

I would so much like to share Stephen's words with fellow Christians and others. The words are sane and wise, and underline and expand on aspects of the teaching of Jesus ascribed to him in the Gospels. Stephen depicts a Gospel of simple and direct experience, and in fact broadens and deepens our understanding of the Kingdom of Heaven. He de-emphasises the doctrinal accretions of later centuries.

As is the case with poetry of depth, readers need to let Stephen's words speak to depths within themselves, and to give time for this to happen.

It will become apparent that St. Stephen is no mere trance persona, but truly himself.

If I as a priest stand in a Christian cathedral I feel enfolded in the strength of two thousand years of the tradition of the Church, the centuries of prayer, the sense of ecclesiastical authorities mediating between me and God, the many celebrations of the Eucharist, the expositions of the Scriptures, the fellowship of worship, the singing of the choirs. I am conscious of the thinking of great church leaders, of fine social work, and missionary work in other countries. Enveloped in this atmosphere, the thought that a saint can speak to individuals outside the church, seems to say the least inappropriate and most presumptuous. But I have only to step into the midst of a Pentecostal church meeting, or an Islamic mosque, to

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<sup>1</sup>The reality accessible to our senses has three dimensions together with the dimension of time. Common sense says that a thing cannot exist unless it has these dimensions. Quantum theory states that several more dimensions than four, are required for something to exist.

find other powerful ways of relating to Spirit. We may therefore be grateful for the good our church may do, while resting assured that Spirit cannot be imprisoned in any church tradition. A Swedish writer, Harry Månsus, spoke of "The Cosmic Cathedral", and rightly so. The universe is God's cathedral, and we cannot place limits on the activities of Spirit.

Because of today's climate of thought both in the churches, and in the community at large, I am sure that very many will feel sceptical about the whole Stephen Experience at first. For one thing, perhaps most people in the western world, consciously or unconsciously, whether or not their spiritual and intuitive selves agree, are strongly influenced by the Reductionist science of the past three centuries. Reductionism, the cosmology of the nineteenth century, asserts that we understand things by taking things to bits, and seeing how the smallest parts behave.<sup>2</sup> It implies that we live in an ultimately meaningless universe that functions in a machine-like way. In a universe seen this way contact with a long dead saint is out of the question. Many Catholics on the other hand, involve the saints in their prayers. To them it will seem less strange to be talking with a saint. Yet they too are determinedly sceptical and demand rigorous proof, before a miraculous event can be accepted as fact. I too was a little sceptical as I asked questions, and listened to Stephen's answers. It is true that I did experience his warm personality as he spoke, that I felt uplifted, and closer to Spirit, that my life was radically changed. Nevertheless after a few months of conversations I plucked up courage to ask Stephen to show that he was himself.

Normally he spoke in a rather curious English. But as if to give proof that he was himself, he spoke some words in his own dialect of ancient Greek. It took very many years until I understood the full implications of the words: namely that he was a Greek-speaker, that he had Celtic and Jewish parentage, that he was born in Ancyra, modern Ankara, that his parents came from Thrace, that he knew Joseph the father of Jesus, and that Joseph had something to do with Stephen being accepted into a group of Essenes to which Joseph himself had belonged. Stephen's Greek words led to many other insights, and we will come to that in Part Two of this book.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Quantum mechanics physics asserts that we *also* need to see things as *wholes*: Holism. It is much more friendly to a spiritual interpretation of reality. Holism has not yet dislodged Reductionism as the philosophy of the majority of scientists.

<sup>3</sup> Anyone who can read the New Testament of the Bible in Greek can look up the very

Regarding this talking in Greek : if a medium or channel speaks in a language that he has never learned, or even heard, then that is called *xenoglossy*. After all other possible explanations—such as fraud, genetic memory, telepathy and cryptomnesia (the remembering of a foreign language learned earlier)—have been investigated, xenoglossy is taken as almost unarguable evidence of *either* memories of a language learned in a past life *or* of communication with a discarnate entity—a spirit person.

Xenoglossy is a recognised phenomenon. Let us take two examples: Dr Morris Netherton reports one case of a blond, blue-eyed eleven year old boy who under hypnosis was recorded for eleven minutes as he spoke in an ancient Chinese dialect. When the tape was taken to a professor at the Department of Oriental Studies at the University of California it turned out to be a recitation from a forbidden religion of Ancient China.<sup>4</sup>

In 1931 a young English girl from Blackpool, known in the files of the Society for Psychical Research as Rosemary, began to speak in an ancient Egyptian dialect under the influence of the personality of Telika-Ventiu who had lived in approximately 1400 BC. In front of Egyptologist Howard Hume, she wrote down 66 accurate phrases in the lost language of hieroglyphs and spoke in a tongue unheard outside academic circles for thousands of years.<sup>5</sup>

It would therefore not be an unknown happening, if St. Stephen were to speak in his own dialect of Greek. In fact in his case the Greek has been thoroughly researched, and can only be his. Because of his Greek, because of his love, because of the depth of his teaching, in line with the teaching of the world's great mystics, because of very many meaningful coincidences, I believe we can be sure we are hearing from him.

His Greek is important in that it helps us trust that we have to do with Stephen, but of course it is his teaching that is really important. I and others believe that his teaching throws light on the heart of Christianity, and as an Anglican priest, I feel that it would be good if fellow Christians could be aware of what Stephen says. But there are big obstacles to this.

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unusual words in Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon. The variant word endings are explained in the Appendix where the language is studied in great detail.

<sup>4</sup> Fisher, Joe (1986) p.202 *The Case for Reincarnation* Grafton Books London

<sup>5</sup> Lazarus, Richard (1993) p.85 *The Case Against Death* Warner Books London

Churches, as communities of faith, define themselves as having certain beliefs, particular traditions, and as having certain expectations of their members. In practice, especially with churches of ancient lineage, members will have differing beliefs, may not observe all the traditions, and may not conform to all expectations. Some church members may be Bible literalists, taking literally and as scientific fact the Genesis story of the creation of the world in seven days, being certain that the animals went into Noah's ark two by two, and that God is very much against mediums, because of the trouble King Saul got into when he consulted the witch of Endor. Literalists fortunately are not consistent in their literalism, for they do not for instance stone to death their disobedient sons. (*Deuteronomy* 21.21) And of course individual church members of all persuasions do develop in their thinking, and have differing beliefs at varying times. Older churches are communities of faith, and usually *houses* of belief, rather than *prisons* of belief. In these modern times, it has to be this way, since people do not hesitate to change churches if they do not feel accepted where they are.

Yet people of differing beliefs do happily worship together. Except that because of varying beliefs, church members have unfortunately learnt to keep quiet about spiritual experiences, fearing awkwardness with those whose view of reality has no room for such matters. Several times during my ministry as an Anglican priest, a bereaved person has hesitantly confided in me, that at the moment of death of a loved one in a distant place, the person they love was present in the room with them, looking and dressed as normal, seemingly saying goodbye. People have to be careful whom they say such things to, for strangely there are appreciable numbers of church-going Protestants and Catholics even, who do not believe in an afterlife, and see reality materialistically.

In the general population there is much less scepticism about the afterlife than we might imagine. Morton T. Kelsey<sup>6</sup> informs us that in "a representative sample" of "a mixture of people from different ethnic groups" forty-four percent responded that they had experienced contact with someone who had died, with over twenty-five per cent of these persons indicating that the dead person was somehow present or was seen by the respondent. Sixty per cent state that the contact was made through a dream." (p.99.)

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<sup>6</sup> *Afterlife, The other side of dying*, New York, 1982

W.D.Reeves in the *British Medical Journal* reported similar statistics, and noted that "none of these people had discussed the experiences with their physicians, and hardly a fourth of them had even mentioned it to anyone else. The main reason given was fear of ridicule. British people seem to have been as thoroughly brainwashed by the materialistic culture as the Americans." Another researcher, Andrew Greeley, "calls attention to the extreme reluctance of Americans to reveal these experiences to the clergy".<sup>7</sup>

Kelsey writes, "I had been asked to speak on several ways of opening individuals to spiritual reality. The meeting had been planned in part by clergy, but mainly by a group of physicists who felt that they needed to know more about this aspect of human life. They believed that this kind of insight might throw some light into the confusion existing in theoretical physics. . . .it was the clergy who had been trained in nineteenth century thinking who were the skeptical ones, not the physicists. I have had this experience time after time." (p.61)

To some degree this is how it has been with the author and *The Stephen Experience*. It is true that a few clergy of standing have given warm affirmation, but in contrast strongest active support has come from a number of academic physicists, doctors, usually members of the Scientific and Medical Network, which regards the materialist philosophy as inadequate to investigate human experience.

Kelsey writes, "for the most part, [the evidence of experience] does not touch the theological community, which has been fairly well brainwashed by the world-view of rationalistic materialism. As a result we find many religious writers uncomfortable with any evidence for continued existence. They consider life after death a matter of revelation which should not and cannot be investigated by ordinary human experience. It must be accepted upon pure faith, and not because of any convincing evidence. . . .Apparently it does not occur to them that it is silly to rely on faith when there are both experiences and facts available." (p.78)

In the Church of England, a committee was specially appointed in 1937 by Archbishop Lang and Archbishop Temple to investigate Spiritualism. It investigated for two years, and by a majority of seven to three, reported that phenomena associated with Spiritualism were genuine. But the report was

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<sup>7</sup> Kelsey, *ibid.* p.98

suppressed due to the offense it might occasion in church members of differing views.

If a reader is truly sceptical about the afterlife, and about the reality of communication from the dead, I recommend the reading of any popular exposition of the thinking of modern Quantum Mechanics physicists as it relates to consciousness, and to spirituality. I also recommend that the reader download Victor Zammit's *Afterlife Book*<sup>8</sup>, which summarises irrefutable evidence for the afterlife. Amongst other matters, it deals with Xenoglossy, the Electronic Voice Phenomenon, Instrumental Transcommunication, accounts of respected scientists who have investigated the question, the scientific study of mediums, Direct Voice mediumship, and Cross Correspondences. I regard his book as entirely sound, and also the Web links that he provides. I am less comfortable with the style of his personal home page.

The viewpoint of the eighteenth century philosopher David Hume has become central for sceptics of all kinds, when confronted by other people's testimonies to paranormal events, such as telepathy, or seeing a vision of a dead person as if alive, at the moment of death in a distant place. He wrote, "A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature. The only sufficient testimony for it would be testimony whose falsehood would be even more miraculous than the miracle itself."<sup>9</sup> Thomas Paris summed up Hume's point of view: "Is it more likely that nature should go out of her course or that a man should lie?"

Hume's argument is fallacious. His view of how the world works is presented as *fact*, as obeying laws of nature, when actually his view is *theory*. For instance Newton's "Law of gravity" has been transcended by other more complete descriptions of a phenomenon that in fact is not fully understood.

A little more humility about our theories about how the world works could transform myself and other reporters of the paranormal into possible truth-tellers.

It is must be the case that those who are sceptics concerning the paranormal, will be those who still adhere to nineteenth century, pre-quantum cosmology.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://victorzammit.com/book.html>

<sup>9</sup> *Essay Of miracles in Essays, Moral, Political and Literary*, OUP, 1963

## **If we can accept the afterlife as fact, how are we to view it in relation to this life?**

For a century now, F.W.H. Myers' *Human personality and its survival of bodily death* has been the most highly esteemed work in the field of psychical research. Amongst many other things, he writes of "resolute antagonists" who appear to maintain, "that no evidence can carry conviction to them unless it be *continuous* with old evidence; and that they cannot conceive that evidence to a world of spirit can possibly be continuous based on our experience of a world of matter. I agree with this demand for continuity; and I agree also that the claims usually advanced for a spiritual world have not only made no attempt at continuity with known fact, but have even ostentatiously thrown such continuity to the winds. The popular mind has expressly desired something startling, something outside Law and above Nature."<sup>10</sup>

Since Myers wrote, out-of-date cosmology continues to influence too many scientists and thinkers. Nevertheless Quantum Mechanics has clearly demonstrated the inadequacy of the old view of the cosmos as machine-like, composed of clearly understood simple basic operating parts, namely, atoms with nuclei and electrons, operating in a clearly understood cause-and-effect manner. QM physicists force us to be a great deal more humble in asserting what we know. We have to acknowledge that atoms are composed of a multitude of types of particles, which come and go, with electrons being described as "waves of probability", with more and more matters seen as yet to be discovered. The subatomic world bears no resemblance whatsoever to the seemingly solid "commonsense" world of the everyday. Many QM physicists refuse to acknowledge a distinction between mind and matter, and depict the universe as a psychophysical continuum. The latter is the view adopted in this book.

I have already quoted Morton Kelsey's statistics concerning those who believe that they have had communication from the dead. The old cosmology would have forty percent of the population to be either deluded, or to be liars with regard to their experiences. But if we can accept that they are truth-tellers, then the "world of spirit" must be continuous with the world that we know with our waking consciousness. Similarly if we accept meaningful coincidence as being truly meaningful, and acausal in the sense

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<sup>10</sup> p.208 abridged edition of 1961, ed. Susy Smith

that we cannot trace cause-and-effect in waking world terms, then the "waking world" cannot be separated from other dimensions of being. *Revelation 21* testifies to the coming marriage of heaven and earth. And this is the testimony of the whole of the teaching of St. Stephen.

### **The light that The Stephen Experience throws on the nature of consciousness.**

As a result of my experiences with St. Stephen, and a multitude of meaningful coincidences or synchronicities with people in different parts of the world, over a period of twenty years and more, I see consciousness as a tapestry. My personal consciousness is like a thread in this tapestry, my whole life and any previous lives can be seen as such a thread. My thread is woven into a fabric of an infinite number of threads, crossing and crisscrossing my own. All the other threads, that of the reader, or that of any other being, are my unconscious, what I am unconscious of. But I am in no way separate. There is one fabric of the conscious, and the unconscious, and in this fabric we all share. The fabric contains all consciousness of all history.

### **The Dream and the Conversation**

Here is an experience that I had not so long ago, which gives a glimpse of what I am trying to say: it is about a dream of a theological student in Sweden, which appears to foretell a conversation of my own, in New Zealand, ten days later.

**The Conversation:** I had been holding a long telephone conversation with a person in Auckland, in which (1) I mentioned a pamphlet by a clergyman friend about the Communion service. The clergyman was saying that it was a *kind of play*, in which the actors followed a script. (2) At another level of course *true spiritual communion* could be taking place. (3) I also mentioned the psychologist Lawrence LeShan, and described his *four modes of viewing the one reality*, namely, the sensory-physical, the holistic, the transpersonal or prayer mode, and the archetypal mode where we see reality in symbolic form. (4) I also mentioned that a series of striking synchronicities had led to the perception of a cosmic cube, both contained by and containing the world. This cube is the *cube of the cubic city of God*, in *Revelation 21*, and it is a symbol of the New Jerusalem where there has been *a marriage of the spiritual and material*. (5) I associated all this with the message of *St. Stephen*.

**The Dream:** The conversation ended. I looked to see if there was a new e-mail. There was. It was from a Swedish theological student in Göteborg. Writing in Swedish, he was saying that he had had a dream *ten days ago*, in which he thought I would be interested. He had dreamed about his church in Biskopsgården. (1) It was a *Communion service*. Near the altar, the pastor was explaining that it was *really a play*, and that the congregation were actors following a *script*. (2) The student saw above the congregation beings clothed in white having *true communion*. At the other end of the church was a gallery, and there the church caretaker stood, and he was called (5) *Stephen*. Stephen applauded the words of the pastor, and to illustrate the message, he twirled (3 and 4) *four cubes*, so that they looked like four spheres or Earths. (6) After the service, preparations were being made for a *wedding service*, but the Bride was not yet visible. (In *Revelation* the heavenly city is let down from heaven, like a bride.)

I was reading this e-mail within five minutes of the telephone conversation. I note that the Conversation and the Dream match almost exactly: the difference in the dream is that "Stephen" is one of two main characters in the dream, and that the marriage of heaven and earth is spelled out. And I note that the account of the dream appears like an exact "prophecy" of what transpired in my telephone conversation.

Can you understand that the matching of conversation and dream was a spiritual experience for me? That I felt in the presence of the holy? That I felt warmly close to the dreamer? That I inferred that the dreamer's consciousness and my consciousness had their roots in a higher and wider order of consciousness? That we were part of the same tapestry?

On a simpler level, perhaps you yourself have had the experience of walking down the street thinking of a person you haven't seen for a long time. You turn a corner, and there she is. Surely this makes you wonder. It lifts you out of yourself, perhaps you feel a sense of awe, or guidance.

Of course, you too might begin to wonder whether all or most of your thoughts and actions have their root in a higher and wider order of consciousness.

In this book St. Stephen has much to say about these things, and throws light there.

Moreover we shall find plenty of evidence that the consciousness of Stephen himself has its roots in, or is projected by, a higher or wider level of consciousness. It is the same for the student and me, for Stephen, and

perhaps for us all, that we are "in the hands of God", "guided by the same Holy Spirit", that there are heights and lengths and depths of us all of which we are usually unaware. Of course ultimately we have to acknowledge our oneness with the universe. There is no limit to these heights and lengths and depths.

Stephen would have it that all of us somewhere within, have knowledge of the truth about the reality of things, but that this knowledge is confused by our wrong beliefs, prejudices, and negative emotions. When we reach out in love, we come the closer to the truth.

### **Here is how St. Stephen described the Church:**

First, let us define the Church as a collection of people of a Christian belief, who follows this belief in its particular way.

In your case, the particular group of people is Anglican.

The mission of the church, should be, and quite often is, is to assist each other and those that they come into contact with, to develop into the eventual path of their own salvation with the Lord Jesus Christ. To follow the teachings of the Lord, to give water to them that thirst, to clothe him that has no clothes, to give bread to them that hunger, to love them that appear to be unlovable, this is the mission of your church.

Also to receive those that come to you, but not despise those that do not come to you, for there are many ways to salvation.

Think not that God would abandon any soul or any child or creature through the lack of understanding of your church, or through the nonconforming with the rules of your church.

**Those who were listening to him and questioning,** were largely people who were frequently noticing meaningful coincidences (synchronicities) in their lives, and interpreting this as guidance from a spiritual level of reality. The latter could be called "God" if we understand this to imply the Source of all that is, the Mystery to whom we pray, and from whom we receive guidance. To avoid unwanted theological overtones we refer to the Source, to Spirit, to Love, to the Mystery to whom we pray, or a Higher level of Mind. Our group spoke of "receiving" guidance, inspiration, teaching, love and so on.

We questioned Stephen about his teaching, and our personal "receiving", and he said all came from the Source of all knowledge, and that it made no difference whether the teaching came through him, or through our own receiving, if conclusions and judgments did not get in the way.

**We have noticed that while Stephen's teaching is profound, it is not new.** It is quite in accord with the experiences and teaching of the great mystics, it is in accordance with world views suggested by modern Quantum physicists, and also with what has been termed the Perennial Philosophy. Truth is truth, whoever expresses it.

One can compare Stephen's teaching to the Neale Donald Walsch's *Conversations with God*<sup>11</sup> which has sold millions of copies. Dr. Bernie Siegel remarks that the latter "Contains a wisdom I believe we all have inside us but don't stop to listen to.. There is the wisdom of the ages in this book." This book also appears to be "received" from a higher level of mind.

Yes, truth is truth, whoever expresses it.

Similarly one can compare Stephen's teaching with Jane Roberts' *Seth speaks*<sup>12</sup> and see that the trance personality Seth's picture of reality is in some ways also close to that of St. Stephen. I note that Jane Roberts (as in the case with the Stephen experience) had a number of sensitives or psychics around her. Those who read *The Stephen Experience* will indeed also profit from reading both *Conversations* and *Seth*. Much can be learned from them.

If this is the case, why should we concern ourselves with Stephen's teaching?

The answer of course depends on who we are, and if we belong to a community of faith. If we accept the reality of Stephen, then we are encountering a spiritual leader who lived near the time of the beginning of Christianity, and is deeply loyal to Jesus Christ. He is speaking of a reality not so different from *Conversations* and *Seth*, but with the eye of faith, the heart of worship, the conviction of our ultimate oneness in the universal Christ. He seeks to help us die to self, to selfishness, and to rise again in union with Christ. In doing so he appeals to our intuitive more than to our rational selves. His language is often that of poetry, and must be pondered

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<sup>11</sup> 1995. In the UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1997

<sup>12</sup> Prentice-Hall, 1972

and savoured. Confirmation that his teaching comes from a higher and wider level of reality, is seen in continual meaningful coincidences giving us experience of the truth of his teaching. We have experienced Stephen as a friend and brother, pointing beyond himself to the One.

### **The beginning of the St. Stephen experience.**

In 1973 I was Anglican vicar in New Zealand, of a Christchurch parish, and on one day an acquaintance knocked on the door. She had come down from the North Island partly to deliver to me a hand-written book of prophecies, the product of a woman unknown to me, who once had belonged to the Plymouth Brethren. There were about a hundred pages of these prophecies, largely based on the Book of Revelation, casting me in the role of one of the Two Witnesses in chapter eleven of the book. She had plainly taken immense pains with her prophecies, and my acquaintance had incurred the loss of time and money to bring them to me. I hope that I received the gift graciously and acknowledged the caring and depth of belief, which prompted it. All the same I could not regard it as other than the product of irrationality.

And yet, on the other hand, I found out later that the gift was almost simultaneous with St. Stephen's first words to my friend Olive Ashman, in Sevenoaks, Kent, in England. Three months later, the strangest circumstances were to have me talking with Stephen in New Zealand. (I will explain this later.) When I eventually learned that Stephen and the prophecies had come together in time, and when I reflected how I had come to talk with him myself, multidimensional reality appeared more and more strange, for many of those weird prophecies had close parallels with Stephen's teachings.

I can quite understand that the reader might find it hard to accept the total Stephen experience as real. We in the actual experience had difficulty. To adjust ourselves to what was happening, we read other people's accounts of similar experiences. We struggled with the theories of certain quantum physicists, and as we gradually pieced together what these scientists were saying, we could see that they were supporting the idea that our experiences made some kind of scientific as well as religious sense - in the face of "common-sense" reality.

**What does the New Testament of the Bible have to say about St Stephen?**

We read in the New Testament that the first Christian martyr was St. Stephen, a Greek-speaking Jew, “a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit”<sup>13</sup>, that he was chosen by the twelve apostles to care for the widows who spoke his language. We can wonder whether this is accurate, because instead doing social work he is also recorded as being an extraordinary preacher, who awakened the wrath of the enemies of Jesus, who in turn had him tried for blasphemy.

St. Luke the author of *Acts* puts a long speech in the mouth of Stephen, which reminded his accusers how religious authorities throughout the history of Israel had persecuted and killed prophets sent by God. They had capped this by murdering Jesus.

We can doubt that stenographers were present at the trial. But Luke, as was the custom with historians at that time, composed a speech that he believed would represent the kind of thing Stephen would have said. Luke continues:

*“This touched them on the raw and they ground their teeth with fury. But Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit, and gazing intently up to heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at God’s right hand. “Look,” he said, “there is a rift in the sky; I can see the Son of Man standing at God’s right hand!” At this they gave a great shout and stopped their ears. Then they made one rush at him and, flinging him out of the city, set about stoning him. The witnesses laid the coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. So they stoned Stephen, and as they did so, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” Then he fell to his knees and cried aloud, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them”, and with that he died. And Saul was among those who approved of his murder.*

### **How did Stephen make himself known to us?**

Olive’s preparation for this encounter, came from her Catholicism with a high respect for the saints, from her seeking a more direct relationship with Spirit in a Charismatic church, and her searching for help in a number of other religious movements.

Olive’s husband, Thomas, had a Catholic mother and a Jewish father. As a child early in the last World War, he attended a school in London, for Christians and Jews, the Star-Cross School. He thought of himself as a Jew,

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<sup>13</sup>Acts 6:8, 7:54-8:1.(NEB) “Saul” was to become “St. Paul” the foremost teacher of Christianity.

but was without any real belief. He had occasionally attended synagogue, but was never fully accepted because of his mixed parentage. He had no tertiary education, leaving school at the age of sixteen. While at school he received a technical education, learning no languages there. (I mention this because Stephen twice spoke in a form of ancient Greek.) At home he picked up a little Yiddish. During the Second World War he joined the RAF at 17, in 1943, and on discharge in 1948, married a Polish woman. This marriage lasted more than twenty years, and he did learn some Polish, together with a few sentences of Russian. He earned a living in business, and also hotel management. (It was in 1974 that he married Olive, a New Zealander.) That he had Catholic and Jewish parents, must have raised questions in his mind. He was interested in mediumship (he once had a conversation with the famous medium Harry Edwards). He joined Olive in a brief flirtation with a group called Eckankar. There was nothing apparently, to prepare him, for the wonderful way in which Spirit was to use him.

Nevertheless, it was he who made the Stephen experience possible. One night Olive heard him speak words in Latin while asleep, and conveying words of spiritual teaching. On subsequent nights Olive recorded his words on tape. It seems that when Thomas was confronted by what was said, and the profundity and wisdom of it, he felt compelled to become a Christian. Discovering what had happened, might initially have been deeply disturbing to him. One does not change one's world-view so easily. In any case, Thomas did not fight the experience. At first, his becoming "Stephen" was involuntary, but then he found a way of praying and then voluntarily allowing his personality to be supplanted by that of Stephen.

Thomas had this to say about his feelings when this happens:

"Firstly I feel so small as if I am surrounded by another being, enclosed, warm and completely protected as if I am a child in a womb. I am also conscious of his words. The emotion of love is all around and through me. Happiness almost to the point of being unbearable without bursting into fragments. But at the same time I wish to stay in this state forever. Safe, warm, and loved, beyond my previous existence. When he is gone an uncontrollable sadness of great loss comes over me and I unashamedly weep. A feeling of being left very much alone and separated from joy and

safety comes over me. His beautiful words still ring in my ears afterwards, and the feeling of great joy is remembered, but soon begins to fade.”<sup>14</sup>

The words “séance”, “channelling” or “mediumship” come to mind, but they would be insufficient to describe what was going on, because of deeply meaningful coincidences involving friends in different parts of the world. Like Thomas we too were caught up in something greater than we were, in such a way that we could readily identify with the feelings Thomas expressed.

The evidence of the whole experience was that Thomas and the rest of us were caught up into the *same* experience. For that reason I prefer to speak of the whole complex event as “the Stephen Experience”, to differentiate it from other occasions when the Unseen communicates through a group of people.

The facts were that Thomas was allowing himself to be displaced by Stephen deliberately, after prayer, and as an act of obedience to God. Returning after being displaced, Thomas would be groggy as if awakening from sleep, with little memory of what had been going on. He often seemed to feel out of it, as if he had been sent to another room, while Stephen and his questioners were holding deep conversation. Indeed, he often felt a little hurt and resentful, as if it did not matter to us whether or not he had been aware of what was going on. To be told that he could read up about it when the transcripts were printed in a few days, did little to assuage these feelings. Yet he laid himself open to Stephen almost two hundred times. In doing this it was patently clear that Thomas’ motives were spiritual, that he wished to do the will of God, and that his submission to Spirit was not in service of fame, money, or in having power over others.

We are deeply in Thomas' debt.

### **Our relationship with Stephen:**

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<sup>14</sup> Thomas was not always aware of what Stephen was saying. There were even occasions when he had to ask, “Did Stephen come?” When he was conscious of the sense of what Stephen had been saying, he sometimes interrupted him. Then Stephen would stop in mid-sentence, appear to be listening to the inaudible voice of Thomas, report Thomas’ words, answer, and then he would carry on speaking from where he had left off.

It was Olive and myself who put most of the questions to Stephen. When the questioner is not named, it is myself, asking either my own personal questions or those of others.

At my personal first interview with Stephen, awed, as I was, I challenged him about some of what he had previously been saying to other questioners. Stephen replied by stressing the importance of checking for ourselves. He was there to help us recognise what we ourselves were receiving from Spirit.

His individuality as Stephen seemed quite real, and he provided indications which sealed our belief that he was in fact the historical Stephen, an entirely personal, sane, loving Stephen, with an endearing sense of humour.

Stephen's teaching extended over seven years (though most conversations with him took place during the first five.) After his voice ceased, as already mentioned, strange teaching synchronicities, or interlocking events continued for a further seven years. Thus we experienced his world of the One.

### **Stephen set us a number of puzzles, to be solved through synchronicity.**

I call one of these the "*Five-fives*". Stephen set this after he and I had been talking about "Christ in the Midst". His puzzle consisted of **five words** in the Greek of his time. The words meant "*I proclaim myself, I reveal thee: think about it.*" I call that conversation with Stephen "Event No. 1".

*On the same night that Stephen spoke those five words*, 200 km away in Christchurch, a friend was later to relate that he had been impelled to find **five notes**. "Event 2".

Another friend dreamed that night that there were **five connections** from her body to a philosopher's stone. "Event 3".

Another friend was making a "UFO" to display in his classroom. He put it in place in the classroom with **five supporting strips** to each of the four walls. "Event 4".

Still on the same night, two friends cut a poem out of the *Christian Science Monitor* in which **five words, become five notes, five birds, five shadows, to make one great cosmic cry**. "Event 5".

The poem seemed to summarise what had happened in the other four events. You can read the whole rather long story in the first section of Part

Five. The friends had at the time, no knowledge of each others' activities that evening, nor did they all know each other.

It was by "chance" (or God's grace), that I learned of these events. The last four events plainly interlocked with my event with Stephen. In a later session Stephen was to agree that the five events together appeared to have been orchestrated by the *Christ in the Midst*, or "the Christ of the Space Between".

"I proclaim myself etc." Who or what says "I"? It does seem to be Christ in the Midst, the Christ of the Space Between. At the time that Stephen spoke his five Greek words, he had also said

We forget that there are two parts of us, this that thinks, and has bodies, and this that is of the Creator, which is the Space Maker.

The pattern is determined by the Creator, and these lives which we find so confusing and so unsatisfying, we are told by the Lord, that it is necessary, that the space and emptiness be created and experienced, to enable what has substance, the true Substance, to be placed there.

We can see this "true Substance" as manifestation of a Love embracing the Inner and the Outer worlds, a Thought of the Wider Mind.

In the case of "Five-fives" we discern this Love, this authentic Christ in the Midst more clearly. The five events obvious point to *one thought, one Love*, uniting all. The creative Love, the Christ is speaking at once in five ways. And he did this in other puzzles that Stephen set.

We may have prejudices that prompt us to reject Stephen when he speaks of reincarnation<sup>15</sup>, or to reject him *because* he is a spirit. Yet it may

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<sup>15</sup> When this word is used in this book it should be taken to imply "A special connection within the Communion of Saints, within the whole of creation, where all affects all else". At the same time that Stephen appears to say that someone is a reincarnation of someone living at an earlier time, he also stresses that at the soul level of discourse "we are all each other", all organs of experience as well as action for the Father. In a certain sense we can talk about a tapestry of reincarnational threads, in another we can talk of an ocean of spirit; or we can heat the ocean, so that it becomes steam, filling the universe. I am forced to use the word "reincarnation", but I would dearly prefer some other term. For further understanding of my problem, read footnote <sup>15</sup>, and ask "what place has the conventional conception of reincarnation in this world-view, which is also Stephen's?"

not be altogether praiseworthy to let prejudice get in the way of experience. Scientists too may reject the facts because they contradict their theories. The fact is though, “He who prescribes the conclusions, precludes the research.”

### **The Testimony of the Perennial Philosophy:**

Stephen talks about Reality from his point of view. Who else shares that point of view? What about the basic teachings of all the great religions? The philosopher Leibniz in the 1600's coined the phrase “the Perennial Philosophy” to describe such teachings. The term was popularised by Aldous Huxley in his book by that name [1945].

Here is a brief summary of the Perennial Philosophy. We can treat it as a kind of preview of what we will find Stephen saying.

The Perennial Philosophy holds that our normal human identification with body and with mind contents is an error that induces us to fear death, suffer, and cause others to suffer. The remedy, variously called *enlightenment, liberation, or Self-realisation* involves a deep shift of identification to the Ground itself. Huxley put it this way:

“The ground in which the multifarious and time-bound psyche is rooted is a simple, timeless awareness. By making us pure in heart and poor in spirit we can discover and be identified with this awareness. In the spirit we not only have, but are, the unitive knowledge of the divine Ground.” [Huxley 1945, p. 29]

Ken Wilber [*HP* p. 161] characterises the philosophy thus: “In the beginning’ there is only Consciousness as Such, timeless, spaceless, infinite and eternal. For no reason that can be stated in words, a subtle ripple is generated in this infinite ocean. This ripple could not in itself detract from infinity, for the infinite can embrace any and all entities. But this subtle ripple, awakening to itself, *forgets* the infinite sea of which it is just a gesture. The ripple therefore feels set apart from infinity, isolated, separate.... This is not only the beginning of narcissism and the battle against death, it is a *reduced* or *restricted* view of consciousness, because no longer is the ripple *one* with the ocean, it is trying itself to *be* the ocean.”

Compare *Genesis* 1:1-12: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, and the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep”. *Genesis* 3 describes how human beings separated themselves from their oneness with the Creator, deciding what was right

and wrong for themselves.” See Jesus’ prayer in *John* 17.21: “that they may all be one; as Thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may also be one in us”, and *Ephesians* 4:6: “One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

Compare also Shankara (Founder of Vedanta): “Though One, Brahman is the cause of the many. There is no other cause. The Atman is that by which the universe is pervaded, but which nothing pervades; which causes all things to shine, but which other things cannot make to shine. It is ignorance which causes us to identify ourselves with the body, the ego, the senses, or anything that is not Atman.”

Compare also Chuang Tzu (Taoism): “Do not ask whether the Principle is in this or in that; it is in all things. It is on this account that we apply to it the epithets of supreme, universal, total. All proceeds from it and is under its influence. It is in all things but is not identical with beings because it is neither differentiated nor limited.”

The last two quotations are taken from Huxley’s book. He quotes also a number of Christian mystics saying much the same thing.

The above quotations *do* represent part of Stephen’s thought, but with one major exception:

*Stephen*: “The ego is the product of your mind and its concepts.

That mind, and that body, and those concepts,

must also be of the Whole. Is this not so?

For nothing can exist that is not part of the Whole.

You have spoken of the dissipation of this ego

and yet have not considered that this is also an instrument of the Whole. For we have spoken about the recording of experiences that are necessary for the Whole.

“For why would what is perfect need to have created all that we consider material, which includes the mind and the product of that mind which is the ego, if these experiences were not only desirable but necessary? One might as well say that a body with a limb that is useless, that cannot operate, that that limb should be cut out and destroyed.” §173

Thus, although agreeing in general with the foregoing, he affirms that the ego is no mistake, but rather necessary.

**Synchronicity:** We have already mentioned synchronicity. C.G. Jung coined the word, referring to “meaningful coincidence”. Writers on

synchronicity often refer to the sense of the numinous, the presence of the Divine, in such an event. The “Five-fives” events that I referred to earlier could be termed “Synchronicity”. One way of describing this, is as a meaningful orchestration of several events from another dimension.

**What some Quantum Mechanics theorists suggest:** Their reality has a lot in common with that of the Perennial Philosophy, and implied by the teachings of Stephen. Albert Einstein must be named, and his opponent Niels Bohr. We must add Werner Heisenberg, Wolfgang Pauli, John Bell, Jack Sarfatti, David Bohm and others. The reality they depict is so much at odds with the old fashioned mechanistic world-view, that academic and practical physicists are often reluctant to accept it. There is wide acceptance nevertheless.

I have neither the space nor the competence, to give an accurate account of their theories and the experimental work on which they are based. The appended footnote on Bohm’s Gnosis<sup>16</sup> does give a clear impression of

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<sup>16</sup> *Quotations from a summary of Bohm’s Gnosis, by Beatrix Morrell:*

1. Any individual element [of totality] could reveal “detailed information about every other element in the universe”

2. “The unbroken wholeness of the totality of existence as an undivided flowing movement without borders”

3. Two subatomic particles that have once interacted can instantaneously “respond to each other’s motions thousands of years later when they are light years apart.” (Stephen: “The furthest sun is closer to you than your tongue.”§46.)

4. Space and time might actually be derived from an even deeper level of objective reality. This reality he calls the Implicate Order.

5. Within the Implicate Order everything is connected, and, in theory, any individual element could reveal information about every other element in the universe.

6. The Hologram is Bohm’s favourite metaphor for conveying the structure of the Implicate Order. “Everything is enfolded into everything”. The totality of the movement of enfoldment and unfoldment may go immensely beyond what has revealed itself to our observations. We call this totality by the name “holomovement”. This is the “fundamental ground of all matter” The holomovement is ground for both life and matter. [Stephen said, two years before Bohm’s work was published, “True life is all movement. The whole of life must be the whole of movement” (§158)]

7. “What *is* is always a totality of ensembles, all present together, in an orderly series of stages of enfoldment and unfoldment, which intermingle and interpenetrate each other in principle throughout the whole of space.”

what their teaching implies. The reader will profit by reading any of the popular presentations of the theories of these scientists.

**Notwithstanding all this, I must point out that with Stephen it is primarily *experience with which we have to do*.** Experience through his personality, his love, his poetry, his stories and parables, through experiences of meaningful coincidence that show us to be bound up with him in something greater.

The feelings that his teaching evokes, the challenges to us to turn our understandings on their head, the strange puzzles that he set that required the activity of a wider consciousness to solve. It is all this that is the *Stephen Experience*. All that I had previously noted but provides a frame, so to speak, in which to view the Experience.

## **A second Introduction: St Stephen and modern Christianity.**

**Prof. Richard M. Cocks PhD**

If you want an idea of what to expect from St. Stephen, at the core of his teaching is a familiar message. This message is that it is our job to become the love of God made manifest. We are to be an extension of the Father. This is perfectly consistent with Jesus' summary of his teachings that we should love the Lord our Father with all our hearts, and minds and souls, and that we should love our neighbor as ourselves.

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8. The individual is in total contact with the Implicate Order, the individual is part of the whole of humanity, and he is the “focus for something beyond humanity”

9. It is this collective consciousness of humanity that is truly significant for Bohm. It is this collective consciousness that is truly one and indivisible, and it is the responsibility of each human person to contribute towards this consciousness of humanity, this noosphere.

10. Bohm also believes that the individual will eventually be fulfilled upon the completion of cosmic noogenesis.

11. intelligence has always been at the very core of the Implicate Order.

(cont. of <sup>10</sup>) 12. It will be ultimately misleading and indeed wrong to suppose.. that each human being is an independent actuality who interacts with other human beings and with nature. Rather, all these are *projections of a single totality*.

So much for the central thought around which all else revolves. The next thing you might wonder is what level is Stephen writing from. Is it as a Christian fundamentalist who takes parables and myths literally? Is he writing as a Christian from 2000 years ago? How close to orthodox Christianity is he? The answer is that although many of his images and metaphors come from an earlier time, his theology is of the highest order. Like a liberal theologian he uses myth to help explain complex ideas, but does not take them literally. This rational reworking of ancient stories seems to be informed by an intimate familiarity with the highest levels of human consciousness in which we arguably merge with the divine, in fact realize ourselves to be God in some sense. These higher levels, what one might call the transrational, or transpersonal, involve perspectives that become progressively less personal, and less tied to a particular mind and body. These levels are sometimes called cosmic consciousness, in which lower identifications (with one's body and mind) are superseded and transcended (but included).

While Stephen's teachings are not unique, they do provide a wonderful addition to the worlds' wisdom teachings. One thing that makes his teachings so beautiful and worth reading is the example he provides of what he is teaching, the love of God made manifest. A true compassion may include anger, when appropriate, and even calling the police! Some people may respond well to angry prophets, but for those drawn to those who practice what they preach, Stephen's embodiment of warmth, and love and gentleness and humor is immensely appealing and seems like a model for his interlocutors and readers to follow.

What Stephen provides is both an ethics and a cosmology. I personally have found in Stephen, despite a good familiarity with Walsch (Conversations with God), and Ken Wilber, the leading transpersonal psychologist, an irreplaceable source of thoughts, images and metaphors, that provide succour and also a map for further development.

Stephen's teachings are consistent with the Great Chain of Being, the notion that reality exists in a hierarchy, or holarchy, extending from matter, to body, to mind, to soul, to spirit. This way of thinking puts him squarely in tune with the world's greatest religious traditions. This hierarchy has been

confirmed over and over by those willing to repeat the experiment, namely to use meditation to verify the levels described.

## A Third Introduction: St. Stephen and Philosophy

Prof. Richard M. Cocks PhD

**Probably the most compelling aspect of the Stephen experience is the warmth of his personality, his consistently loving attitude and the gentle humor that pervades what he says. Autobiographically, Stephen was important in helping me overcome what philosophers call the scientific worldview, accepting the reality of an afterlife, and interpreting Christianity in a way that I found congenial. Philosophically I found his teachings very impressive, combining as it does some of my most cherished ideas about life. In what follows I try to place Stephen in the context of Western thought.**

To begin with the **pre-Socratics**, Stephen is similar to Heraclitus with his emphasis on growth, movement, and change. On the other hand, Stephen has Parmenidean aspects in his attitude that all is one. If nothing is separate then movement may indeed be an illusion, as Parmenides' famous follower Zeno argued.

More specifically, Stephen's account of reincarnation and knowledge as memory is **Platonic** in nature. In Book X of Plato's *Republic* is the Myth of Er in which a man of that name, being placed on the funeral pyre is found to be alive. He gives an account of the afterlife in which the dead are judged and are offered the opportunity to become incarnate once again. But before they do so, they must be immersed in the River of Lethe. *Lethe* means forgetfulness and *aletheia* is its opposite, to remember. Interestingly, it also means truth and reality which follows the Platonic doctrine that to know the truth, what is real, is to remember. Stephen's teachings concur with this and suggest that what we need to remember will be revealed to us. "Feel within, RECALL the knowledge which you have."

So, what are we remembering? What is this truth that we can rediscover? In the end perhaps, it is the **holist's intuition** that all is one. That separateness is an illusion. An illusion that is necessary perhaps for the possibility of experience, but one that can be dangerous if we forget that it is an illusion and act as though we are separate from other people and from nature. If all is one, how can competition be based on reality? How

can there be not enough? And how can any part of God's creation be rejected? To reject one part is to reject all.

**Corollaries to Stephen's teachings can also be found among the Stoics.** Epictetus in particular suggests that events themselves are neutral. It is only our judgment of those events that leads us to consider them positively or negatively. In this case, no experience comes with a judgment already stamped upon it. So, consistent with the Christian dictum to judge not, Epictetus suggests that at the beginning of our education we still blame others for 'bad' things that happen to us. It represents progress if instead we blame ourselves for negative experiences and the end of our education is when we blame no one. Stephen also thinks that no one *has* to view any experience as bad and argues that Jesus' response to crucifixion was continued love and continued acceptance. He rejected nothing, neither the events, nor those whom we would call his persecutors, nor God, nor his destiny.

Stephen's notion of experience also has close similarities to the philosophy of **John Dewey**, a twentieth century holistic philosopher who Sidney Hook called the American Buddha. Dewey views experience as an interaction between the 'organism' and the 'environment.' Experience represents a contribution from both. What this means for a Stoic is that control of the 'organism' is in principle sufficient to keep experience from becoming 'suffering,' or 'undesirable.' We cannot control external events, such as disease, death, poverty, or false accusations, however we can, in principle, choose our attitude to these events. For Stephen, if we refuse to deviate from a loving attitude, from acceptance (non-rejection), thus from *reality*, if in fact all is one, then no experience can be 'bad.'

**This however, does not mean that Stephen is a quietist.** He says: "The starving masses *do* starve because we in the West choose to let them starve. In that sense the sin of not recognizing their at-oneness with ourselves, as a product of the human mind, does cause or allow their suffering. It is not God as love that is responsible for their suffering. If they continue to love God, being able to bear the pain, they surely contribute in a striking manner to experience of God's love. God does not NEED this suffering - his love would be manifest anyway.

"It seems plausible to say that that which we may need may not be what our physical selves may want. That we may cry out that we are no longer loved when we in fact are."

Stephen's notion that the only sin is stagnation is also consistent with Dewey. Stephen says "Sin consists of attempts at "stagnation," or non-growth along the path set each one of us individually and corporately "by the Father"." Dewey also rejects stagnation in the following passages.

"In . . . *The Dawn of Conscience* **James Henry Breasted** refers to Haeckel as saying that the question he would most wish to have answered is this: Is the universe friendly to man? The question is an ambiguous one. Friendly to man in what respect? With respect to ease and comfort, to material success, to egoistic ambitions? . . . Mr. Breasted's answer . . . is that nature has been friendly to the emergence and development of conscience and character. Those who will have all or nothing cannot be satisfied with this answer. Emergence and growth are not enough for them. They want something more than growth accompanied by toil and pain. They want final achievement [but] . . . morally speaking, growth is a higher value and ideal than is sheer attainment (55 - 56)."

"The live being recurrently loses and re-establishes equilibrium with its surroundings. The moment of passage from disturbance into harmony is that of intensest life (*Art as Experience*, 17).

Instead of signifying being shut up within one's own private feelings and sensations, [experience] signifies active and alert commerce with the world; at its height, it signifies complete interpenetration of self and the world of objects and events. Instead of signifying surrender to caprice and disorder, it affords our sole demonstration of a stability that is not stagnation but is rhythmic and developing (*Art as Experience*, 19)."

**Stephen also stresses the importance of feeling.** "If you FEEL, it is much better, than being able to hold with the physical mind. For as some insight comes in, other insight may begin to escape you." **Dewey's philosophy** gives enormous importance to feelings and rescues them from the dustbin of subjectivity to which the scientific revolution had relegated them.

For Dewey, emotions are not to be thought of as discrete states of mind with a "cognitive content." Instead, the idea is that a coherent experience involves a selection and arrangement of qualities of the world in an interactive stance. Emotions play a role in this selection and arrangement. The qualities selected and arranged are real, existential qualities of the world. For this reason, emotions reveal real aspects of the world that would otherwise not be noticed. For instance, if one is "in love," in a strong occurrent sense, one notices all the charms of one's loved one.

The loved one's charming and lovable characteristics are noticed and selected. When one falls out of love, the same person's displeasing qualities may be noticed for the first time. Both emotions, love, and hatred due to betrayal, open up different contexts in which the person is revealed. The noticed qualities are never perceived as discrete and separate items, (although one might choose to *consider* them reflectively like that), but as features of people within a contextualized point of view.

Combining Dewey and Stephen one might say, as you feel so will you see. If you can feel love, then one will perceive God as manifest. A feeling reveals the world in a certain way. By feeling, one will perceive the loving interconnectedness of things, rather than merely accepting this as an intellectual doctrine. According to Stephen, we will then perceive truly.

But for me at least, perhaps the most attractive philosophical idea that is represented in Stephen's teachings is something akin to **Hegel's notion of God**, what Hegel called the absolute spirit. Hegel puts forward the idea that human experience is part of God coming to know his own nature. Experience is only possible if there is something doing the experiencing and something experienced. This requires the illusion of dualism. God therefore has to make nominal distinctions within himself. Of course, all of creation is still God and still within God. The purpose of creation, for Stephen, is to make God's love manifest and in fact is the result of a kind over-flowing of love. Physical reality is not some ghastly mistake, as the Gnostics believed. It is part of God experiencing himself. Our lives therefore have a larger all-encompassing purpose and that is as God's sense organs. Every experience we have contributes to God's ever-expanding awareness and experience of his own nature. Hegel believed God's ultimate nature is freedom and saw human history as a progressive realization of ever greater degrees of freedom, from primitive communal societies which were free but unconscious of their freedom, to slavery, feudalism, and so on. I suspect that Hegel may be right about God's nature as freedom, although I'm not so sure about his views of human history. I also suspect that the views that God is freedom, God is love, and God is life, are all the same thing. What this *really* means I am still attempting to discover. With regard to Stephen, he thinks that human experience contributes in this Hegelian fashion and also that we are intended to experience everything. What this ultimately means is that an enlightened life continues to have pain as well as leisure, wild unfounded recriminations as well as gentle appreciation lovingly expressed. One who

is saved does not cease to be involved in turmoil. All that might change is one's attitude to these events. We can learn from trying circumstances. We learn what we currently think are our limits and hence where we still need to grow. Where we find ourselves judging people or events negatively, we are made aware of potential new avenues of growth. Christ's attitude to his own crucifixion being a wonderful example. If one imagines that trying circumstances cease after one is saved and one loves God with all one's heart, soul, mind and strength, just look what happened to God's most beloved son. Still less can we expect prosperity, ease, and material comfort. But we can expect to love our lives more regardless of circumstance.

I have found Stephen's teachings to be **philosophically profound**. My consistent attitude has been that this cannot be a hoax, in the same way that Shakespeare's plays are not a hoax, Machado's poetry is not a hoax, and Einstein's theorems are not a hoax. If Tom Ashman is a fake medium, the teachings expressed are fake in the same way Plato's philosophy is fake, Bach's *St Matthew Passion* is a fake and Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain* is a fake, i.e., not at all. Of all the things expressed in Stephen's teachings, as I said at the beginning, the consistently loving attitude he expresses in his replies to questions is the most convincing and inspiring of all his lessons.